

## Tankers are 'legitimate' targets warns al-Qaeda ideologist

But oil wells, 'the heart of Muslim wealth', should be spared, writes David Osler — Friday March 03

**T**ANKERS are legitimate targets for Islamist terrorists, according to a pronouncement from a prominent Saudi al-Qaeda ideologist.

Pipelines and other infrastructure controlled by "infidels" are also singled out for inclusion in the guidelines.

However, oil wells should be spared as they represent an economic lifeline for Muslim nations, supporters are advised.

Coming hard on the heels of last week's frustrated attack against the world's largest oil processing plant at Abqaiq, the news will concern many in both the shipping and oil sectors.

Islamist terrorists have turned on tankers before, most notably blowing up French-owned VLCC Limburg in Yemen in October 2002.

### Beefed up

However, security specialists yesterday said that security precautions in many Saudi ports have been substantially beefed up. They also contended that the strategy might not be universally backed in the terrorist camp.

The instructions come in a manifesto written by Abdulaziz al Enezi, an al-Qaeda militant captured by the Saudi authorities last year. The two-year-old document was recently posted on an Islamist website.

Mr Enezi argues that disrupting oil supplies is the best way to damage the US economy and to destabilise the Saudi regime.

Saudi state-owned refineries and oil pipelines, as well as Iraqi facilities, are described as "all in the hands of infidels".

In edition, Mr Enezi writes: "It is permissible to target oil interests held by infidels ... including American and Western oil tankers."

He added that oil pipelines are easy targets because their length makes them difficult to protect.

Moreover, attacks on them do not directly detract from Muslim oil wealth.

Experts say that Mr Enezi had the rank of 'information minister' in al-Qaeda's Saudi offshoot, and acted as a spiritual guide to the group.

But analysts close to the Lloyd's market yesterday pointed to countervailing tendencies.

### Infrastructure

Zaineb al Assam, head of the Middle East division at strategic intelligence forecasters Exclusive Analysis, said that while oil infrastructure was a target for terrorists, the risk was mitigated by the resistance of some local cells to leadership calls to action.

"This is precisely because they seek to inherit the kingdom's oil wealth — rather than to destroy the infrastructure that helps generate it."

But Ms al Assam added there was a lack of uniformity surrounding strategy to weaken the House of Saud, and therefore the target-set was not necessarily fixed.

"Attacks on expatriate workers in the

oil industry are far more likely than on the facilities themselves because they accomplish both objectives of weakening the regime and diminishing the western footprint in the kingdom," she said, adding that security measures — such as anti-aircraft batteries which provide cover for ports involved in the export of hydrocarbons — had been put in place to counter the threat.

"With respect to offshore protection and the safeguards given to tankers carrying Saudi crude, both air and sea forces and Aramco are deployed to protect critical resources," she said.

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

Vessel	Type	Flag	Class	GT	DWT	Bit	Casualty
<i>ALEXANDROUPOLIS</i>	bulker	MLT	LR	41,342	77,300	1982	Experienced rudder engine trouble at Km 107, Suez Canal Feb 20. Vessel towed by SCA tugs to Great Bitter Lakes to effect repairs. Southbound convoy delayed by 8 hours. Completed repairs and resumed voyage.
<i>ANNE-LISE-POULSEN</i>	fishing	DNK		228	—	1971	In lat 61 03N, long 00 33E, Feb 21 with a fouled propeller and requesting assistance. Supply vessel <i>Olympic Provider</i> towing casualty to Lerwick. Arrived Lerwick 22 Feb.
<i>CLEOPATRA S.</i>	passenger	SLE	LR	9,598	1,981	1970	Grounded at Km 64 Suez Canal Feb 20 in dense fog and poor visibility. Vessel refloated with assistance of SCA tugs and towed to Ballah station to effect repairs.
<i>CORA JO</i>	general	ANT	(LR)	3,214	6,033	2006	Engine breakdown in lat 41 37N, long 09 23W, Feb 17. Vessel towed to Vigo and repairs to be commenced Feb 18, ETD Feb 20. General Average declared.
<i>GRENLAND</i>	general	ATG	PR	1,900	2,550	1970	Aground in Aviles port entrance chanel Feb 21. Tugs on scene. Still aground Feb 22, salvor not contracted.
<i>HIGH RIDER</i>	product tanker	MHL	NK	25,800	41,502	1991	Grounded at Km.340 River Parana Feb 20. Refloated without tug assistance and proceeding to San Lorenzo, ETA same day. Survey carried out at San Lorenzo Feb 22. Unable to carry out dive inspection. No machinery, internal damage found.
<i>HENG DA 1</i>	refrig	PAN	—	2,188	—	2003	Struck a reef and sank near Dongjia Island, Fujian province, south-east China, in lat 25 17N, long 119 46E, Feb 16. Twenty-nine crew missing, presumed dead.
<i>MYS KOMMUNAROV</i>	refrig	RUS		973	1,196	1979	Reported Feb 17 drifting with engine trouble in lat 37 30.7N, long 136 19.5E.
<i>NOVA LIGURIA</i>	refrig	BHS	BV	4,361	5,459	1985	Experienced an engine breakdown while transiting the Dardanelles Feb 16. Anchored near Karanlik Liman. Completed repairs by own means and proceeded Feb 17.
<i>REPLENISH</i>	fishing	GBR	—	246	—	—	Escorted to Lerwick after taking on water in a storm south-east of Shetland Feb 14. Pumps taken to vessel, but unable to drop gear due to gales. Sailed Lerwick Feb 16.
<i>STENA EXPLORER</i>	passenger	GBR	NV	19,638	1,500	1996	Struck a submerged object while entering Holyhead Feb 15. Out of service for about two weeks. Effecting repairs at Holyhead Feb 20, ETC Feb 27.
<i>WESTERN MONARCH</i>	fishing	CAN	—	79	—	1937	Grounded at north end of Ogden Channel, BC, and sank in lat 53 54.41N, long 130 12.33W, Feb 2.

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The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



## AL MANARA (St. Kitts-Nevis)

Seychelles, Feb 17 — General cargo *Al Manara* was towed to Port by Seychelles Port Authority as a danger to navigation or pollution. Billed and not paid. Awaiting arrival of owners for settlement of towage bill. Apparently spare parts have arrived in Seychelles but vessel has not managed to secure the service of an agent. The vessel has to be repaired because it can not sail on own steam and no arrangement for towage had been done, as far as we are aware. — Lloyd's Agents.

## AL SALAM BOCCACCIO 98 (Panama)

London, Feb 16 — A press report, dated today, states: Egyptian officials say salvage experts have located the wreck of passenger ro/ro *Al Salam Boccaccio 98* which sank in the Red Sea almost two weeks ago killing about 1,000 people. Transport Minister Mohamed Loutfi Mansour said the *Al Salam Boccaccio 98* was found in 800m (2,600 ft) of water, 90km (56 miles) from Egypt's port of Safaga. He said experts will lower a robotic submersible to take pictures and search for the vessel's voyage data recorder. Only 388 out of more than 1,400 people on board survived the disaster. Ships carry a voyage data recorder, similar to a aircraft's black box, to record information about the vessel's location, direction of travel and weather conditions. Mr Mansour said the Egyptian authorities were now working with international salvage experts to try to recover the device from the *Al Salam Boccaccio 98*, which was operated by El-Salam Maritime. When they launch the salvage mission at the weekend they will also photograph the wreckage in an effort to establish why the vessel sank. It is believed that the 35-year-old vessel, which was sailing in bad weather, ran into trouble when a fire broke out below decks. The accident has prompted accusations of negligence, with the crew accused of ignoring warnings to evacuate after the fire took hold and the vessel began to list. The anger of relatives has increased because of a lack of information about their loved ones, most of whom were Egyptians working in Saudi Arabia.

London, Feb 21 — Detailed inspections of the El Salam Maritime Transport fleet will begin this week as the international maritime community seeks to uncover the causes of the loss of more than 1,000 lives on board passenger ro/ro *Al Salam Boccaccio 98* earlier this month. The inspections, to be carried out by Tom Allan, the former chairman of the International Maritime Organisation's Marine

Safety Committee, are designed to eliminate the prospect of a repeat of the tragic events of Feb 3 and shed light on any structural causes that may have contributed to the accident. Panama, the flag state for the 1970-built ro-ro, will also participate in the inspection of three other vessels. The *Al Salam Carducci 92*, *Al Salam Manzoni 94* and *Al Salam Pascoli 96*, all owned by El Salam Maritime Transport, the operator of the ill-fated ferry, will be the first vessels to be inspected, said Alfonso Castellero, PMA's deputy director of the merchant marine department. "The first part, of course, is that they have to do a revaluation of all the ships in this area and especially the sisterships," said Mr Castellero. "This signifies a physical inspection but it also includes an evaluation of the operation and the reactions of the crew. The human factor, as history has shown, is very important." Details of the possible role played by the vessel's crew in the disaster should become clearer this week with the recovery of the voyage data recorder. The black box was located last Wednesday (Feb 15) and preparations are being made to recover the unit later this week. It is hoped recordings on the bridge will shed some light into why a decision was taken to continue sailing to Egypt while the crew were fighting a fire in one of the lower decks. The IMO has offered its support to the Egyptian authorities and sent Mike Travis from the UK Marine Accident Investigation Branch and Jean-Charles Leclaire from the French marine investigation department to assist in the investigation. Mr Travis has special expertise in the interpretation of VDRs while Mr Leclaire participated in the inquiry into the loss of the Senegalese ferry *Joola* in 2002. Panama's second vice-president and head of the PMA, Ruben Arosemena, is also scheduled to visit Egypt at the end of the month. "I am going to meet the minister of transport to observe the advances in the process, refine the participation of Panama, support the authorities in Egypt and express our condolences for the loss of so many citizens," he said. He said that Panama was disposed "to collaborate at the highest levels in this investigation." Mr Castellero said he hoped that the investigation would help the maritime community "to avoid any other events like this in the future." Findings from the forthcoming inspections, he said, would be presented to the IMO. El Salam Maritime has a fleet of 15 vessels, all of which will be inspected as part of a broader investigation of ferries operating in the region. RINA, the class society of the *Al Salam Boccaccio 98*, has also offered its full co-operation with the investigation.

Cairo, Feb 21 — French and British experts working for the International Maritime Organisation today recovered the black box from passenger ro/ro *Al Salam Boccaccio 98*, which sank in the Red Sea this

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month with the loss of more than 1,000 people. Transport Minister Mohamed Lutfi Mansour told the state news agency MENA the experts had brought the Voyage Data Recorder up from the vessel and would send it to Britain for analysis. The recorder, which stores details such as the position of the vessel, direction of travel and weather conditions, might throw light on why the vessel sank. *Al Salam Boccaccio 98* was on a voyage between Duba and Safaga when it sank on the night of Feb 2-3. Out of the 1,414 people on board, only 388 people survived. Witnesses and surviving officers said a fire broke out on the car deck shortly after the vessel left Duba. However, they have not explained why the vessel continued to sail out into the Red Sea for several hours after the fire started and why the crew evacuated so few of the passengers. The disaster provoked widespread criticism of the shipping company and of the government, which was accused of reacting too slowly and of laxity in enforcing safety regulations. — Reuters.

**ALASKAN FRONTIER (U.S.A.)**

London, Feb 16 — Following received from Coast Guard Juneau, timed 1805, UTC: Fishing *Alaskan Frontier* is now under tow for King Cove, ETA 0200, UTC, Feb 17.

London, Feb 17 — Following received from Coast Guard Juneau, timed 1720, UTC: Fishing *Alaskan Frontier* arrived safely at Sand Point at 1830, local time, yesterday.

London, Feb 20 — Following received from Coast Guard Juneau, timed 2030, UTC: As far as the Coast Guard are aware fishing *Alaskan Frontier* was to carry out repairs at Sand Point.

**ALESSIA (Switzerland)**

London, Feb 21 — Following received from Corsen MRCC, timed 1050, UTC: General cargo *Alessia* (2999 gt, built 1999) reported 30 deg list to port in lat 49 07N, long 05 07W on Feb 20. The vessel is proceeding to Brest. (Note — According to LMIU AIS *Alessia* was reported in lat 48 22 54.78N, long 04 27 58.5'W at 1056, today, one nautical mile from Brest.)

London, Feb 22 — General cargo *Alessia*, Brake for Haifa, developed serious list to port on Feb 20 after its cargo of girders was shifted by heavy weather. Firefighting tug *Abeille Bourbon* escorted the vessel to Brest, where it is now safely berthed.

Brest, Feb 23 — General cargo *Alessia* arrived Brest at 1210, Feb 20, under its own power after the vessel's cargo shifted to port, giving the vessel a list of 30 deg. Cargo discharge commenced Feb 23 and is expected to last approximately eight to 10 days. The vessel will need to effect repairs prior to reloading. — Lloyd's Agents.

**ALEXANDROUPOLIS (Malta)**

Port Said, Feb 21 — Bulk *Alexandroupolis* (41342 gt, built 1982), which entered the Suez Canal

on Feb 20 with the northbound convoy, experienced rudder engine trouble at Km 107 in the Canal. The vessel was towed by Suez Canal Authority tugs to the Great Bitter Lakes to effect the necessary repairs. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — *Alexandroupolis* sailed Singapore Feb 4 for Amsterdam.)

London, Feb 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Southbound convoys transiting the Suez Canal yesterday were delayed by approximately eight hours after bulk *Alexandroupolis* in the northbound convoy experienced engine trouble. Ships in the southbound convoys faced delays as they had to wait for *Alexandroupolis* to anchor at Bitter Lakes, with the assistance of Suez Canal Authority tugs. Traffic in the Suez Canal has now returned to normal.

Port Said, Feb 22 — Bulk *Alexandroupolis* completed repairs and resumed passage awith the northbound convoy of today. — Lloyd's Agents.

**ALICAN DEVAL (Turkey)**

London, Feb 17 — Following received from Rome MRCC, timed 1020, UTC: General cargo *Alican Deval* is still aground, with tug *Nefgtegaz 51* on scene. Salvage operations have been delayed due bad weather.

London, Feb 19 — Following received from Rome MRCC, timed 1145, UTC: General cargo *Alican Deval* is still heavily aground after another attempt to refloat the vessel on Feb 16-17 failed. Due to bad weather drivers still can not inspect the fall extent of the damage to the vessels keel. The salvage operation is thought to last as long as 3 weeks.

London, Feb 20 — Following received from Rome MRCC, timed 0928, UTC: General cargo *Alican Deval* is still aground.

**AMUNDSEN (Canada)**

London, Feb 17 — Icebreaker *Amundsen* (5910 gt, built 1979) struck the wharf when departing Tadoussac, Quebec, in lat 48 08.18N, long 69 42.48W at 1910, Jan 26.

Montreal, Feb 21 — Damage sustained by icebreaker *Amundsen* is minor, considered as scratch only. — Lloyd's Agents.

**ANG PANGULO (Philippines)**

Manila, Feb 20 — The Philippine Navy is planning to put the repair work on the yacht *Ang Pangulo* out to tender, which was damaged by fire on Jan 14, Philippine Navy spokesperson Captain Geronimo Malabanan said. The vessel had recently undergone drydocking at the Keppel Batangas shipyard and was being prepared for sea trials when the fire happened. The presidential yacht remains moored at Keppel Batangas shipyard. Capt. Malabanan clarified that repairs to the burned portion of the yacht have not yet started. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

**ANNE-LISE POULSEN (Denmark)**

London, Feb 21 — Following received from Coastguard Shetland MRCC, timed 1520, UTC: At 1424, UTC, today, agent of fishing *Anne-Lise-Poulsen*, OVYX, (228 gt, built 1971), reported that the vessel was in lat 61 03N, long 00 33E, with a fouled propeller and requesting assistance. Supply vessel *Olympic Provider* is now proceeding and ETA alongside at 1645, UTC. Vessel intends to tow *Anne-Lise-Poulsen* to Lerwick. The fishing vessel is currently drifting 226 degs, at one knot and is well clear of all oil installations.

**ANNE-LISE-POULSEN (Denmark)**

London, Feb 21 — Following received from Coastguard Shetland MRSC, timed 1716, UTC: Fishing *Anne-Lise-Poulsen*: Supply vessel *Olympic Provider* is now on scene. Tow established en route to Lerwick where ETA 0300, UTC, Feb 22. Intention is to hand tow to Lerwick harbour tugs at north entrance to harbour. Four-hourly scheduled safety checks established.

London, Feb 22 — Following received from Coastguard Shetland MRSC, timed 1225, UTC: Fishing *Anne-Lise-Poulsen* arrived safely in Lerwick at 0303, UTC, this morning.

**APL PANAMA (Antigua & Barbuda)**

London, Feb 10 — Following received from the operators of c.c. *APL Panama*, dated today: *APL Panama* is still aground. About 550-600 containers have been removed from the vessel's deck by a crane. A dredger is proceeding to the grounding location, ETA on scene Feb 25-26. The intention is to cut a channel from the open sea to the vessel, which will then be used to tow the vessel free.

London, Feb 22 — An APL service status report, dated Feb 21, states: C.c. *APL Panama* remains grounded off the coast of Ensenada. Cranes have been assembled on the deck of the ship to assist in the discharge of the ship. Once these additional cranes are fully operational we expect that the speed of discharge of containers will increase. It is also hoped that additional containers will be removed from below deck with the help of this equipment. Approximately 621 containers have been removed from the ship. The salvors intend to remove most of the containers from the ship, however this may be subject to operational limitations. We will continue to notify customers as containers become available for pick-up. Containers are being discharged exclusively to assist in recovery efforts; therefore we can not identify in advance which will be available for pick-up. There is no sign of cargo damage on board the vessel, and reefers continue to be powered by generator. Preparations are being made to remove a sand build-up from the starboard side of the ship that has inhibited recovery with the use of a dredger. Additional attempts to refloat the vessel will be made near the end of February.

London, Feb 22 — Efforts continue to remove the c.c. *APL Panama* which went aground on sand some 1.5 nautical miles south-east of the entrance to the port of Ensenada, Mexico. So far, 716 containers, weighing 9,506 tonnes, have been removed from the vessel. A dredging vessel is presently en route to the casualty and will arrive on Feb 25. This will be used by the salvors to clear a channel through the sandy beach, making it easier to tow the lightened vessel back to sea. Environmental response teams remain on 24 hour stand by to ensure that no damage is caused to the local environment. The vessel's owners continue to work in close co-operation with the Mexican authorities and the salvors in order to remove the vessel in a safe and manageable manner from the beach.

**ATLANTIC EXPRESS (Panama)**

London, Feb 22 — Bulk *Atlantic Express* (15284 gt, built 1985) lost rudder control, for a short period of time, in a curve upstream of Batiscan anchorage in lat 46 30 43N, long 72 13 30W, at 1245, EST, Feb 21. At 1707, EST, same day, while, transiting downbound, approaching Quebec bridge in lat 46 44 44N, long 71 17 17W, the vessel requested the assistance of tug and an icebreaker to help avoid striking the bridge. The vessel cleared the bridge without problems.

**B.E.LINDHOLM (U.S.A.)**

London, Feb 22 — A press report, dated Feb 17, states: The US Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit upheld the equal division of damages in a collision case where both vessels were at fault. In the instant case, an inbound chemical/oil carrier *Stolt Achievement* (25427 gt, built 1999) and outbound trailing suction hopper dredger *B.E.Lindholm* (3446 gt, built 1985) were in collision in the Houston Ship Channel on Oct 21, 2002. The trial court found both vessels to have been at fault and divided the damages equally. The tanker owner appealed, asserting that the primary cause of the collision was the steering failure on the dredger as the two vessels were about to pass. On appeal, the court held that the trial court found various faults on the part of both vessels, including regulatory violations by the tanker. The decision of the trial court was found not to be clearly erroneous.

**BANGLAR SHIKHA (Bangladesh)**

London, Feb 21 — A press report, dated Feb 20, states: Coastguard officials seized a huge quantity of computer accessories and electronic goods from general cargo *Banglar Shikha* (9927 gt, built 1991) at Karnaphuli channel on Sunday afternoon (Feb 19). Officials said that they had been following the *Banglar Shikha* at the outer anchorage since 1630 on Saturday and challenged it when it reached Karnaphuli channel at 1330 on Sunday. Sensing the presence of the coastguards, the crews

of the vessel dropped the smuggled goods into the river. At one stage, the coastguard personnel stepped into the dock of the vessel and recovered the goods hidden inside the vessel. The coastguard men recovered 39 monitors, five Central Processing Unit (CPUs), three laser printers, two audio video recorders, two desktop computers and other accessories worth about TK 1.2 million. The master of the vessel admitted that the seized goods were brought undeclared, but huge consignment of the unauthorized goods were dropped into the river, said a spokesman of the coastguard. (Note — *Banglar Shikha* sailed Port Klang Feb 14 and arrived Chittagong Feb 19.)

**BEAUFORT (Panama)**

Guayaquil, Feb 17 — To date the change of owner of chem.tank *Beaufort* has not been reported to this office. — Lloyd's Agents.

**BLACK SWAN (Bahamas)**

Port Said, Feb 21 — Bulk *Black Swan* is still under arrest in the Great Bitter Lakes. — Lloyd's Agents.

**BOA VISTA (Panama)**

London, Feb 20 — Ro/ro *Boa Vista* passed Gibraltar, eastbound, Feb 17. Avonmouth, Feb 20 — Milford Haven Port Authority confirm that ro/ro *Boa Vista* struck the Neyland Point navigation beacon at 1625 hrs, Feb 12. No injuries or pollution resulted. Damage to the vessel was minor; a side access ladder rung partially detached and scraped across a length of approximately 20 metres. Beacon damage is being assessed. An investigation is ongoing. The vessel sailed late the same day bound for Greece via Gibraltar. — Lloyd's Agents.

**BOOMTOWN BELLE II (U.S.A.)**

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

**BORDER HEATHER (Isle of Man)**

London, Feb 17 — A press report, dated today, states: A fire officer was seen smoking a cigarette and using a mobile telephone next to product tanker *Border Heather* where there had just been an explosion, a safety report has revealed. The Marine Accident Investigation Board looked into an incident at Grangemouth docks and highlighted several major concerns. It found the BP tanker was overloaded and its chief officer fatigued in the lead-up to the explosion in October 2004 (Oct 31). The vessel had made three voyages before entering dry dock for repairs and then berthed and loaded ultra low sulphur diesel (ULSD) followed by kerosene. However, the vessel's second officer smelled fuel vapour and found a puddle of ULSD which he reported to the chief officer, who confirmed it but took no action. Some motor spirit and vapour trickled down to the bow thruster-room because of an open valve and a leaking non-return valve.

The vapour was ignited by electrical equipment and the explosion threw flames and burning material through the hatches, door and vents in the forecastle deckhouse. No one was injured. The fire was tackled by the crew and extinguished by shore-based firefighters after about 40 minutes. The MAIB highlighted several concerns, particularly the lack of liaison between the terminal and the Central Scotland Fire Brigade. "It is unfortunate that part way through this accident, a member of the fire brigade was observed smoking and using a mobile telephone within the jetty area," the report said.

**BREMER VICTORIA (Gibraltar)**

London, Feb 17 — General cargo *Bremer Victoria* arrived Norrsundet Feb 8, sailed Feb 10, returned Feb 13 and sailed Feb 16 for Swinoujscie.

London, Feb 21 — General cargo *Bremer Victoria* arrived Swinoujscie Feb 19.

**CANADA SENATOR (Liberia)**

London, Feb 23 — A press report, dated Feb 22, states: The Transportation Safety Board of Canada today released its final investigation report into the collision between c.c. *Canada Senator* and yacht *Mondisy* off Saint-Nicolas, Quebec, on Aug 11, 2004. The investigation revealed that it was likely that the unstructured watchkeeping system on board *Mondisy* led to a sleep debt that caused a crew member to fall asleep while on duty at the helm. Investigators found that the warning signals sounded by *Canada Senator* did not arouse attention and indicate to *Mondisy* that it was in danger. Although *Canada Senator* did not slow down before the collision to allow more time to assess the situation, course alterations taken by the vessel did not prevent the collision. The report also stated that materials used in the construction of *Mondisy* contributed to the rapid sinking upon impact with *Canada Senator*. No recommendations were issued by the Board.

**CAPE BAKER (Marshall Islands)**

See *Elise Schulte*.

**CAPE BRADLEY (Marshall Islands)**

London, Feb 18 — As of Feb 17, chemical/oil carrier *Cape Bradley* was reported to be still at Bremerhaven.

London, Feb 20 — Chemical/oil carrier *Cape Bradley* sailed Bremerhaven Feb 18.

**CENTURY TEAM (Belize)**

Busan, Feb 20 — General cargo *Century Team* is still in port at Wando, carrying out discharging, reloading and resecuring of cargo. The reloading and resecuring operation is expected to be completed by Feb 25. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

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**CLEOPATRA S. (Sierra Leone)**

Port Said, Feb 21 — Passenger ro/ro *Cleopatra S.* (9598 gt, built 1970), which entered the Suez Canal on Feb 20 with the southbound convoy, grounded at Km 64 in the Canal due to dense fog and very poor visibility. The vessel was refloated with the assistance of Suez Canal Authority tugs and towed to Ballah Station to effect the necessary repairs. — Lloyd's Agents.

**CMA CGM OTELLO (French Southern Territories)**

London, Feb 21 — C.c. *CMA CGM Otello* (91410 gt, built 2005) lost four dozen containers overboard in the Bay of Biscay around Feb 16-17. The vessel had sailed Hong Kong Feb 1 and passed Gibraltar Feb 15. Following the loss of the containers, it arrived Le Havre Feb 18 and sailed Feb 19 for Rotterdam.

**CMA CGM VERDI (Bahamas)**

London, Feb 19 — Following received from Coastguard Solent MRSC, timed 1635, UTC: C.c. *CMA CGM Verdi* (65427 gt, built 2004) arrived at Southampton earlier today and reported losing 80 40 foot containers on Feb 18, in the vicinity of Cape Finisterre, as a result of bad weather. Two containers are currently "hanging off" the vessels stern and are being recovered. The vessel was due to depart later today, but MCA surveyors have suggested it will be two-three days before the vessel can proceed.

London, Feb 19 — Following received from Coastguard Solent MRSC, timed 1859, UTC: C.c. *CMA CGM Verdi* was visited at its berth in Southampton by an MCA surveyor. The vessel lost 80 containers, each 40 feet in length, over the side. Two groups were lost in lat 43 22.3N, long 09 39.1W at 0058, UTC, Feb 18. A third batch was lost in lat 45 25.1N, long 08 11.4W at 0745 hrs, Feb 18. The vessel still has two containers hanging over the stern, which require recovery. The vessel was scheduled to depart Southampton at 2100, UTC, today. However, because of the two containers and others that need attention, the surveyor did not think that the vessel would be able to leave Southampton until Feb 21/22. There are no plans for the recovery of the missing boxes by the vessel or the Company at this time.

**CONCEL PRIDE (Nigeria)**

Cadiz, Feb 17 — Understand product tanker *Concel Pride* is still in port at Algeciras. The vessel has been under repair for a long time, and the owners are now trying to catch up with their debts. In addition, they are bringing in a new crew to get the vessel sailing. — Lloyd's Agents. (See issue of Jan 9.)

Cadiz, Feb 20 — Product tanker *Concel Pride* is still in port, under repairs. — Lloyd's Agents.

**CORA JO (Netherlands Antilles)**

London, Feb 18 — Following received from Lisbon MRCC, timed 1240, UTC: General cargo *Cora Jo* (3214 gt, built

2006) is currently being towed to a Spanish port (possibly Vigo) following an engine-breakdown in lat 41 37N, long 09 23W. Vessel was stopped for approximately 10 hours. (Note — *Cora Jo* departed from Trieste on Feb 8, bound for St. Nazaire and was reported passing through the Straits of Gibraltar at 2054 hrs, Feb 14.)

London, Feb 18 — Following received from managers of general cargo *Cora Jo*, dated today: *Cora Jo* broke down at around 0700 hrs, yesterday. The vessel has already arrived at Vigo (under tow). A representative of the managers is attending the vessel and it is hoped to effect repairs in Vigo. The vessel's cargo was four engines

Vigo, Feb 20 — General cargo *Cora Jo* put into Vigo at 0200, Feb 18, assisted by local tug *Conde de Gondomar* on "Bimco towcon" - no claim for salvage clause. Once docked alongside by tugs, repairs to the main engine commenced on the Saturday (on Wartsila guarantee) and once repairs are completed, the vessel is expected to sail p.m. today, for its destination of St. Nazaire (France). No claim received regarding cargo. — Lloyd's Agents.

Trieste, Feb 20 — General cargo *Cora Jo*: Understand that General Average has been declared, to recover the costs of the towage/port of refuge. — Lloyd's Agents.

**COTE D'IVOIRIAN STAR (Panama)**

London, Feb 21 — Following received from Corsen MRCC, timed 1055, UTC: Ref *Cote d'Ivoirian Star* (11733 gt, built 1998) reported losing six containers in lat 48 08N, long 05 49W Feb 16. (Note — *Cote d'Ivoirian Star* sailed Abidjan Feb 9, arrived Portsmouth Feb 17 and sailed Feb 19 for Antwerp, where arrived Feb 20.)

**DAMAGE TO VESSEL UNDER CONSTRUCTION, SESTAO SHIPYARD, BILBAO, SPAIN**

London, Feb 21 — A press report, dated Feb 15, states: A 270-tonne block of steel being held by four cranes that was to be placed in a gas carrier under construction at "Naval One", Sestao Shipyard, collapsed on the ship yesterday without causing any injuries. Damage to the cranes and to the hull of the vessel are still to be evaluated, as is the cause of the accident which happened at 1435 hrs. There were no injuries to dock workers as it happened during a food break. Apparently, the block came off one of the cranes, by causes still unknown, and dragged to the other three. However, they restrained the block's fall and this avoided greater destruction. The shipyard has opened an investigation into the causes the accident. The vessel is due to be delivered to shipowners Knutsen at end of 2007. Sources of the shipyard said it was too early to determine how the delivery of the vessel will be affected by yesterday's incident. Aside from the disadvantages that the failure of the cranes represents,

technician will have to assess in the next hours the damage produced by loosening of the plates in the bottom of vessel, that separates the cargo area and the ballast tanks. The incident can also affect the process of privatization of the shipyard. Although still the losses produced are not known, the repair or the replacement of the cranes could suppose a payment of millions of Euro.

**DISCOVERY (Liberia)**

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: At least nine people were injured when passenger *Discovery* (24799 gt, built 1956) caught fire while being dismantled at the ship-breaking yard at Alang, today. The passenger vessel caught fire at 1330 hrs and several persons who were trapped inside the vessel were rescued by 1830 hrs. The fire reportedly started in the engine-room and rescue work by fire-brigade personnel and workers from nearby plots were hampered because of high tide as the vessel was beached 300 feet away from the shore. The workers' injuries were not serious in nature and all the victims were discharged by evening. Some labourers jumped from the vessel and managed to swim to safety, said sources. According to Haresh Parmar, secretary of Alang Ship Breaking Yard Association, the vessel is owned by Mahavir Indecto Melt Pvt Ltd situated on Plot No V-5. The owner of the company, Kishore Bansal, could not be contacted. (Note — *Discovery* arrived Alang Nov 20.)

**DYVI PAMPLONA (NIS)**

Baltimore, Feb 22 — Advised by the Agents that an accident on vehicle *Dyvi Pamplona* (37237 gt, built 1999) yesterday involved a malfunction in the vessel's electrical system. While the ship's engineers were attempting to make a repair, there was an electrical power surge which injured three of the engineering crew. All three were transported to a local hospital. Two of the crew may be released back to the vessel today. The third crewman, the electrical engineer, remains in the hospital in serious or critical condition. There was no fire on board the vessel and it continues to receive and discharge cargo. At this point, the vessel expects to sail sometime tomorrow for the Port of Charleston. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — *Dyvi Pamplona* sailed Southampton Feb 11 and arrived Baltimore Feb 21.)

**ECE (Marshall Islands)**

London, Feb 16 — A press report, dated today, states: An underwater survey is to be carried out of the wreck of acid tanker *Ece* that sank off Guernsey in January. A research vessel will use sonar and remote-controlled submarine equipment to study the *Ece* that sank while being towed after a collision. French authorities have ordered the *Ece*'s Turkish owners to take action to

minimise the effects of the sinking. They believe the vessel has begun to leak some of its cargo of 10,000 tonnes phosphoric acid. A British research vessel starts a six-day survey on Friday (Feb 17) at the site, 56 miles west of Cap de La Hague.

#### **EIDER (Hong Kong)**

Balboa, Feb 20 — Bulk *Eider* completed repairs and sailed Balboa Feb 16 for Vancouver. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **EILTANK 5 (Germany)**

London, Feb 21 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Non specific tanker *Eiltank 5* (1522 gt), homeport Duisburg, ran aground on the river Rhine at 2050, local time, on Feb 19. Before this it had sustained a rudder failure and then drifted to the left side of the Rhine where it stuck fast, close to the bunker station Lobith. The Dutch tugs *En Avant* and *En Avant II* pulled the vessel free some time later and towed it to a nearby yard for inspections.

#### **ELISE SCHULTE (Hong Kong)**

London, Feb 17 — Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 1510, UTC: Crude oil tanker *Elise Schulte* (56239 gt, built 1999), while taking on bunkers, had minor contact with crude oil tanker *Cape Baker* (84586 gt, built 2002) at Galveston Lightering Zone at 1600, local time, Feb 15. The *Elise Schulte* sustained minor denting above waterline and is being inspected with regards to ascertaining necessary repairs. (Note — *Cape Baker* sailed Salvador Jan 28 and, according to LMIU AIS, was stationary in lat 28 57 35.82N, long 94 30 34.98W, at 0906, UTC, today. Also according to LMIU AIS, *Elise Schulte* was stationary in lat 28 59 01.44N, long 93 15 07.26W, at 1855, UTC, Feb 16.)

London, Feb 22 — Following received from the managers of crude oil tanker *Elise Schulte*, dated today: *Elise Schulte* was involved in ship-to-ship operations with crude oil tanker *Cape Baker*, conducted by Heidenreich Lightering Services Inc, at Galveston Lightering Area, position lat 28 58.7N, long 94 35.9W. At 2047, UTC, Feb 15, after completion of ship-to-ship transfer operations, while casting off from the *Cape Baker* with the Heidenreich Pilot on board, the flanges of the cargo hoses which were hanging overside on the starboard side of the *Cape Baker* made contact with the port side of the *Elise Schulte* in way of No 5 port water ballast tank well above the waterline, resulting in minor denting to the hull plating of the latter vessel. The minor denting was inspected by classification society AB, who confirmed that the damage does not affect the seaworthiness of the vessel.

#### **ELVITA (Malta)**

London, Feb 23 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: General cargo *Elvita* (1707 gt,

built 1979) ran into an embankment in the eastern part of the Kiel Canal at about 0001, Feb 23. The vessel later came free and berthed in Rendsburg harbour.

London, Feb 23 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: General cargo *Elvita* ran onto the south embankment of the Kiel Canal, close to Rendsburg but came free under its own power. Traffic on the canal was not affected by the grounding.

London, Feb 23 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: General cargo *Elvita* ran into the embankment due to rudder failure.

#### **ESER KAPTANOGLU (Turkey)**

London, Feb 17 — Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 1530, UTC: Bulk/c.c. *Eser Kaptanoglu* (22225 gt, built 1982) had bridge wing strike quayside loading arm while berthing at Corpus Christi at 2350, local time, Feb 13. Subsequently, when tug tried to pull stern away from loading arm, damage was sustained which resulted in topside water ballast tank being holed. (Note — *Eser Kaptanoglu* sailed St. Petersburg Jan 14 for New Orleans.)

London, Feb 21 — Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 0105, UTC: Bulk/c.c. *Eser Kaptanoglu* remains at Corpus Christi. Vessel is expected to complete operations at 1200, local time, Feb 23, and departure is estimated for 1400, local time, same day.

#### **ESTRADEN (Finland)**

London, Feb 17 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Ro/ro *Tor Minerva* passed the Kiel Canal for the first time on Feb 9 as it has been chartered as a temporary replacement for ro/ro *Estraden* which is at present under repair in Turku. (Note — *Estraden* was last reported to have arrived Turku Feb 8 and sailed same day for Naantali.)

Turku, Feb 20 — Ro/ro *Estraden* is currently at Turku Repair Yard, Naantali. The vessel is expected to return to service Feb 28, after repairs are completed. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **FAIRWEATHER (U.S.A.)**

London, Feb 20 — An Alaska Marine Highway System press release, dated Feb 17, states: The Alaska Marine Highway System announced today that it has reached an agreement with the three maritime unions representing AMHS workers to allow crew members assigned to passenger ro/ro *Fairweather* to operate passenger ro/ro *Chenega* on *Fairweather's* Lynn Canal and Sitka routes for the remainder of the winter schedule. *Chenega* and *Fairweather* have both been in the shipyard in Ketchikan for scheduled maintenance. However, *Fairweather* will continue to be out of service through mid-April having all four of its diesel engines repaired. "*Chenega* and *Fairweather* have been working together on a trial

express run between Juneau, Petersburg, Wrangell and Ketchikan this winter," said AMHS General Manager Captain John Falvey. "Obviously, with *Fairweather* out of service, we cannot run *Chenega* on the southern leg. It makes sense to put it on *Fairweather's* Sitka and Lynn Canal runs, but under the International High Speed Craft Code, our crews are trained for specific routes. The letter of agreement worked out with the labour unions allows *Fairweather* crew to operate *Chenega* for this period of time." Falvey said *Chenega* will sail a revised *Fairweather* schedule. *Chenega* will transit to Prince William Sound in mid April for route-training in advance of the busy summer season, and will commence carrying passengers on May 3. *Fairweather* is expected to return to its route in mid-April.

#### **FLORA S. (Cyprus)**

London, Feb 23 — General cargo *Flora S.* arrived Altamira Feb 9 and sailed Feb 10.

#### **FOS (St. Kitts-Nevis)**

Izmir, Feb 21 — Understand that towed acid tanker *Fos* had arrived at Aliaga on Feb 11 and had been run aground by bow on the same date. However as per information obtained today, the demolition has not commenced yet. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **GENMAR STAR (Liberia)**

London, Feb 22 — Bulk/oil *GenMar Star* (57082 gt, built 1992) drifted off course after a rudder fault and was halted near the European shore of Istanbul yesterday, causing Turkey to close the Bosphorus to shipping. A maritime official said the strait was closed around 1500, local time, after the *GenMar Star* experienced problems. It then dropped anchor off the coast near the city's Dolmabahce Palace and was being allowed to continue on its journey once other vessels transiting the strait had passed through. Of eight tankers scheduled to transit the strait yesterday, six had passed through and one transit was cancelled due to the afternoon closure, a shipping agent said. It said a further 11 tankers were waiting to pass through the strait. Earlier yesterday, Turkey reopened the Dardanelles, south of Istanbul, after closing it during the morning because of fog.

London, Feb 22 — A press report, dated Feb 21, states: Bulk/oil *GenMar Star*, Russia for United States, with 86,000 tons of kerosene, narrowly escaped crashing into a waterside Ottoman palace in Istanbul today after having a technical failure while passing through the Bosphorus Strait, officials said. "We escaped a big disaster," Salih Orakci, head of Istanbul's coastal safety management, said. He said the vessel posed no environmental danger. *GenMar Star* began drifting towards the 19th-century Dolmabahce Palace after its rudder stopped working. It managed

to stop just short of the palace, with the help of its anchors and specialized teams from the coastal safety department, a spokeswoman for the authority said. The tanker came to a halt about 50 metres from the palace, an newsagency photographer reported. (Note — *GenMar Star*, Kerch for Corpus Christi, passed Istanbul 1405, Feb 21.)

London, Feb 22 — Bulk/oil *GenMar Star* started to drift because of rudder failure during her North-South passage in the Istanbul Strait at 1500, Feb 21 and was prevented from running aground by anchoring in front of Dolmabahce. Tugs *Kurtarma 2* and *Kurtarma 3*, a search and rescue vessel and tug *Zubeyde Ana* belonging to T.D.I were sent to the location immediately. After making clear to all vessels navigating under control of VTS, it is planned to remove the tanker to the anchorage area of Ahirkapi with tug assistance. There is no any environmental pollution.

#### **GRENLAND (Antigua & Barbuda)**

Gijon, Feb 21 — General cargo *Grenland* (1900 gt, built 1970), in ballast, is reported to be aground in the Aviles port entrance channel. The port entrance is clear. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — *Grenland* sailed Leixoes Feb 15.)

London, Feb 21 — Following received from Madrid MRCC, timed 1031, UTC: General cargo *Grenland* grounded at the entrance to Aviles harbour at 0115, UTC, today. Tugs are presently on scene.

London, Feb 22 — Following received from Madrid MRCC, timed 1240, UTC: General cargo *Grenland* is still aground. Pumping of oil off the vessel started today.

#### **GRENLAND (Dominica)**

Gijon, Feb 22 — General cargo *Grenland* is still aground at Aviles. Port operations are not affected in the least. The Spanish maritime authorities have in place an operation to pump the fuel out of the vessel. Hull and machinery underwriters have appointed a surveyor that is in attendance. Vessel's P&I underwriters have also appointed a surveyor that is also in attendance. Owners and hull and machinery underwriters have not yet contracted a salvor. A diver survey will be carried out tomorrow. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Feb 23 — Following received from the Department of Marine Services and Merchant Shipping, Inspection and Investigation Division, Bremerhaven, dated Feb 22: General cargo *Grenland* was deleted from the register of ships of Antigua and Barbuda as of Mar 31, 2004. It is presently flying the flag of Dominica.

#### **GU DRUN (Germany)**

London, Feb 20 — Product tanker *Gudrun* passed Brunsbittel Feb 17, bound Wilhelmshaven.

#### **HANIFE ANA (Turkey)**

London, Feb 17 — Following received from Rome MRCC, timed 1030, UTC:

General cargo *Hanife Ana* is still aground north of Brindisi. Operation to remove oil has not yet commenced as machine to remove it failed to function.

London, Feb 20 — Following received from Rome MRCC, timed 0928, UTC: General cargo *Hanife Ana* is still aground.

#### **HARBOURLYNX (Canada)**

London, Feb 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Ferry *Harbourlynx* (501 gt, built 1997), the high speed passenger-only ferry service between Vancouver and Nanaimo is no longer running between the two cities. The vessel experienced engine trouble and is awaiting what the owners call specialised parts in order to repair it. They say it could be Feb 28 at the earliest before repairs are completed. Service was suspended on Friday afternoon (Feb 17).

London, Feb 21 — A press report, dated Feb 20, states: The British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union confirms that it is doing everything possible to assist members who are owed back pay after their employer, the private Nanaimo-based ferry company Harbour Lynx Corporation, went into receivership last week. The company had temporarily suspended services since Feb 2, due to engine trouble on ferry *Harbourlynx*. Noting that the BCGEU and HarbourLynx have been engaged for months in negotiations for a first collective agreement, union president George Heyman said: "It is unconscionable that this employer failed to disclose its financial problems during the bargaining process, and continued to let members work knowing that there might be no money to pay them. This company and its managers have abandoned these employees who have families to support and bills to pay." Heyman said, "In receivership situations such as this, wages owed to working people need to be given a higher priority for repayment under the law." The 20 BCGEU members who were customer service and general purpose workers, and engineers and oilers for Harbour Lynx are owed three weeks back pay, vacation pay, plus banked overtime in some cases. Harbour Lynx operated a daily passenger-only high-speed ferry service between downtown Nanaimo and downtown Vancouver.

#### **HENG DA 1 (Panama)**

London, Feb 17 — A press report, dated today, states: Thirty-seven Chinese sailors were missing today after their cargo ship (ref *Heng Da 1*, 2188 gt, built 2003) sank off south-east China, Xinhua news agency said. A search and rescue operation had been launched after yesterday's accident but the chance of finding survivors was slim, Xinhua said. The ship, fully loaded with "aquatic products" and headed for Indonesia, struck a reef near coastal Fujian province's Dongjia island at around 2300 hrs yesterday, Xinhua said.

London, Feb 17 — Following received from Beijing MRCC, timed 0715, UTC: Ref *Heng Da 1* sank in lat 25 17N, long 119 46E.

London, Feb 17 — A press report, dated today, states: No survivors have been found from ref *Heng Da 1* which sank in rough seas off eastern China with 37 people on board, a rescue official said today. Helicopters and ships were searching near the position about five kilometres from Pingtan island in Fujian province where the freighter went down after smashing against the rocky coast late yesterday, an official with the provincial maritime rescue centre said. "They're looking and looking but haven't found anything," said the man. The official said the ship was carrying a cargo of seafood to Indonesia. Harsh weather continued in the area today.

London, Feb 17 — Following received from Coast Guard San Francisco, timed 1725, UTC: Ref *Heng Da 1* was reported sinking, after grounding, off Fuzhou in lat 25 17N, 119 46E at about 1527, UTC, yesterday. Two crew reported saved, 24 reported lost.

London, Feb 19 — A press report, dated today, states: ref *Heng Da 1* More rescuers have been sent to search for 31 sailors who remained missing after a Panamanian freighter ran on rocks on Feb 16 off East China's Fujian Province. The freighter had a total crew of 37, all which were Chinese. So far, two have been rescued, remains of four dead recovered, and 31 others remain missing, the local salvage source said. The East China Sea Salvage Bureau under the Ministry of Communications dispatched a 14-member rescue team, including 10 divers and engineers today to join the rescue operations in the sea area off Dongjia island of Fujian Province. Currently, five ships are searching for the missing sailors in the waters around the accident site in the East China Sea.

London, Feb 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Panama is sending an investigator to China to look into the fatal sinking of ref *Heng Da 1*, the government said on Saturday (Feb 18). The Panamanian agent will work with Chinese authorities to investigate the sinking of the vessel, which went down after it hit a coral reef off China's south-eastern coast on Friday, Panama's Maritime Authority said in a news release. On Saturday, rescuers in China's Fujian province found two survivors and four bodies. Thirty one of those on board the vessel were still missing.

London, Feb 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Chinese rescuers today found two more bodies from sunken ref *Heng Da 1*. The search for the other 29 missing sailors is still going on with five vessels and one helicopter involved.

London, Feb 20 — A press report dated Feb 21 (local time) states: The bodies of two more dead sailors were recovered yesterday afternoon from the East China Sea where ref *Heng*



*Da 1* ran into the rocks and sank late Thursday (Feb 16) night. Another 29 crew members are still missing. Two sailors were pulled from the sea alive and five others died on Friday several hours after the ship hit rocks in heavy waves and quickly sank. A team of 14 rescue workers including 10 divers and ship engineers from the Shanghai-based Donghai Rescue Bureau, as well as helicopters and rescue vessels, had been searching the sea near Fujian Province over the past four days. Rescuers finally managed to spot the ship yesterday afternoon when low tides left part of the mast exposed. "We were sorry to find that it was very likely the front mast, which means the vessel sank on its rear. The result could be most of the crew didn't have time to escape and were kept inside the working cabins that are usually in the rear of a ship," said Tang Panrun, an official with the rescue operation.

London, Feb 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Searchers have discovered, this morning, the stern of ref *Heng Da 1* that sank last week, according to the East China Sea Salvage Bureau under the Ministry of Communications. Two sailors were rescued and nine bodies have been found so far among the 37-member crew of *Heng Da 1*. The remaining 26 people are still missing and their survival chances are slim, said rescuers. Divers found the ship's stern at 1045 hrs with the help of five rescue ships and one helicopter. Rescuers said that some of the missing sailors might be in the cabin at the stern. The rescue operation has been extended to a wider area of sea, including areas near local islands, as it entered the sixth day today, local salvage department sources said. Rescue work is still going on, though strong wind and high waves have hampered the operation.

London, Feb 23 — A press report, dated Feb 22, states: Sixty-seven vessels and 2,377 people are searching for the 31 Chinese sailors who went missing after a Panamanian ref *Heng Da 1* ran aground in the sea area off East China's Fujian Province last week. The rescue operation has been extended to a wider area of sea, including areas near local islands and polders. The accident occurred when the *Heng Da 1* hit a reef. All 37 Chinese crew members fell overboard. So far only two of the crew members have been saved and the bodies of four victims recovered. The 31 others are still missing. The East China Sea Salvage Bureau under the Ministry of Communications dispatched a 14-member rescue team, including 10 divers and engineers, to join the rescue efforts. Strong wind and high waves have hampered the rescue operation.

#### **HENRY HUDSON BRIDGE (Japan)**

Genoa, Feb 20 — At about 0530, Feb 19, while c.c. *Henry Hudson Bridge* (42400 gt, built 1987) was berthing at Genoa with a pilot on board and the assistance of three tugs, the vessel's

bow came into contact with ro/ro *Isola delle Perle* (12804 gt, built 1975), which was already moored at the Calata Gadda pier, undergoing routine repairs. The stern of *Isola delle Perle* in turn bumped against a quay/shore building, causing damage to a warehouse/sheltered structure owned by a local private shiprepair company. *Isola delle Perle* reports damage to its forecastle, side shell in way of B-deck and stern ramp. Understand estimated repair time is about 20 days. Passenger ro/ro *Tadla* (7838 gt, built 1970) also reports damage due to being struck by a bitt. The local Port Authority are presently investigating the cause of the accident, and official enquiries are in hand. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **HIGH RIDER (Marshall Islands)**

Buenos Aires, Feb 20 — Product tanker *High Rider* (25800 gt, built 1991) grounded between 0124 and 0215, today, while proceeding to San Lorenzo. The vessel is currently anchored at San Nicolas north road, loaded with approximately 12,000 tonnes of chemicals on board. — Lloyd's Agents.

Buenos Aires, Feb 20 — Product tanker *High Rider* refloated, after grounding between 0124 and 0215 hrs at km. 3.40, without obstructing navigation, without the assistance of tugs. It is currently sailing to San Lorenzo where it is expected to arrive at approximately 1600 hrs. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Feb 21 — Following received from Magnus Carriers, operators of product tanker *High Rider: High Rider* loaded at La Plata, part cargo and sailed for San Lorenzo at 0730 hrs on Feb 19 with two river pilots on board and a draft of 07.40 m forward and 07.50 aft as per local regulations. At 0105 hrs, Feb 20, when approaching land mark "340 Km" the pilot intended to change course a few degrees and ordered helm 20 degrees to port and subsequently hard over because the vessel was not turning due to strong current and shallow water. At 0110 hrs the vessel grounded on the shallow side of the channel at a depth of 10.0-10.2 m in way of the bow. The vessel refloated at 0210 hrs, after taking some ballast in the after peak and running the engine at full astern. While aground ballast tanks in way of grounding were inspected and nothing untoward was noted. After refloating the vessel moved to Nord San Nikolas anchorage (1.5 miles north-west of the grounding position) where Coast Guard and Port State Control boarded and carried out a thorough inspection of all accessible compartments and tested equipment. They also took statements from the master, the watch officer and the helmsman. When the inspection and all formalities were over at 1010 hrs, on Feb 20, the vessel was permitted to sail to her destination (San Lorenzo) as underwater hull inspection was not possible at this location because of restricted visibility underwater.

London, Feb 23 — Following received from Magnus Carriers, operators of product tanker *High Rider*: We are glad to attach herewith class survey record of occasional survey held on Feb 22 at San Lorenzo. No recommendation/condition imposed. As stated by the master, the vessel sustained a grounding casualty during navigation at Parana River, km.340, on the way to San Lorenzo and that the grounding area was located at the forepeak tank. Survey carried out: Due the dark waters and strong current in the River Plate and Parana River it is not possible to carry out diver inspection. Forepeak tank was internally inspected and no damages were found. All spaces adjacent to the shell were checked and no leakages, abnormalities or water ingress were detected. Steering gear system, propulsion machinery and shafting were tested under working conditions and no vibrations or abnormalities were detected.

#### **HOEGH GANDRIA (NIS)**

London, Feb 20 — A SMIT Salvage BV report states: Lng/Lpg *Hoegh Gandria*, carrying a cargo of ammonia, required SMIT's assistance after its engine-room had flooded. *Hoegh Gandria* was located about an hour away from the SMIT office in Singapore. Our salvage team was deployed to dewater the engine-room and to preserve the machinery. The team was also standby for possible firefighting activities. After being discharged of its cargo, the tanker was taken to a dock for repairs. A salvage team from SMIT Singapore concluded the assistance on Feb 14.

Singapore, Feb 20 — Lng/Lpg *Hoegh Gandria* remains at Raffles Anchorage, Singapore. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **HOJIN (Vanuatu)**

Vigo, Feb 20 — While vehicle *Hojin* (55470 gt, built 1990) was docking at Vigo ro-ro terminal with a pilot on board and the assistance of two tugs, the vessel struck the pier at about 1200, Feb 18, damaging the upper part of the pier over an area of one metre long by 55 cm wide. The Port Authority will make a claim for deck repairs. The vessel sustained some scores and scratches on its starboard quarter over a length of 102 cm by two cm depth. The vessel sailed at 2200 same day for its next destination. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Feb 23 — Vehicle *Hojin* arrived Bristol Feb 21 and sailed Feb 22.

#### **HORNCLIFF (Liberia)**

London, Feb 18 — C.C.Ref *Horncliff* (12887gt, Built 1992) was in collision with *Rika* (1925 gt, built 1978) while they were leaving the Boudewijnlock in Antwerp. Both vessels have proceeded outwards, but the vessel *Rika* has sustained a small dent and paint damage.

London, Feb 21 — C.c.ref *Horncliff* arrived Hamburg Feb 19.

**ISOLA DELLE PERLE (Italy)**

See *Henry Hudson Bridge*.

**JOANNA III (Greece)**

London, Feb 16 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: This morning, general cargo *Joanna III*, Larimna for Thessaloniki, in ballast, grounded off Kamena Voula. The seven Greek crewmembers on board were not injured. A Coast Guard patrol vessel and general cargo *Joanna IV* immediately proceeded to offer assistance. There has been no pollution caused and weather in the area is good.

London, Feb 17 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1145, UTC: General cargo *Joanna III* was refloated at 1745, local time, yesterday by tug *Ierax*. Vessel is now safely anchored in Stylidas Bay for inspection.

London, Feb 17 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1210, UTC: General cargo *Joanna III* completed repairs at Stylidas Bay and continued voyage for Thessaloniki.

Piraeus, Feb 17 — General cargo *Joanna III*, Larimna for Thessaloniki, stranded in shallow waters at Kenurgio Bay, Kamena Vurla, on Feb 16. All seven crew members were reportedly healthy and secure. No pollution was reported. The vessel was finally refloated with tug assistance. — Lloyd's Agents.

Piraeus, Feb 21 — General cargo *Joanna III* was inspected by a Class surveyor and continued its voyage to Thessaloniki on Feb 17. No damage was reported. — Lloyd's Agents.

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

London, Feb 16 — A press report, dated today, states: At 1300, today, general cargo *Katya Z.*, led by ice-breaker *Captain Belousov*, sailed towards Kerchenskiy strait and at 1530 reached the Black Sea, *Katya Z.*'s manager company Varna Shipping and Trading informs. This evening the crew will be provided with water and full check-up of the vessel will be made. "If all is well we expect *Katya Z.* to land in Bourgas in about two days", Company manager Captain Vesselin Genov said. "We hope there will not be any consequences for the crew and vessel after this 25-day ice saga", he added. (See issue of Feb 16.)

London, Jan 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Bulgaria-managed general cargo *Katya Z.*, which was twice trapped into the ice hug of the Sea of Azov, has finally reached Bulgaria's Black Sea port Bourgas. *Katya Z.* reached Bourgas on schedule. The ship is in good technical condition and all the crew members, 14 Bulgarians and three Ukrainians, are in good health. The ship was twice trapped in the ice.

**KELLY LEE (U.S.A.)**

London, Feb 19 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Tug *Kelly Lee*: The owner of the barge that's been lodged against the K and I railroad bridge on the Ohio River near New

Albany plans to begin the process of heating and removing asphalt cargo today. Magnolia Marine Transport spokesman Bob Mallette says the heating process will begin in one of the cargo compartments at noon, today. Mallette says there will be an asphalt odor in the air, but says it is not harmful. It could take from five to eight days to remove asphalt from one area of the barge, which has eight compartments. Removing all three-thousand barrels of asphalt could take up to two months. Mallette says once the weight has been removed, the salvage process can then start.

**KHALED JUNIOR (Cambodia)**

London, Feb 23 — Bulk *Khaled Junior* arrived Bejaia about Feb 14 and sailed Feb 20.

**KIM JACOB (Liberia)**

London, Feb 17 — Following received from the managers of crude oil tanker *Kim Jacob*, dated today: *Kim Jacob* sailed yesterday for Lisnave shipyard, Setubal, where it will carry out permanent repairs, ETA early March.

London, Feb 20 — A SMIT Salvage BV report, states: After refloating on Feb 6 crude oil tanker *Kim Jacob* was transferred to a safe anchorage location, where it was fully examined and the remaining cargo of crude was then pumped ship-to-ship to the lightering crude oil tanker *Endless*. After completion, *Endless* delivered the remaining crude oil at St. Croix.

**KUJAWY (Bahamas)**

London, Feb 21 — Bulk *Kujawy* arrived Cartagena, Colombia, Feb 12 and sailed Feb 16.

**LCT 6 SAMARINDA (Indonesia)**

London, Feb 19 — A press report, dated today, states: One man drowned after the vessel *LCT 6 Samarinda* capsized amid rough weather in Muna waters, Southeast Sulawesi. The 14 other crew members of the vessel, which transports heavy machinery from Jakarta to Sorong, Papua, are missing. The capsized vessel was discovered by a Kendari-based search-and-rescue team Thursday (Feb 16). The dead man was identified on Friday (Feb 17). If there are any survivors they may have made it to small islands, Amiruddin, head of the search-and-rescue team, said. The machinery transported by the vessel includes excavators, wheel loaders and rollers as well as vehicles, he said.

**LINMAR (U.S.A.)**

London, Feb 22 — A press report, dated Feb 21, states: Firefighters are trying to determine what sparked a fire aboard a yacht in the Oakland Estuary that caused an estimated \$1.5 million in damage. Smoke and flames from yacht *Linmar* (108 gt, built 1932) early Sunday (Feb 19) morning could be seen from across the water in Jack London Square. No-one was aboard the vessel, which was docked off the 2400 block of Mariner

Square Drive near Pasta Pelican restaurant. Alameda Deputy Fire Chief Chris Reilly said the fire spread to all three levels before it was extinguished. "The cause of it is still under investigation," he said. The yacht contained about 100 gallons of fuel when the fire broke out about 0300 hrs, police Lt. David Boersma said. The boat also has an electrical water heating system. At the time of the fire the yacht was in the custody of a sales broker with a listed price of \$2.4 million. It was insured for \$1.4 million, police records show. Four engines, two aerial ladder trucks and two ambulances were dispatched to the scene, Reilly said.

**M.PIONEER (Panama)**

See *Vertigo*.

**MAERSK HOLYHEAD (Venezuela)**

Curacao, Feb 16 — Lpg *Maersk Holyhead* is presently in Curacao Drydock, under repair. Repairs expected to be completed within 50 days. — Lloyd's Agents.

**MAINE (Cambodia)**

London, Feb 21 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1252, UTC: General cargo *Maine* is still hard aground. Tugs are on scene and salvage operations are continuing.

London, Feb 23 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1000, UTC: General cargo *Maine* is still aground in the same position. The Port Authority of Lemnos is now co-ordinating operations.

**MARIA (Greece)**

See *Monte Rosso*.

**MISS CAROLINE A. (U.S.A.)**

London, Feb 23 — A press report, dated Feb 22, states: Coast Guard safety officials say they encouraged the owner of the New Bedford wooden fishing *Miss Caroline A.* (104 gt, built 1979) to sign up for a voluntary dockside safety exam a month before the scalloper sank off Long Island last week. Boat owner David M. Breault of Acushnet never scheduled an exam with the Coast Guard Marine Safety Field Office in New Bedford, safety co-ordinator Kevin Coyle said. "He didn't contact us," Mr. Coyle said. Instead, *Miss Caroline A.* left for fishing grounds near Montauk Point, N.Y., and ran into trouble last Wednesday night (Feb 15) when the boat lost power and began taking on water. The three-man crew abandoned ship, and all were rescued by the crew of another New Bedford scalloper, *Galaxy*, which was fishing nearby. Coast Guard officials believe the 68-foot wood-hulled vessel sank about 8.5 miles south of Montauk Point in 110 feet of water. Up to 90 percent of New Bedford's fishing fleet participates in the voluntary vessel inspection program, which tests safety equipment and identifies visible structural deficiencies, Mr. Coyle said. According to Coast Guard records, *Miss Caroline A.* did not

receive a voluntary inspection under the ownership of Mr. Breault. If *Miss Caroline A.* had been signed up for an exam before its doomed fishing trip, safety inspectors would have examined the boat's safety and survival equipment and assessed the "general condition of the vessel," Mr. Coyle said. Since the 68-foot vessel was made of wood, inspectors would have "looked for any excessive leaking or any indication that the wood was defective or rotten," he added. Mr. Coyle said it is unlikely that inspectors would have identified a missing "Jabsco" pump and backup filter for the generator, which crew members have blamed for the sinking. The exam would have "checked to see if the boat had sufficient pumping capabilities," he said, adding that all boats should carry a backup filter. "It's just good maintenance," he said. Mr. Breault contends that *Miss Caroline A.* did not need a voluntary dockside safety exam in New Bedford since Coast Guard safety officials had inspected the scalloper in January when it was docked in Montauk Harbor. "The dockside exam was done in New York," he said yesterday. The vessel was boarded Jan 13 by Montauk Coast Guard officers, who charged the vessel with several safety violations, including a missing life raft, life ring, five portable fire extinguishers and a copy of the navigation rules, according to Coast Guard documents. Mr. Breault replaced the safety equipment within one day and was cleared by the Coast Guard, said Lt. J.G. Brian Zekus of Coast Guard Marine Safety Detachment Coram. Before the vessel could get under way, a storm hit with strong winds that tore the vessel off the dock. *Miss Caroline A.* crashed into two boats, tearing a large hole in its bow, which later was repaired by Mr. Breault and his crew. Mr. Coyle said he contacted Mr. Breault after the Montauk incident and advised him to sign up for a voluntary safety exam when the boat returned to New Bedford. *Miss Caroline A.* was unable to get insurance because it was made of wood, Mr. Breault said.

**MONDISY (Canada)**

See *Canada Senator*.

**MONTE ROSSO (Malta)**

Piraeus, Feb 22 — Crude oil tanker *Monte Rosso* (50571 gt, built 1987) collided with barge *Maria*, which was berthed at Perama port, during the departure of *Monte Rosso* from Perama yesterday morning (Feb 21). A small crack, two metres above the waterline, was ascertained at the left fuel tank of *Monte Rosso* which caused an oil slick of approximately 900 to 1000 square metres. No injuries were reported. The master of *Monte Rosso* was arrested and the sailing of the vessel was prohibited until class inspection and repair of the damages. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — *Monte Rosso* arrived Piraeus Feb 4.)

**MOON STAR (Cambodia)**

London, Feb 21 — C.c. *Moon Star* arrived Nakhodka Feb 11.

**MSC JILHAN (Panama)**

London, Feb 18 — C.c. *MSC Jilhan* arrived at Bremerhaven at 0010 hrs, Feb 16 and sailed later the same day, at 1400 hrs, bound for Antwerp, where it arrived at 1418 hrs, Feb 17.

**MYS KOMMUNAROV (Russia)**

London, Feb 17 — Following notice to mariners issued today: Engine troubled vessel (ref *Mys Kommunarov*, 973 gt, built 1979) adrift in lat 37 30.7N, long 136 19.5E, at 0618, UTC, today.

London, Feb 17 — Following received from, Japan Coast Guard, timed 0900, UTC: Ref *Mys Kommunarov*, UFTA, Busan for Sea of Okhotsk, in ballast, is still adrift awaiting assistance. Port vessel to be towed to is not decided yet.

**MYSTIC (Netherlands Antilles)**

Poznan, Feb 20 — Understand ref *Mystic* is still berthed at Szczecin. status of repairs not known. — Lloyd's Agents.

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

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

**NAPOCOR TUGBOAT NO.1 (Philippines)**

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

**NEPLINE DELIMA (Malaysia)**

See "Langkawi Area, Malaysia" under "Piracy."

**NEPTUNIA MEDITERRANEO (Brazil)**

Buenos Aires, Feb 20 — C.c. *Neptunia Mediterraneo* remains under arrest, without developments. — Lloyd's Agents.

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

London, Feb 19 — General cargo *Nina 1* sailed from Antwerp at 2210 hrs, Feb 17, bound for Liege.

**NORDCARRIER (Sweden)**

London, Feb 17 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: General cargo *Nordcarrier* (1689 gt, built 1977) has been berthed at the Southquay of Brunsbuttel for four weeks with machine damage. A new machine part had to be built in Rendsburg. Today it will be mounted on the vessel. (Note — *Nordcarrier* sailed Umea Dec 21 for Casablanca and according to LMIU AIS was stationary in lat 53 53 36.84N, long 9 9 4.32E at 1802, today.)

**NORGAS TRAVELLER (Singapore)**

London, Feb 21 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Lpg *Norgas Traveller* (6711 gt, built 1980) was in contact with the northern gate of the Brunsbuttel locks

of the Kiel Canal at 1830, Feb 20. The vessel had sustained a machine failure and crashed into the gate. At 2030, two tugs pulled the vessel stern first out of the lock and secured it at the so-called railway pilings in Brunsbuttel. The vessel had a gash in the hull beneath the port anchor. (Note — According to LMIU AIS *Norgas Traveller* was in lat 54 2 6.54N, long 07 43 24.18E at 0817, today, speed 11.8 knots, 11.8 nautical miles from Helgoland.)

London, Feb 21 — Following received from Kiel, dated today: Lpg *Norgas Traveller* (6711 gt, built 1980) was fully loaded with dangerous goods. At 0200 hrs, today, after inspections by Germanischer-Lloyd the vessel was allowed to continue its voyage. The lock of the canal is operating again.

London, Feb 22 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Lpg *Norgas Traveller* continued its voyage to Antwerp after the machine had been inspected. The damage is said to be about 50,000 Euro. The vessel had crashed into gate of the Brunsbuttel locks with its bulbous bow as the machine had failed to change from "ahead" to "back".

**NORWAY (Bahamas)**

London, Feb 20 — A press report, dated Feb 19, states: The Bangladesh Government has banned passenger *Norway* from entering the country's territorial waters as it allegedly carries toxic materials. Environment and Forest Minister Tariqul Islam said: "We have information that the vessel is carrying toxic materials like asbestos and mono-carbon and I have asked the authorities concerned to keep vigil so that it cannot enter our territory." The Navy, the port authorities and the National Board of Revenue have also been alerted as the Government fears some unscrupulous businessmen may try to bring such vessels to Bangladesh, he said. The announcement came in the wake of media reports that a local merchant had made an offer to buy the *Norway* to scrap it at the Sitakunda breaking yard in Chittagong. Greenpeace has warned that the vessel is carrying 1,250 tonnes of asbestos and that it would pose a serious health risk to workers who dismantle it. The Bangladesh Environment Lawyers' Association served a notice on the relevant agencies, threatening to take legal action if the vessel was allowed into Bangladesh's territorial waters. Hajji Lokman Hakim, a ship merchant based in Chittagong, offered to buy the vessel for \$12 million, much less than its market price, and was in the final stages of negotiations. However, reports from Chittagong said the merchant had decided to cancel the deal in the face of the Government ban. The vessel is now docked in open water off the Malaysian coast.

**NOVA LIGURIA (Bahamas)**

Istanbul, Feb 16 — Ref *Nova Liguria* (4361 gt, built 1985), Alexandria for

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

Novorossiysk, experienced an engine breakdown at 0035, local time, Feb 16, while transiting the Dardanelles and anchored near Karanlik Liman. — Lloyd's Agents.

Istanbul, Feb 17 — Ref *Nova Liguria* completed repairs by own means and upon inspection/formalities it sailed from Canakkale 0215, local time, today. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **NOVA SPIRIT (Malta)**

Edinburgh, Feb 22 — After general cargo *Nova Spirit* (3936 gt, built 1991), laden with 96 containers, sailed berth 52, Constantza, (for Novorossiysk) around 1900, Feb 20, in heavy fog, it struck the quay of berth 79 on the starboard bow. This resulted in a hole immediately below the anchor well and some damage to the quay. The incident is now under investigation. The ship has been towed to Constantza shipyard. The vessel is thought to be in no danger of sinking. The 96 containers have been placed on shore. — Danube Research.

#### **NU C**

London, Feb 17 — Following received from Coast Guard Seattle, timed 1845, UTC: Fishing *Nu C*: Refloating attempts are due to take place this morning.

London, Feb 18 — Following received from Coast Guard Seattle, timed 1508, UTC: Fishing *Nu C* was successfully refloated yesterday.

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated Feb 17, states: The salvage operation for a fishing boat that ran aground continues today off the jetty at Ocean Shores. A helicopter and two bulldozers were used yesterday to right the 59-foot fishing *Nu-C* and it should be refloated on this afternoon's high tide (at 1500 hrs). State Ecology Department spokeswoman Sandy Howard says it will be towed to a boat yard in Aberdeen.

London, Feb 20 — A press report, dated Feb 19, states: Fishing *Nu C*, which ran aground on the North Jetty near Ocean Shores on Feb 12, was pulled off the rocks this morning by tugs, according to the Coast Guard. Officers at Coast Guard Station Grays Harbor had no details on how many tugs were required to remove the vessel, but said that the operation was successful and was all over by 1700 hrs. The vessel ran onto the rocks after the crew issued a  $\emptyset$ Mayday $\emptyset$  distress call at 0643, Feb. 12. A small diesel spill was reported after the vessel ran aground, and the National Response Corporation, an international company specialising in oil spills and disaster response, was hired to  $\emptyset$ respond to the pollution and to salvage the vessel,  $\emptyset$  the Coast Guard said.

#### **ONEGO TRAVELLER (Netherlands)**

London, Feb 16 — Following received from Bermuda RCC, timed 1515, UTC: General cargo *Onego Traveller* remains at Hamilton, with work continuing to attempt to dry the vessel out.

#### **OOCL NEVA (Luxembourg)**

London, Feb 17 — C.c. *OOCL Neva* arrived St. Petersburg Feb 12.

London, Feb 18 — C.c. *OOCL Neva* was reported passing through the Kiel Canal, at 0816 hrs, Feb 16, on passage St. Petersburg for Rotterdam.

London, Feb 19 — C.c. *OOCL Neva* arrived at Rotterdam at 1850 hrs, Feb 17, and sailed at 0620 hrs, Feb 18, bound for Antwerp. The vessel arrived later that day, at 1444 hrs, and sailed at 2140 hrs, Feb 18, destination Hamburg.

#### **OOCL QINGDAO (Hong Kong)**

London, Feb 18 — C.c. *OOCL Qingdao* passed through the Straits of Gibraltar at 0038 hrs, Feb 13 and was next reported arriving at Southampton at 0916 hrs, Feb 15. The vessel departed at 2152 hrs, Feb 16, bound for Rotterdam.

#### **P&O NEDLLOYD MONDRIAAN (Liberia)**

London, Feb 20 — More than four dozen containers were lost overboard from c.c. *P&O Nedlloyd Mondriaan* in the Bay of Biscay late last week just days after a similar incident off the Dutch coast. The vessel, on charter to Maersk Line, was heading back to Asia. Reederei Blue Star, which manages the vessel on behalf of German KG investors, is investigating and expects to have a clearer idea of the cause in the next few days. Weather conditions were said to be bad, with reports that containers from several other vessels in the area had also been washed overboard. However, initial reports also suggested faulty twistlocks might be to blame. A spokesman for Blue Star said that twistlocks could be one of the reasons for the loss but other possible causes were being examined. No other vessel in the fleet experienced anything similar. In last week's incident the vessel apparently lost 50 containers over the side, most of which were empties being returned to Asia. Only four or five contained cargo. A week earlier 58 loaded containers had been washed into the sea as the vessel headed from Rotterdam to Hamburg, while many more were badly damaged. The *P&O Nedlloyd Mondriaan* was inspected when it arrived in Hamburg but no final conclusions have been drawn about why so many containers were swept off in what were described as windy but not stormy conditions.

#### **PEGVAK (Iran)**

London, Feb 16 — A press report, dated Feb 15, states: The initial estimates for the causes of the fire that broke out at an Iranian exploratory vessel (general cargo *Pegvak*) Tuesday morning (Feb 14) while it was being repaired in Baku have been disclosed. All the crew were evacuated to safety, with no casualties, and the fire was completely put out, the State Fire Department officials said. The accident was caused by a violation of safety policy by the repair workers,

the Fire Department spokesman Aghali Ismayilov said. The blaze, which started 400-500 metres away from the seashore, is believed to have resulted from an inflammation of oil products. The scrutiny is under way to confirm the cause.

#### **PRESTIGE (Bahamas)**

London, Feb 20 — The long-running factual discovery phase in Spain's \$1bn lawsuit against ABS and its consulting subsidiary ABSG Consulting, formerly ABS Marine Services, is scheduled to conclude at the end of next month as two critical offshoots of the case await decisions by a US federal court in New York. The main case is not expected to come to trial as Spain has demanded at least until the summer of next year as the litigating parties wend through the submission of Spain's and ABS' expert reports, expert liability discovery and other pre-trial work. However, the two offshoot decisions awaited from Judge Laura Taylor Swain of the US District Court for the Southern District of New York have the potential to swing the main case decisively in one direction, or effectively to decide it altogether. The discovery phase has been under way for more than two years, and to date has involved more than 75 depositions. Spain sued ABS for \$750m following the incident involving crude oil tanker *Prestige* in November, 2002, alleging the society's negligence in classifying the tanker as fit for business. Spain amended the complaint in July, 2004, to include the ABS consulting subsidiary as co-defendant, raising the damages claim to \$1bn. Spain's contention is that ABS' alleged negligence had been continuous throughout the life of the *Prestige*. In August, 2004, Judge Swain dismissed four counter-claims against Spain asserted by ABS. ABS separately responded to Spain's amended complaint, denying the charges levelled against it and presenting several affirmative defences in a legal move possibly designed to pave the way for an apportionment of blame. Spain, however, moved in June last year to dismiss Spain's affirmative defences, specifically the society's claim that Spain's charges against it did not stick because by refusing the *Prestige* a place of refuge the country had itself effectively breached international law. Spain's stance in this regard is that as a nation, and also under international law, it had an "absolute and sovereign right" to deny the *Prestige* access to a place of refuge, a course of action adopted by other European nations in the vessel's path. Judge Swain's ruling on Spain's motion to strike out ABS' affirmative defences is still awaited. No hearings were scheduled by last week. ABS, meanwhile, has opened up an entirely new legal front in this convoluted case, a move described by experts as unprecedented in shipping annals. The class society has moved before Judge Swain for a summary judgement under the Civil

Liability Convention asserting that the only forum for litigation under the convention would be Spain. The argument is that as the deemed agent of the *Prestige* owner ABS enjoys immunity from all damages arising out of Spain's lawsuit and should be allowed to avail itself of the convention limits as a shipowner would. Should the judge agree with this legal viewpoint it could effectively scuttle Spain's painstakingly compiled \$1bn lawsuit. It remains unknown whether Judge Swain will rule on the motion in tandem with the main \$1bn lawsuit.

#### **PRINCESS ABA (Antigua & Barbuda)**

Edinburgh, Feb 21 — General cargo *Princess ABA* (2940 gt, built 1984), in ballast, was in collision with a Ukrainian River Danube convoy consisting of one pusher and two barges at the confluence of the Kilia arm of the Danube Delta with the Maritime Danube fairway at Mile 43, River Danube, during the evening of Feb 19. The incident occurred in Ukrainian territorial waters. — Danube Research. (Note — *Princess ABA*, Gaeta for Galatz, passed Sulina westbound Feb 19.)

London, Feb 23 — General cargo *Princess ABA* arrived Galatz Feb 21.

#### **PUERTO DE ALTAMIRA (Panama)**

Veracruz, Feb 20 — Cutter suction hopper dredger *Puerto de Altamira* is still at the Veracruz shipyard with only one engine and one deck crewmembers watching over it. There appears to be a dispute between the Mexican and the Dutch owners of the dredging company and this may be the reason why the decision to repair or scrap the dredger has not been taken. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **QUEEN OF COQUITLAM (Canada)**

London, Feb 17 — Ro/ro *Queen of Coquitlam* (6551 gt, built 1976) experienced failure of No.2 controllable pitch propeller and its LO pump while loading vehicles at Langdale Terminal, Howe Sound, BC, in lat 49 25.59N, long 123 28.00W at 1415, Feb 9. (Note — According to LMIU AIS *Queen of Coquitlam* was reported in lat 49 25 20.76N, long 123 26 34.32W at 1549, today, speed 19.1 knots.)

#### **REPLENISH (U.K.)**

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated Feb 15, states: Fishing *Replenish* (246 gt, built 1998) was escorted back to shore yesterday after it started taking in water in storm-lashed seas. The 72-foot vessel was 50 miles south-east of Shetland when the crew of six alerted the coastguard at Lerwick. A rescue helicopter from Sumburgh took extra pumps to the Banff-registered boat. But it was unable to drop the gear in the gales and had to return to base. An RNLI lifeboat was sent out instead to escort the vessel back to Lerwick. RAF Kinloss were notified and helped oversee the rescue.

London, Feb 23 — Following received from Lerwick Port Authority, dated today: Fishing *Replenish* sailed Lerwick Feb 16.

#### **RIGEL (U.S.A.)**

Seattle, Feb 16 — Tank barge *Rigel* returned to service Feb 13. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **ROUGH 47/3B**

London, Feb 17 — A press report, dated Feb 16, states: Work on a vital North Sea gas platform (*Rough 47/3B*) has been suspended following a fire. Two people were taken to hospital, one with burns and one with smoke inhalation. Rig crews put out the fire. The Bravo gas storage rig in Centrica's Rough field, with a crew of 58, is about 20 miles off Withernsea on the East Yorkshire coast. Twenty-five essential staff remained on the rig, with the remaining 31 taken ashore by boat or helicopter, a Centrica spokesman said. The two injured rig personnel were taken to Hull Royal Infirmary for treatment. One RAF helicopter from Leconfield in North Yorkshire and two from Wattisham Airfield in Suffolk were scrambled by the Aeronautical Rescue Co-ordination Centre at RAF Kinloss in Scotland. The rig stores North Sea gas for UK consumption. The platform can supply about 10% of the UK's peak gas demand. The closure caused wholesale gas prices to rise 40%, but they fell again later. A spokesman for Centrica said: "As a precaution we have reduced manning on the platform to essential levels. The remainder of our personnel have been safely evacuated. "The platform has been depressurised and made operationally safe." Operations at the platform have been suspended until further notice, the spokesman said.

London, Feb 22 — A press report, dated Feb 21, states: Operations on the North Sea gas storage platform *Rough 47/3B*, put out of action by a fire and explosion, may not resume fully for a month, owners Centrica Storage said. In a statement, Centrica said: "The initial visual inspection of the scene would appear to indicate there was an apparent failure of a cooler unit in one of four dehydration units and an explosion occurred in that vicinity. Following this inspection we currently estimate that it is unlikely that *Rough 47/3B* will be available for one month." They said bad weather had restricted helicopter access and delayed restoring full power and other services to the platform, which was their first priority. "Detailed examination of the equipment will continue over the next few days in parallel with the investigation of the cause of the incident and plans to restore safe operations," the company said.

#### **SAFE CONCORDIA (Panama)**

Singapore, Feb 20 — Semi-sub HL vessel *Safe Concordia* is still lying anchored at West Jurong Anchorage, Singapore. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **SAGA SPRAY (Hong Kong)**

London, Feb 19 — Following received from RCC Victoria, BC, timed 2210: Bulk *Saga Spray* (29381 gt, built 1994) reported losing 14 containers over the side in bad weather in lat 42 40.5N, long 177 06.8W, at 1952, UTC, Feb 17. A further 67 containers are reported to have been damaged and a number are "hanging precariously". The vessel is proceeding to New Westminster.

London, Feb 20 — Following received from RCC Victoria, BC, timed 2035, UTC: Bulk *Saga Spray* is expected back at New Westminster later today after losing a number of containers while west bound.

London, Feb 21 — Bulk *Saga Spray*, China for Fraser-Surrey Docks, New Westminster, BC, reported 14 containers lost overboard and 67 empty containers damaged, some hanging over the side of the vessel, Feb 17. (See issues of Feb 21 and 22.)

Vancouver, Feb 21 — Bulk *Saga Spray* has now arrived Fraser Surrey Docks, Surrey, BC. On attending vessel surveyor advises 10 to 12 53-ft "new empty" containers, were lost overboard and he estimates that 90 containers have sustained damages due to shift of deck cargo while in transit from China to Surrey, BC, on or about Feb 13. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **SEABULK PRIDE (U.S.A.)**

London, Feb 17 — A press report, dated today, states: Product tanker *Seabulk Pride* was expected to leave Port Angeles Harbour last night. The vessel has been undergoing inspection and repairs in Port Angeles, a Coast Guard spokesman said yesterday. Its next scheduled stop is Anacortes, where it will unload about 900,000 gallons of oil and fuel. "That's the plan at this time," said Petty Officer 3rd Class Jeff Pollinger, a spokesman for the Coast Guard's command in Seattle, yesterday. The vessel has not leaked any oil. Coast Guard and state Department of Ecology officials boarded the vessel Wednesday (Feb 15) for inspections. Yesterday crews were replacing the vessel's anchor and Pollinger said that may have held up the vessel's departure. Pollinger did not know if the patches on the cracks were checked, but said it was a "thorough inspection."

London, Feb 17 — Following received from Coast Guard Seattle, timed 1830, UTC: Product tanker *Seabulk Pride* has left Port Angeles and is due in Anacortes today.

London, Feb 17 — A press report, dated today, states: Product tanker *Seabulk Pride*, that went aground earlier this month in Alaska, has arrived safely at Anacortes, the Coast Guard said. Petty Officer Jeff Pollinger in Seattle said some minor problems were caught and repaired in an inspection at Port Angeles. He said there were no leaks when the *Seabulk Pride* headed for the Tesoro refinery at Anacortes. From Anacortes, the vessel will go into drydock at Victoria, British Columbia, for permanent repairs.

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

**SKALVA (Lithuania)**

London, Feb 20 — General cargo *Skalva* arrived Baltimore Feb 16 and sailed Feb 17.

**SPEYBANK (Isle of Man)**

Singapore, Feb 20 — Ro/ro/c.c. *Speybank* is currently at Pan United FP East, Singapore. — Lloyd's Agents.

**STAR HERDLA (NIS)**

London, Feb 18 — On Feb 17, general cargo *Star Herdla* was reported to be still at Dunkirk.

**STAR OHIO (Bahamas)**

London, Feb 16 — At approximately 0645, Feb 16, crude oil tanker *Star Ohio* experienced an engine problem while some 50 miles west of the Shetland Islands. Further investigation revealed that one of the vessel's main engine turbo-chargers had failed. The vessel is currently on passage to Belfast Lough at reduced speed and is expected to arrive PM Sunday (Feb 19), where facilities are available to fully inspect and repair the damaged turbo-charger. Replacement parts have been ordered and are expected to arrive in time to meet the vessel. *Star Ohio* was on passage from Norway to the US Gulf when the problem occurred.

London, Feb 16 — Following received from Coastguard Shetland MRSC, timed 2028, UTC: Crude oil tanker *Star Ohio*, heading for Belfast, to be met PM Feb 17 by tug *Highland Courage* en route. As of 2008, UTC, today, co-ordination passed to Stornoway Coastguard.

London, Feb 17 — Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 0022, UTC: Crude oil tanker *Star Ohio*, under way for Belfast, to be met by tug *Highland Courage* in lat 58 00N, long 09 46W.

London, Feb 17 — Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 1240, UTC: Crude oil tanker *Star Ohio* was reported a short time ago in lat 59 42.4N, long 06 59.2W, speed four knots. Weather good.

London, Feb 18 — Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 0550, UTC: Crude oil tanker *Star Ohio*: Tug *Highland Courage* met vessel in lat 58 34N, long 08 58W at 0400, UTC, presently two miles astern.

London, Feb 18 — Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 1211, UTC: At 1207, UTC, crude oil tanker *Star Ohio*, under escort of tug *Highland Courage* was in lat 57 59N, long 09 46.5W. Vessels proceeding at five knots. Winds currently south-east, force six.

London, Feb 19 — Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 0017, UTC: Crude oil tanker *Star Ohio* in lat 56 48N, long 09 21W at 0001, UTC, speed 6.6 knots.

London, Feb 20 — Crude oil tanker *Star Ohio* is currently in lat 54 44 33.12N, long 05 38 16.98W, anchored to effect repairs, ETC two to three days.

London, Feb 23 — Following received from Coastguard Belfast MRSC, timed

1153, UTC: Crude oil tanker *Star Ohio* completed repairs and proceeded on voyage at about 2300, UTC, Feb 22.

**STELKUR (Faroe Islands)**

Torshavn, Feb 22 — Fishing *Stelkur* (457 gt, built 2002) caught fire while in the harbour at Runavik yesterday. The fire was soon extinguished, but the vessel sustained considerable damage. — Lloyd's Agents.

**STENA EXPLORER (U.K.)**

London, Feb 17 — A press report, dated today, states: Stena yesterday cancelled its fast ferry service from Holyhead to Ireland for a fortnight after the passenger ro/ro *Stena Explorer* (19638 gt, built 1996) was damaged. The incident will leave the travel plans of hundreds of Welsh rugby fans heading for the Six Nations clash in Dublin on Feb 26 in chaos. Supporters could be forced into making other arrangements to get to Dublin for the match. Last night Stena Line confirmed the high speed *Stena Explorer*, which operates three times a day between Holyhead and Dun Laoghaire, will be out of action for two weeks. The vessel was damaged as it headed into the Anglesey port's inner harbour on Wednesday (Feb 15) evening. The company believes it struck something below the water line and yesterday brought in teams of divers to investigate. Stena press officer Eamonn Hewitt said: "We realise the rugby weekend is a busy one and we are now transferring passengers from *Stena Explorer* to our conventional ferry *Stena Adventurer*, which sails from Holyhead into Dubin. "Obviously, as *Stena Adventurer* takes longer to make the crossing, about three hours compared to *Stena Explorer's* 99 minutes, passengers will have to make some changes to their arrangements. "We will endeavour to make sure everybody gets to the match on time. We will be contacting customers who have booked to travel on *Stena Explorer* up to Mar 3." To cope some may be switched from Stena, to rivals Irish Ferries, who also operate traditional and fast services from Holyhead.

London, Feb 20 — Following received from the owners of passenger ro/ro *Stena Explorer*, dated today: *Stena Explorer* is currently at Holyhead, undergoing repair assessment.

London, Feb 20 — Following received from owners of passenger ro/ro *Stena Explorer*, dated today, states: The vessel's hull has been sealed and the vessel will effect permanent repairs at Holyhead. A mini dry-dock, en route from Holland, is due to arrive on Wednesday (Feb 22). Once this has arrived and is in place, it is anticipated that repairs to the vessel will take approximately five days.

**STOLT ACHIEVEMENT (Cayman Islands)**

See *B.E.Lindholm*.

**SUPER-FAST LEVANTE (Canary Islands)**

Vigo, Feb 20 — Passenger ro/ro *Super-Fast Levante* (19808 gt, built 2001), which arrived Vigo at 0900, Feb 19, reported suspected damage to cargo inside trailers on the main deck and shelter deck, which will be investigated. The vessel is still at Vigo and will sail at 1800 today. — Lloyd's Agents.

**TADLA (Cyprus)**

See *Henry Hudson Bridge*.

**TANANGER (Barbados)**

London, Feb 18 — Following received from Sandnes, dated today: Ro/ro *Tananger*, sailed from Tananger at 1800 hrs, Feb 17, in tow of tug *Bryteren* bound for Stavanger, probably for repairs.

Kristiansand, Feb 20 — Understand ro/ro *Tananger* has been towed to Grenaa. — Lloyd's Agents.

Aarhus, Feb 22 — Ro/ro *Tananger* was not towed to Grenaa, but to a Norwegian port. After undergoing engine repairs the vessel is now reportedly back in normal schedule and is expected to arrived Grenaa at 0200 hrs, Feb 23. — Lloyd's Agents.

**TARIFA (Spain)**

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

**TENAKA (Canada)**

London, Feb 16 — Ro/ro *Tenaka* (651 gt, built 1964) experienced "hard landing" while berthing at Cortes Island, BC, in lat 50 06.58N, long 125 03.24W at 1755, Jan 16. Damage unknown.

Vancouver, Feb 21 — Ro/ro *Tenaka* struck the dock at Cortes Island Jan 16, however, there were no damages to the vessel or dock. The incident was of a minor nature and there was no delay to the schedule of the *Tenaka*. — Lloyd's Agents.

**THOR TRAVELLER (Thailand)**

London, Feb 21 — Following received from the owners of bulk *Thor Traveller*, dated today: *Thor Traveller* is currently discharging cargo at Lahad Datu. Underwater inspection revealed no major damage as a result of the grounding, only minor indentation.

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

London, Feb 23 — General cargo *Tramp* arrived Queenborough Feb 20 and sailed Feb 21.

**TRANSFER (Antigua & Barbuda)**

Belize City, Feb 16 — Understand from Belize Port Authority that part c.c. *Transfer* is still on the reef, as a salvage attempt was not successful. Understand the vessel's underwriters have terminated their contract with the wreck receivers, and the Government of Belize are considering options for the removal of the vessel. — Lloyd's Agents.

**TUGEN (Luxembourg)**

Antananarivo, Feb 21 — Product tanker *Tugen* left for South Africa with no apparent damage, but still awaiting confirmation. — Lloyd's Agents.

**TYUMEN (Russia)**

Seoul, Feb 22 — General cargo *Tyumen* sailed from Hwasoon at 1700 hrs, on Feb 15, bound for discharging port, Taicang, China, after paying a deposit of Won500Million in cash to the court. — Lloyd's Agents.

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

Gothenburg, Feb 21 — General cargo *Ugra* proceeded to temporary berth at Vanersborg after a small hole was noted, oil leakage noted at locks and checked by Inspectors/surveyors for acceptance. Proceeded for discharging Lidköping where departed at 1500, Feb 13 and then loaded at Otterbacken, sailed at 1600, Feb 14, loaded glass scrap for Nestved. — Westax Marine Services AB.

**VEGA PIONEER (Panama)**

London, Feb 22 — Hay Point Coal Terminal update, dated Feb 21: An incident occurred at BMA's Hay Point Coal Terminal on Dec 28 when shiploader No.1 came in contact with a loading crane on bulk *Vega Pioneer*, which sustained minor damage from the contact. The vessel sailed Dec 30. A section of the shiploader boom, which is attached to the main structure, was damaged during the incident and requires repairs. Initial estimates indicated that the shiploader would be out of action for around eight weeks and would be recommissioned in March, weather depending. However, unsuitable weather conditions at the berth have thwarted attempts to remove the damaged boom with a heavy lift ship brought in for this purpose. As a back-up plan, a jack-up barge with a 250 ton on board crawler crane has arrived at Hay Point from Gladstone to lift the boom from the shiploader. The operation is also weather dependent. This option means that the shiploader will potentially be recommissioned in mid-April. The outage will decrease port throughput capacity of the Hay Point Terminal to around 70% for the duration of the repairs. Additional allocations have been secured at Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal to support shipping demand through until April. Efforts are continuing to minimise the impact on customer deliveries with alternative shipping arrangements. As a result of remedial action taken, no significant congestion at the terminal is anticipated.

**VERTIGO (Jamaica)**

Aarhus, Feb 20 — Bulk *Vertigo* is still at Fredericia, and will be towed to a Polish yard within the next two weeks. Bulk *M.Pioneer*, which was due to offload the steel cargo from *Vertigo*, arrived Fredericia Feb 3, but was blocked by the ITF, and is still

lying alongside. After a number of the crew took command of the vessel last week, and the ITF assisted them by blocking the gangway, the master and three officers were taken from the vessel on Saturday night (Feb 18), as they felt threatened. The vessel is now occupied by the crew. — Lloyd's Agents.

**VESTA (Sweden)**

Gothenburg Feb 19 — Ferry *Vesta* (347 gt, built 1998) made a turn to avoid a close situation with a tanker, but ended up at a shallow part in the channel near Gothenburg and a slight grounding last Thursday (Feb 16). Vessel did not show any defects or leaking and could proceed on tour as per schedule with its passengers onboard. Incident was just an unfortunate mistake, as the engine "just died and stopped working" while we needed some support and speed, and confirm a human error. Divers were sent down - checking the bottom, but no damage noted and no need for repair or yard. The incident will be investigated by the board of shipping and final report to be presented in due time. — Westax Marine Services AB.

**VICTORIA**

See "Seizure Of Drugs From Fishing Vessel North Of Panama" under "Miscellaneous".

**VITA (Antigua & Barbuda)**

Gothenburg, Feb 22 — General cargo *Vita* (2497 gt, built 1990), Vyborg for Seaham, with 3,400 tons of fertiliser and 33 tons of bunkers on board, ran aground around 0100 hours this morning, 50-60 metres from the shoreline at Kaseberga near Ystad, south-east Sweden. Observations confirmed that the vessel turned round and around before grounding near the coast. Coast Guard confirming the master allegedly drunk and brought to hospital at Ystad for tests and control of status. The master is a Latvian citizen and the crew mainly Russian and from Baltic States. Total approximately 10 persons, no injuries reported. An investigation commenced by DA and to take decision if master to be arrested during this afternoon. During the day the vessel is to be inspected by divers and the possibilities for salvage considered. Some leakage in front section but only small amounts involved. No oil leakage reported. The vessel has been lightened and part of cargo discharged before salvage procedure commenced and to empty most of oil tanks/bunker to minimize the risks involved. Master still in custody at Police station for DA decision. — Westax Marine Services AB. (Note — *Vita* arrived Vyborg Feb 11 and ETA at Seaham was Feb 24.)

London, Feb 22 — Following received from Gothenburg MRCC, timed 1320, UTC: At 0250 hrs, MRCC was informed that general cargo *Vita* had run aground in lat 55 22.7N, long 14 03.4E. The vessel remains hard aground, but its crew are in no danger.

Gothenburg, Feb 22 — General cargo *Vita* grounding: A test at the police station reveals one permille alcohol in blood of the master and confirmed by the spokesman for the police. The 60 year old master complained of "chest-injuries and pain" and was taken to hospital and remained there during the entire day. Despite the result and tests, the master did not agree/denies allegation of alcohol or that he should have fallen asleep during his watch, but cannot give any explanation to the grounding or manouvre. We will ask the crew during tomorrow says the Coast Guard. The owner has no liability for crew drunkenness as it falls back on the individual person. Coast Guard officers confirm that if the vessel was bound England, it has nothing to do at Kaseberga, where it ran aground at a speed of eight knots. Also the vessel was checked by radar, confirming several 360 degree turns before ended up 60 metres from the coastline. This unlogical manouvre does not support the masters attempts to explain his position. Divers examination of the bottom confirms generally fair and no outlet of oil and only the small hole in bow/forepeak and possibilities to pull it off the ground are good, after some shifting of bunker oil and cargo. — Westax Marine Services AB.

London, Feb 23 — A press report, dated today, states: The Latvian master of general cargo *Vita* that ran aground in southern Sweden has been arrested. Police say the master is suspected of being drunk when the ship ran into shallows 25 metres from the Swedish coast early yesterday. The freighter was carrying 3,300 metric tons of fertiliser. There have been no reports of injuries to the crew of 10 or fuel or oil leaks.

Malmö, Feb 23 — General cargo *Vita* Vyborg, Russia to UK port, grounded just outside Kaseberga, Scania, at about 0100, local time, Feb 22. Police and the Swedish Maritime boarded the vessel and tested the master and crew for alcohol. The master's blood test showed excess alcohol, and he was arrested for sea-drunkenness. During inspection, leakage was found in the forepeak, starboard double-bottom ballast tank No 1, starboard side tank No 1 and the bow propeller-room. No oil leakage has been observed. The vessel is still hard aground. No refloating attempts has been made as yet. The owners' representative is en route to the vessel. A hull and machinery surveyor attended on board Feb 22. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Feb 23 — Following received from Gothenburg MRCC, timed 1030, UTC: General cargo *Vita* remains aground.

**WERSE (Antigua & Barbuda)**

Emden, Feb 22 — General cargo *Werse* left berth at Emden at 1305, local time, today, for Brake. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

**WESTERN MONARCH (Canada)**

London, Feb 21 — Fishing *Western Monarch* (79 gt, built 1937) grounded at the north end of Ogden Channel, BC and subsequently sank in lat 53 54'41N, long 130 12 33W, at 0231, PST, Feb 2.

**YEOSU PIONEER NO.2 (Panama)**

London, Feb 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Chemical/oil carrier *Yeosu Pioneer No.2* (887 gt, built 2000), in a laden condition, is reported to have run aground at 0900 hrs, today, close to the port of Chiba. A refloating attempt is planned at high tide this evening. There have been no injuries to the 12 member crew and no breach of the vessel's hull.

**LANGKAWI AREA, MALAYSIA**

London, Feb 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Nine Indonesians, mainly from the tsunami-hit province of Aceh, have been jailed for seven years for a pirate attack on product tanker *Nepline Delima*. A Malaysian court sentenced the group for carrying out the armed, pre-dawn attack on the vessel off the northern resort island of Langkawi in the Malacca Strait last June. The tanker was carrying more than \$US3 million worth of diesel from Port Klang to Burma when it was boarded. The attack was foiled when a crewman from the vessel leapt into the pirates' boat and sped off to alert police.

**SARUNA (Panama)**

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

**UNITED KINGDOM**

London, Feb 21 — A press report, dated today, states: General cargo *Saruna* detained by Maritime and Coastguard Agency surveyors for a number of serious defects, remains at anchor in Falmouth Bay. The vessel is now up for sale at a price of £1.2 million. A spokesman for the Romanian owners, Sammarina Shipping and Trading Limited, said: "We have a representative in the area and the deficiencies have been rectified." But MCA surveyors have not released the ship from detention. Falmouth MCA surveyor John Ross said: "We have to examine *Saruna* again to see if any of the previous defects have been rectified. I doubt if it will pass an inspection and be released."

**Seizures & Arrests****ATLANTIC MERCADO (Antigua & Barbuda)**

Durban, Feb 21 — General cargo *Atlantic Mercado* is still undergoing repairs. Understand from local agents that the repairs are expected to be completed on or about Feb 27. — Lloyd's Agents.

**BEI JI ZHOU (Panama)**

London, Feb 22 — Bulk *Bei Ji Zhou* (20704 gt, built 1976), H9VL, which arrived at Hong Kong at 1850 hrs, Feb 21, is today reported at North-west Lamma Anchorage, Hong Kong, under arrest.

London, Feb 23 — Bulk *Bei Ji Zhou* sailed Hong Kong Feb 22.

**BM 2 (Panama)**

London, Feb 17 — General cargo *BM 2* sailed Hong Kong Feb 11.

**CAPTIANOUS TAH (North Korea)**

Alexandria, Feb 22 — General cargo *Captianous Tah* is still under arrest and we are unaware of any prospects for its release. — Lloyd's Agents.

**CHEN LONG (Panama)**

London, Feb 17 — A press report, dated today, states: The 18 Chinese crew from one of the largest suspected illegal fishing boats (fishing *Chen Long*) found in Australian waters are being held at the Immigration Department's detention facility in Darwin. A department spokesman says there are no plans to transfer the group to the Baxter detention centre in South Australia while the investigation into illegal fishing is continuing. The boat was found with 639 tonnes of fish on board and fisheries authorities suspect some of it may have been caught in Australian waters.

London, Feb 20 — A press report, dated Feb 19, states: Aboriginal sea rangers say fishing *Chen Long*, brought into Darwin last week, could have been caught a month ago. Authorities suspect that the vessel, found in Australian waters a week ago, is a mothership that carries the catch for a fleet of smaller boats. They are investigating whether part of the 640 tonnes of catch on board the *Chen Long* was caught illegally. The 18 Chinese crew members are being held at the Immigration Department's detention facility in Darwin. Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation spokesman Ian Munro says it should not have gone undetected for so long. "In fact, our rangers here suspect they might have seen it a month ago and took it to be a freighter," he said. "Did Customs overlook it because it simply doesn't look like a mothership for a fishing operation? What was that doing 100 nautical miles inside the

exclusive zone. If it is a mothership, where's the flotilla of ships that must be serving it. Why did it go undetected by radar for so long?"

Darwin, Feb 21 — Fishing *Chen Long*: We have been advised by the shipping agent looking after the vessel in Darwin that it has been placed under detention following apprehension in Australian waters with a large quantity of fish product on board. Australian Fisheries Management Authority are currently conducting an investigation into the vessel and the crew. The crew are no longer on board and are being detained at the Berrimah Detention Centre on the outskirts of Darwin. There is a skeleton Australian caretaker crew on board at present whilst the vessel is anchored in Darwin Harbour. It is the intention of the shipping agent to bring the vessel alongside the Iron Ore Wharf in Darwin Harbour tomorrow afternoon, as the Australian Federal Minister of Fisheries will be visiting Darwin at that time. — Lloyd's Agents.

**DURSUN CEVAHIR (Turkey)**

Beirut, Feb 20 — General cargo *Dursun Cevahir*: The P&I Club has provided the required guarantee and vessel agents are now undertaking the sailing formalities. Once completed, the vessel's next port of call declared is Mersin. — Lloyd's Agents.

**FADELSIA (Marshall Islands)**

London, Feb 21 — Bulk *Fadelsia* arrived Bandar Abbas Feb 10 and sailed the same day.

**GEPARD (Cyprus)**

London, Feb 18 — Tug *Gepard* sailed from Flushing at 0612 hrs, Feb 16, bound for Gdynia.

**JOHN CHEEK (Falkland Islands)**

London, Feb 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Argentina's coast guard detained Falkland Islands-registered fishing *John Cheek* (775 gt, built 1985) suspected of operating illegally in Argentina's so-called "economic exclusion zone" in the South Atlantic. A coast guard statement last night identified the vessel as the *John Cheek* and said it was being escorted to Comodoro Rivadavia. Coast guard inspectors boarded the vessel without resistance and found 31 crew members onboard a ship carrying a load of 100 tons of fish and squid, the independent Argentine news agency Noticias Argentinas reported. Argentina claims an "economic exclusion zone" stretching some 200 nautical miles off its coastline and authorities were quoted as telling Noticias Argentinas that the fishing vessel was stopped just inside that boundary. There was no immediate response from authorities in the Falklands.

London, Feb 22 — A press report, dated Feb 21, states: Fishing *John Cheek* arrived Comodoro Rivadavia yesterday afternoon escorted by the Argentine Coast Guard and is



forecasted to have to remain at least two weeks before its situation is cleared. According to Argentine naval authorities the vessel was caught early yesterday red-handed poaching in Argentine waters, 198 miles from Comodoro Rivadavia, but the Falklands' company Petrel Trawling Ltd and Spanish associates insist *John Cheek* was outside the EEZ and in permanent satellite position monitoring. La Nacion reports that following normal procedure several Argentine government departments are now involved in the information gathering of the controversial incident, Customs, Coast Guard, Animal and Food Health Service, Migration. Eduardo Emilio Coutinho, head of Comodoro Rivadavia Coast Guard Operations said that once the investigation is concluded all the information will be sent to the Argentine Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food Secretary which will then decide on the fine. "This (investigation) could take at least two weeks", estimated Mr. Coutinho adding that much will also depend on the owners' attitude, "whether they appeal or not the decision". *John Cheek* had 100 tons of squid and hake on board, now seized, when it was boarded by a team from the Coast Guard vessel *Fique*. However Mr. Coutinho said no legal actions will be taken against the master or the crew of the vessel since "there was no resistance. They all collaborated at all times so the current procedure is merely administrative". The vessel is under the command of Captain Jaime Cortizo Riva and has a crew of 31, half of which from Galicia and the rest Chilean and Peruvians. In Galicia the head of the fishermen's union Muniz Ríos said he had been in telephone contact with Captain Cortizo Riva who insisted the arrest had been done "outside the Argentine 200 miles EEZ". Furthermore *John Cheek* has a permanent satellite tracking system "which shows and records at all time the vessel's position", added Mr. MuOiz Ríos. Apparently Argentina is considering presenting a formal complaint to the United Kingdom government once the administrative investigation has been concluded.

London, Feb 23 — A press report, dated Feb 22, states: The British government "understands" that fishing *John Cheek* arrested last Monday (Feb 20) by the Argentine Coast Guard was fishing "in international waters" said a spokesman for the British embassy in Buenos Aires today. "The United Kingdom and the Falkland Islands strongly disapprove of illegal fishing, so if the Argentine authorities prove an anomaly, then they must proceed as indicated," added the spokesman, who revealed that the Embassy was in contact with the Argentine Foreign Affairs Ministry. Sources from the Argentine Ministry said they were waiting for the administrative report from the Coast Guard before proceeding. The *John Cheek* is currently being held in Comodoro

Rivadavia waiting to comply with procedural formalities following the arrest. Jan Cheek, from Petrel Trawling Limited, owners of the vessel, interviewed by Stanley's radio station FIRS, said: "We know we were fishing in international waters and we continue to reiterate that at every opportunity." In Comodoro Rivadavia the head of the local Coast Guard post admitted a delay in the beginning of the investigation for bureaucratic reasons. So far the situation of the *John Cheek* is considered a "breach of regulations" which, according to the Argentine Fisheries law, could mean a fine ranging from the equivalent of US\$33.333 to US\$333.333 plus the total or partial forfeit of the one hundred tons of squid and hake in the vessel. Another delicate issue which will naturally follow once the administrative investigation is concluded is the fact that the *John Cheek* flies a flag "not recognised" by the Argentine government.

**LIAN CHI SHENG**

London, Feb 22 — A press report, dated Feb 21, states: State lawyers today made their closing submissions in the trial of a Taiwanese National and a local fishing company charged with fishing illegally in Fiji waters. The DPP's Office reinforced the evidence given by Fisheries Ministry officials, the Foreign Fisheries Agency and the naval officers to try and convince the four assessors that the two accused did in fact take fish from Fiji waters without having a valid license. She highlighted that the naval officers who had boarded fishing *Lian Chi Sheng* in May 2004 had found tuna fishing equipment on board, along with fresh and frozen shark fins. Pictures taken on board the vessel also showed that the crew had laid out a Long Line used to catch tuna within Fiji's Territorial Waters which they did not have a license to do. Hung Kuo Hui has been charged as the skipper of the *Lian Chi Sheng* while Waikava Marine Industries has been charged as the charterer of the vessel which was fishing illegally in Fiji waters.

**LUCKY DOLPHIN (Panama)**

Haifa, Feb 22 — The Admiralty Court in Haifa had ruled on the issue of general cargo *Lucky Dolphin* and it was due to be sold at auction on Feb 19. However this was delayed to a later date, probably to April of this year. Therefore, the vessel has not been sold yet. — Lloyd's Agents.

**MAHDI (Norway)**

London, Feb 17 — A press report, dated Feb 16, states: Chem.tank *Mahdi*, the merchant tanker which was implicated in the case of the missing tanker *African Pride* in Nov 2003, has been released to its owners. The directive to release the vessel was given by the Presidency after the vessel had stayed in Naval custody for two years. The vessel, which was owned by Al-Dawood Shipping Lines, was let off the hook with a stern

warning by the hierarchy of the Western Naval Command, to stay clear of illegal activities in the country's territorial waters. decision to release the vessel came from the presidency and the naval headquarters, after thorough investigations by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) which ultimately cleared the *Mahdi*. The FOC added that when the vessel was arrested, the case was handed over to the EFCC, while the product was evacuated by the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) for laboratory analysis. The release of the *Mahdi* on Feb 7, brought to five, the number of vessels released by the Navy after being siezed in 2003 for allegedly pilfering from the nation's crude oil pot.

**PAN YUN BO 1 (China)**

London, Feb 20 — General cargo *Pan Yun Bo 1* is still reported at Western Anchorage No.1, Hong Kong, under detention.

**RABUK-4 (Russia)**

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated Feb 17, states: The Georgian coastguard has seized the Russian non specific tanker *Rabuk-4* in Georgian territorial waters, accusing it of violating navigation regulations, the Georgian Coastguard Service told Interfax. The Russian vessel has been towed to Batumi port. In line with Georgian law, the vessel's owner will have to pay a fine of 50,000 lari (about \$24,000). Failure to do so could result in the ship being sold at auction. The owner is entitled to go to court to appeal the ruling.

London, Feb 21 — A press report, dated Feb 20, states: Non specific tanker *Rabuk-4* has been allowed to return to Russia after paying Georgia a fine of 50,000 Lari, nearly US\$24,000, for violating navigation regulations in Georgia's territorial waters, a source in the Georgian state border guard department said.

**RAND 1 (Russia)**

St. Petersburg, Feb 16 — Fish factory *Rand 1* (1058 gt, built 1970) is currently under arrest at Kaliningrad, where arrived May 6, 2004. — Lloyd's Agents.

**SAFMARINE PAKISTAN (Cyprus)**

London, Feb 22 — A press report, dated today, states: The master and three crew members of c.c. *Safmarine Pakistan* (15929 gt, built 1998), who had disembarked at the uninhabited and remote Suhali island in Lakshadweep have been taken into custody for unauthorised entry. They have been charged under Section 14 of the Foreigners Act after being questioned today, Superintendent of Police, Lakshadweep, David Lalrim Sangha, said. The accused are likely to be produced before a trial court here either tonight or tomorrow. The vessel was on its way to Tuticorin from Salalah when it anchored near the Suhali island. The master and three crew members then went to the

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

island to take a look, administration sources said. The guard on duty immediately informed the police control room and the four were brought to Kavratsi for questioning. There are 15 other crew members in the ship, which has been detained by the Coast Guard. Lakshadweep is a restricted area and none can travel to the territorial Archipelago without the Home Ministry's permission, administration sources said. (Note — *Safmarine Pakistan* sailed Salalah Feb 17 for New Tuticorin.)

**SEA SERENADE (Cyprus)**

Koper, Feb 17 — Ro/ro *Chang Po Po*, ex *Sea Serenade*, is still berthed at Izola shipyard. The vessel has not been arrested by court order but by the the shipyard, as a consequence of repair invoices unpaid by the vessel's owners. — Lloyd's Agents.



**Pipeline Accidents**

**BATUMI, GEORGIA**

London, Feb 20 — A press report dated yesterday, states: A Black Sea oil spill was caused by pipeline rupture in Batumi terminal. The terminal workers will be liable for the material damages on the pollution of the sea, announced from environment protection headquarters. At the moment the level of the pollution is still unknown. According to initial information it will be considerable, as the spill had began the previous night. Earlier Georgian Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources announced huge quantity of oil had spilled near Georgian port Batumi in the Black Sea. Group of experts arrived at the incident scene and took immediate measures to localise the spill. All operations connected to loading and unloading oil in the port were stopped.

**KHANTY-MANSIISK AUTONOMOUS REGION, RUSSIA**

London, Feb 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Two men have been killed in Siberia after an oil pipeline burst in the trench where they were working, a local Emergency Situation Ministry spokesman said today. According to the spokesman, the workers had been sent to repair a leak in the pipe owned by the VaryeganNeft oil company at the Varyegan deposit in the Khanty-Mansiisk Autonomous Area, about 1,700 miles east of Moscow. The workers descended into a three-meter-deep trench, which had been dug to repair the leak. The 17-inch pipe then suddenly burst, engulfing the two men under emulsified crude (89% water, and 11% crude). The spokesman said that "the leak" had been shut off to prevent oil from contaminating water basins. Police are investigating the incident, he added.



**Pollution**

**BATUMI, GEORGIA**

See under "Pipeline Accidents".

**DIOMID BAY, RUSSIA**

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated Feb 16, states: The aftermath of an oil spill in the Diomid bay has been totally liquidated in Vladivostok. The coastal area has been cleared of oil and the soil contaminated with fuel oil has been removed, the press service of the Russian Emergency Situations Ministry department for the Primorsky (Maritime) territory said today. Petroleum products spilled into the sea on Feb 14 during the pumping of fuel oil at a boiler house of a shipbuilding plant located on the Diomid bay shore. About one tonne of fuel oil was spilt on the ground and then got into the sea. The spill area was 200 square metres. The Prosecutor's Office of the Maritime territory has instituted criminal proceedings under the Criminal Code Article envisaging punishment for "contamination of the marine environment from land-based sources."

**NEW YORK HARBOUR, UNITED STATES**

London, Feb 17 — A press report, dated Feb 16, states: Hornbeck Offshore Services, Inc. announced that the Company was not responsible for the oil spill that occurred earlier this week into the waters of Arthur Kill near Perth Amboy, New Jersey. According to the United States Coast Guard, the terminal has assumed responsibility for cleaning the spill and has contracted Clean Harbors and Atlantic Response to help with the cleanup. Carl Annessa, Hornbeck Offshore's Chief Operating Officer, stated, "There is currently an ongoing investigation by the controlling authorities into this incident with which Hornbeck Offshore is fully cooperating as a witness. One of our double-hulled tank barges, the *Energy 8001*, was present at the terminal at the time of the spill. However, the Company has been advised that it is not a target of the investigation. As a result, the Company does not expect this incident to have any effect on Hornbeck's financial condition or results of operations."

London, Feb 20 — A press release, dated Feb 19, states: A Unified Incident Command comprised of the US Coast Guard with co-ordination from the US Environmental Protection Agency, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, the New York State Department of Environmental

Conservation and Chevron Products Co continue to respond to a crude oil spill in the Arthur Kill. The total volume of crude oil spilled is unchanged from the prior estimate of approximately 31,000 gallons. Approximately 96,000 gallons of oil-water mixture have been recovered and are currently being stored. Approximately 145,620 pounds of oil absorbents and other contaminated solids have been removed during the clean-up. Unified Incident Command's priorities are to protect human health and the environment, and continue a safe, incident-free response; to increase assessments by air and land and develop response strategies. Overflights of the spill area have been conducted throughout the cleanup and will continue, weather permitting; to contain and clean up impacted areas. The focus areas include the Chevron spill site, Mill Creek, the Tottenville and Port Atlantic Marinas and the shoreline north of Outer Bridge Crossing. Heavy machinery is excavating the contaminated soil at the source of the spill. Approximately 440 personnel from the Unified Incident Command, including contractors, are on site working to manage response efforts and contain and clean up the spill. More than 14,000 feet of containment boom has been deployed. On-water oil recovery is being conducted by seven oil skimming vessels. Another 40 vessels/work boats are being used for a variety of purposes, such as deploying or maintaining containment and absorbent booms. Responders have also deployed five vacuum trucks and other equipment for the response effort.

**YUEXI RIVER, SICHUAN PROVINCE, CHINA**

London, Feb 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Toxic wastewater was flushed untreated into a river in southern China, prompting the government to cut water supplies to 28,000 people for at least four days, a local official and a Chinese newspaper said today. The official China Daily said that a power plant on the upper reaches of the Yuexi River in Sichuan province was to blame for the pollution, which prompted environmental officials to suspend water supplies to the town of Guanyin last week. A town leader reached by telephone said 28,000 people had been without water since Tuesday evening (Feb 14). He said a power plant in nearby Xinqiao county had discharged untreated wastewater directly into the Yuexi. Fire trucks were bringing clean water to residents but supplies were short, he said. There were no reports so far of people sickened by the pollution, he said. A source at the Xinqiao Power Plant said poor quality coal may have been partially to blame for the pollution and that an investigation was underway. The plant had temporarily halted power generation, said the man. An employee with a local water supply company noticed the river water had

turned yellow last Tuesday, the China Daily said. Tests showed it was polluted with high levels of fluoride, nitrogen and phenol, also known as carbolic acid, it said.

## Weather & Navigation



### BOLIVIA

London, Feb 19 — Thousands of villagers living on the edge of Lake Titicaca, Bolivia, have lost their homes and seen crops destroyed following weeks of heavy rainfall. The government has now declared a state of emergency in the area, which has seen water levels in the lake rise by around 250 millimetres (one inch) daily. This has brought water levels to a height of 3,810.03 metres, which is just short of the record 3,811.28-metres set in 1986, according to the government news service ABI. The death toll across the country from landslides and floods as a result of heavy rains has reached 20 this year, with tens of thousands affected.

### CANADA

London, Feb 17 — A press report, dated today, states: Wind and snow are making driving perilous in Ontario. Three people were killed in a huge pileup near Ottawa. And two police officers were hurt this afternoon, one seriously, after a collision on the York-Durham border. It was the latest incident of many that have resulted from the windy, blizzard-like conditions to hit the province.

### ECUADOR

London, Feb 20 — A press report, dated Feb 19, states: Ecuadorean President Alfredo Palacio has declared a state of emergency after days of heavy rains caused floods in two lowland provinces, an official said today. The 60-day state of emergency for the Guayas and Los Rios provinces, some 230 kilometres southwest of the capital, Quito, will be accompanied by up to U.S.\$2 million in aid for farmers, Agriculture Minister Pablo Rizzo said. The Agriculture Ministry will purchase seeds and fertilizer for farmers in the two provinces, a major rice and corn-producing region. Floods damaged five percent of rice crops in both Guayas and Los Rios, but officials have not yet calculated the economic damage. Rizzo said that Ecuador faces no risk of a food shortage. The country's food security will not be affected at any time, he said.

### EGYPT

London, Feb 16 — Vessels with a draft over 12.8 metres in today's first Suez Canal southbound convoy were not permitted to enter the Canal, due to bad weather. Six vessels were affected, and are now expected to join

the first southbound convoy tomorrow (Feb 17). There are currently no indications of further delays.

### HURRICANE "KATRINA"

London, Feb 22 — A press report, dated Feb 21, states: Signal International, a company known for its work in repairing and renovating offshore drilling rigs, will repair the hull of the Boomtown Casino barge (?passenger *Boomtown Belle II* (10507 gt, built 1995)). The barge, heavily damaged during Hurricane "Katrina", was moved to Signal last week for hull repairs, according to information from Penn National Gaming, which owns the casino. Company officials said they expect to have the barge's repairs completed and the casino back in operation by the end of this year. The exact cost of the repairs were not released, but company spokesman Ron Schnoor said the hull repairs were estimated at less than \$1 million.

### INDONESIA

Jakarta, Feb 22 — Landslides and floods triggered by torrential rain have killed at least 24 people in Indonesia's eastern city of Manado, search and rescue officials said today. The disaster occurred yesterday in the North Sulawesi provincial capital, where parts of the city were inundated with one-metre high floodwaters after hours of rain. Most of the dead were buried by mud from landslides in hilly parts of the city. "Today we found four bodies so the total is now 24," said Rinaldi, a search and rescue official in Manado, about 2,200 km north-east of Jakarta. Another search and rescue official on the scene in the seaside city said rescuers were still searching for survivors. — Reuters.

### NORWAY

London, Feb 16 — A press report, dated today, states: Heavy snows fell during the night all over southern Norway, snarling traffic, knocking out power and virtually paralyzing the capital's tram and subway system. Motorists were being advised once again to leave their cars parked, but skiers could look forward to a great weekend. As much as 20 centimetres of heavy new snow either fell or was expected early today. This time the temperatures outside were much warmer than during the winter's earlier snowfalls, making the snow wet and heavy and difficult to get around. More than 2,000 households were without electricity this morning after heavy snows toppled power lines. A spokesman for Midt-Telemark Energi said the heavy snow made repair work "extremely difficult," adding that there was "danger of more broken power lines throughout the day." Many households were also without water, because of cuts in power to their electrical pumps. All westbound trams on Oslo's public transit system, meanwhile, came to a halt near the end of the commuter

rush this morning, mostly because of switching problems on tracks exposed to the heavy snow. Hundreds of passengers were stranded inside tunnels, waiting for the system to get back in operation.

### PHILIPPINES

Manila, Feb 17 — Hundreds of people were feared dead in the central Philippines after mudslides triggered by heavy rains buried houses and an elementary school packed with children today, officials and witnesses said. Footage from local television showed wide areas of the remote farming village of Guinsaugon, near Saint Bernard town in Southern Leyte Province, covered in reddish mud, with only the tops of coconut trees and a few tin roofs sticking out. Blocked roads, washed-out bridges, cut communications lines and lack of heavy equipment were hindering rescuers. "Our estimate is about 2,500 people were buried," said Colonel Raul Farnacio, in charge of the military's relief operations. He said 16 bodies had been recovered in Guinsaugon, a community of 3,000 to 4,000 at the foot of a mountain where a minor earthquake was reported this morning. There were unconfirmed reports at least 200 villagers could be dead and about 1,500 missing, said Senator Richard Gordon, who also heads the Philippine Red Cross. "Help is on the way," President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo said on television, adding that Navy and Coast Guard vessels were proceeding to the remote coastal area. Congressman Roger Mercado said residents had been advised to leave the village after weeks of heavy rain but he laid some of the blame on mining and logging in the area three decades ago. Sixteen people were killed earlier this week when heavy rains and flash floods hit south-eastern provinces. — Reuters.

London, Feb 19 — Workers have failed to find any more survivors of a mudslide in the central Philippines and fear 1,800 people died. The landslide hit Guinsaugon village in the town of St Bernard on the island of Leyte on Friday (Feb 17). A school with 200 pupils was amongst buildings to be crushed by mud after 10 days of heavy rain pounded the area. Only a few dozen people were pulled out of the mud alive. Another 11 villages in the area have now been evacuated in case another landslide hits the area. Government experts said that a mild earthquake had hit the area on Friday and may have contributed to the landslide. Some have suggested illegal logging has removed forests from the area and left it more vulnerable to floods and landslides. Search efforts were made more difficult by blocked roads, collapsed bridges and the fear of setting off another landslide with diggers. Helicopters and a dog rescue team were sent from Manila to help with rescue efforts. A United Nations team is now on the way to assess the damage.

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

London, Feb 19 — At least ten people were missing and feared dead in a landslide last night near a mining headquarters in the province of Zamboanga del Sur in southern Philippines, reported today. A report from the Armed Forces Southern Command as saying that the incident occurred at around 1120 GMT in Sitio Balabag, Barangay Depore in the town of Bayog. The landslide comes after a devastating mountain cave-in buried a village in Southern Leyte Friday, possibly killing an estimated 1,400 people. The report said the landslide site was about 500 meters from the headquarters of Toronto Ventures Incorporated mining corporation. Two houses were buried by mudflows brought about by heavy downpour that is being experienced across the region for the past days. Authorities have yet to identify the victims and owners of the two houses that were buried by mudflows. Troops from the Philippine army and police are conducting search and rescue operations in the area.

London, Feb 20 — A press report, dated Feb 19, states: Aid from many countries has been offered for a Philippines village buried under a landslide on Friday (Feb 17) but hopes of finding survivors are dim. Sixty-eight people have been confirmed dead and 1,800 remain missing from the village of Guinsaugon on Leyte island. Australia and China have pledged thousands of dollars in aid and US marines are helping dig at the site. Efforts to find survivors are focusing on the buried village's school, a Filipino military officer said. However, he added: "The exact location of the school cannot be found because the landslide pushed everything away." Dozens of US marines arrived at the site of Guinsaugon today to lend a hand with the rescue effort. The men were given shovels to dig through layers of rock and mud, amid fears that using heavier digging equipment could further destabilise the mud, reports stated. Rescue workers have been advised to tread carefully in the soft mud or risk drowning. Captain Roman Dioso, an Air Force officer heading a team of rescue workers, said heavy earth-moving equipment would be deployed tomorrow to excavate the centre of the site. "But," he said, "this is one of the most dangerous areas. Every time it rains, the mountain rumbles and we have to run to safety." The US has put two naval vessels and 17 helicopters on stand-by to help the rescue effort. Australia has offered more than \$700,000 and China about \$1m to provide shelter and relief to survivors. Local officials say the focus is now on recovering bodies and aiding survivors, of whom none have been found since Friday. Officials said the mudslide happened after about 200 cm of rain fell in the area in the space of 10 days. Correspondents say the area lies in the path of several typhoons each year, and that coconut trees — which are common locally — have shallow roots which leave the soil vulnerable to landslides.

Guinsaugon, Feb 20 — Hunting for bodies and burying the dead resumed in the central Philippines today, with rescuers holding out little hope for survivors in a village of 1,800 buried by a collapsed mountainside. The National Disaster Co-ordinating Council said 72 bodies had been recovered, with 1,350 villagers still missing. Battling deep, shifting mud and steady rain, search teams continued to focus on a school packed with more than 250 children and staff when Friday's (Feb 17) landslide engulfed Guinsaugon, a farming community in Southern Leyte province. "They can see the roof but so far there is no sign of life," Congressman Roger Mercado said today. Reports that some survivors sent desperate mobile phone text messages on Friday had spurred on the search. There were fresh glimmers of hope yesterday and today when sensing equipment detected sounds from the school, but even then rescuers could not be sure about what they heard. "The signs of movement may be falling rock or running water," said Colonel Raul Farnacio, in charge of the army's operations. A three-year-old girl, among the first to be saved on Friday, died in hospital from injuries, television station ANC said. Fifty recovered bodies were buried yesterday in mass graves sprinkled with holy water and lime powder — a measure Health Secretary Francisco Duque said was necessary to prevent disease from spreading in the hot, fetid conditions. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo viewed relief goods and dog teams being flown from a military airbase in Manila today. She plans to visit the scene of the disaster, about 675 km (420 miles) south-east of Manila, on Wednesday or Thursday. International agencies have also sent supplies, but many of the emergency goods must be trucked to the area on bad roads and around washed-out bridges. Although the president had pledged to recover all of the bodies for burial, Mercado said a decision was likely within days about closing off the devastated area. Around 2,000 people from villages near Guinsaugon were evacuated over the weekend as Defence Secretary Avelino Cruz warned of more potential catastrophes because rains triggered by the La Nina weather pattern were expected to last until June. A village in the south-eastern province of Davao Oriental was evacuated today after five people were killed in a landslide in the northwestern part of Mindanao island on Saturday. In Guinsaugon, hundreds of rescuers, backed by US marines sent from annual exercises with Philippine troops, were warned to tread gingerly or risk sinking. — Reuters.

Guinsaugon, Feb 21 — Rescue workers battled through sludge and rubble today, buoyed by scratching noises and sounds picked up near where a packed elementary school was buried under metres of mud in a deadly Philippine landslide. So far, 85 bodies have been recovered and

relatives have reported 1,371 people still missing. Rescuers, including US Marines dispatched from annual Philippine military exercises, have focused efforts on the school after unconfirmed reports that some of the 253 people trapped inside had sent desperate text messages on Friday (Feb 17). Late yesterday, seismic equipment picked up scratching noises and rhythmic sounds close to the school. Provincial governor Rosette Lerias refused to give up hope. "We see increasing positive signs to continue." Rescue conditions are treacherous. Emergency workers from Taiwan, Spain and Malaysia, along with Philippine soldiers and miners, have had to contend with deep, shifting mud which threatens to swallow them in places. Soldiers are starting to pave a path for more accessibility. — Reuters.

## RUSSIA

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated today, states: The Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk airport has resumed its operation after a snow cyclone that swept across Sakhalin Island, airport press secretary Vladimir Kochkovsky reported yesterday. The airport now receives airliners from Moscow, Vladivostok and Khabarovsk. However, the air service between Sakhalin and the South Kuriles is disrupted as before. A blizzard is raging over the islands, and Iturup as well as Kunashir cannot receive jetliners. Motor traffic has resumed on the highway between the city of Nevelsk and the town Gornozaodsk. An avalanche buried the road early this morning. However, the railway between these cities is being cleared up to this time. The avalanche blocked there a freighter of nine wagons with coal. According to chief of the emergency center in the Nevelsk district Georgy Glukhov, rail tracks are covered by eight-meter-thick snow there. Low speed of the train and emergency braking saved it from complete drowning. Despite a heavy snowfall and blizzard, the engine drivers noticed an avalanche downward slide when it was about 20 metres to the dangerous section. The emergency braking could not stop the train immediately, and it continued to move under its own momentum. The loco and the first wagon were covered by snow.

London, Feb 18 - Congestion on the railway approaches to Russia's Black and Azov seaports has increased considerably within the last few days as the ports are unable to cope with an increasing amount of cargo, according to the management of the North-Caucasus railway. The railway authority said 18,120 railway cars, mostly with export metals and grain, were blocking the railway, awaiting unloading by the ports. On the approaches to the port of Novorossiisk, 10,000 cars are blocking the railway. The railway authority said the ports were to blame for the jams as their equipment couldn't cope with the current strong winds. Thick

ice has practically stopped work at Yeisk, Temryuk and Port-Kavkaz.

#### TROPICAL STORM "DELTA"

Tenerife, Feb 17 — Tug *Tarifa* was successfully pulled out from the bottom of the port area, Anaga Basin, by floating crane *GPS Atlas* yesterday evening. The tug will now be taken out to high sea to a point approximately 15 miles away from the coast, where it will be sunk again in waters of more than 1,500 metres depth. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### TROPICAL STORM "KAJIKI"

Manila, Feb 20 — Sea trials of tug *Napocor Tugboat No. 1*, which were scheduled for Feb 18, did not take place as the completion of repairs continued to be delayed. The National Power Corporation said that delays in finishing the vessel's engine alignment prevented the undocking of the vessel for sea trials. The vessel is being repaired at Keppel Batangas Shipyard in Bauan. Napocor officials also said that even if the repair work had been finished on time, the sea trials would have been postponed as the vessel's crew did not show up. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, Feb 20 — Delays in settling refloating and towage charges are holding up the drydocking of barge *Napocor Power Barge No.106*. The vessel, which is due to undergo repairs at Keppel Batangas shipyard, is still being held by Malayan Towage and Salvage Corp, who refloated the vessel after it ran aground off Semirara island on Dec 18 last year. Malayan Towage has not yet been paid for its services. Consequently, the vessel is still moored at Keppel Batangas shipyard under the custody of the salvor. Napocor personnel have only been allowed to board the vessel to remove contaminated oil from its storage tanks. The salvage company are asking for a US\$2.4 million-dollar bond before turning over the vessel to its owners. In the meantime, Napocor and the Government Service and Insurance System (GSIS), which provided hull and P&I insurance for the vessel, are still negotiating over who should sign the bond documents. Napocor's position is that GSIS, as the insurer, should be responsible for the bond, however GSIS, are insisting that Napocor should be the guarantor. In the meantime, Napocor's costs are mounting as it has to pay Keppel Batangas Pesos 4,500 (US\$88) in daily wharfage fees. The barge has been moored at Keppel Batangas for over a month. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

#### TROPICAL STORM "KAJIKI"

Manila, Feb 21 — Tug *Napocor Tugboat No.1* is not expected to leave Keppel Batangas Shipyard anytime soon because of difficulties in getting the tug's insurer to pay for repairs. The tug is in the final phase of repairs and is expected to undergo sea trials before the end of February. Cost of repairs is estimated at Pesos10.8 million (US\$212,000). Officials of the National Power Corporation

(Napocor), owner of the vessel, fear that Keppel Batangas will detain the vessel unless the insurer pays up. Hull and machinery coverage is provided by state insurance company, Government Service and Insurance System (GSIS). Napocor officials said that they have been negotiating with the GSIS since December for the release of funds but to no avail. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

#### UNITED KINGDOM

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Extreme weather conditions have led to the cancellation of all Condor high speed ferry services departing from Guernsey today. Heavy seas and winds of up to 30mph are predicted during the day. The cancellations include the 1130, GMT sailing to Jersey and St Malo and the 1915, GMT sailing to Weymouth. A Condor Ferries spokesman said they expect the 1730, GMT conventional ferry to Jersey and Portsmouth to depart on time today. Winds are expected to rise to 35mph, tomorrow.

#### UNITED STATES

London, Feb 17 — A press report, dated today, states: Rain and strong winds triggered mudslides in the port town of Unalaska that moved a bunkhouse off its foundation, collapsed a warehouse and pushed cars and shipping containers into Dutch Harbor. Slides Monday (Feb 13) down Mount Ballyhoo hit buildings constructed along the land side of Ballyhoo Road, which runs parallel to Dutch Harbor on the east side of Amaknak Island in the Aleutian chain. Across the water in downtown Unalaska, winds estimated at more than 100 mph knocked out windows, tore off siding and lifted off sections of roofs in the community of 4,300 people 800 miles southwest of Anchorage. There were no reports of injuries. Damage to private property, including buildings and their contents, could exceed \$1 million, said City Manager Chris Hladick. Official readings at the Unalaska airport recorded winds of 60 mph and 77 mph at nearby Nikolski and Cold Bay, said National Weather Service spokesman David Vonderheide. But reports of stronger gusts easily could be accurate, he said. The agency's computer model indicated peak winds of 144 mph at 5,000 feet, he said. The storm started midafternoon Sunday and peaked at about noon Monday, Betzen said. Residents with wind gauges clocked winds exceeding 99 mph, the highest reading on their instruments, Betzen said. Two mudslides hit a Pacific Stevedoring bunkhouse, knocking the building more than a foot off its foundation. About 40 people lived in the building, said Lisa Lee, a member of the office staff at the company. Residents were evacuated to hotels and other housing. The American Red Cross of Alaska was assisting eight adults and 11 children with food and clothing, said spokesman John Ramsey. To the south, another slide

damaged a construction site belonging to Magone Marine, a salvage company, Hladick said. The slide destroyed a piling that contained 50 tons of concrete, he said, and threw a 20-foot cargo container into the water. Workers heard the slide coming and escaped by running onto a barge, Hladick said.

London, Feb 18 — Three people died yesterday in New York and Massachusetts as a fierce winter storm pushed its way into the Northeast from the Midwest. The storm created below-freezing temperatures and winds over 75 mph, which knocked out power to more than 100,000 homes in New York. One person died when a tree fell and crushed a passing car, and another was killed after a tree crashed onto his pickup truck. Meanwhile, Friday's strong wind gusts turned deadly for a man in Billerica, Mass., when a tree fell on his truck. WCVB-TV in Boston reported that at one point, up to 90,000 residents in Massachusetts were without electricity. In Needham, Mass., driving rains and strong winds took some residents by surprise. Power went out across the area, knocking out traffic lights and forcing some stores in the Needham Heights area to close temporarily, the station reported. The same storm battered the Midwest on Thursday (Feb 16), and there were still about 100,000 customers in Michigan without power yesterday evening. Some of those homes and businesses may remain blacked out until Sunday, officials said. Meanwhile, electricity has been restored to most homes and businesses in Terre Haute, Ind., where a fast-moving storm has damaged buildings at the airport and elsewhere. It may have brought two tornadoes into Indiana. In southeastern Minnesota, the snow piled up just in time for morning rush hour.

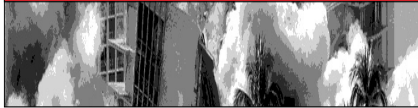
London, Feb 20 — A press report, dated Feb 19, states: It will cost about \$5 million to repair damage caused by New Year's Day weekend flooding along the Carson River in Nevada, federal officials said. Dan Kaffer, head of the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service, said floods damaged bridges, water lines and diversion dams. Floods also caused considerable riverbank erosion and dumped trees, rock, gravel and sand on farm and ranch fields, he said. Though the damage is extensive, Kaffer said, not much money is available for repairs. Officials' top priority is to remove debris clogging the Carson and diversion ditches, Kaffer said. Then they will stabilise banks and restore the river. "Opening up those diversions gets water from the river, and then the farmers can irrigate their fields," Kaffer told the Nevada Appeal. Kaffer said he was coordinating with more than 10 entities to find funding for repairs. The Carson Water Subconservancy District and the Douglas County and Dayton

Valley conservation districts are heading efforts to find funds for repairs before the irrigation season starts, he added. Earlier this month, President Bush declared Carson City, and Douglas and Lyon counties along the Carson a disaster area.

London, Feb 20 — A press report, dated Feb 19, states: Utility crews worked today to restore power to thousands of homes and businesses from Michigan to Maine following a weekend winter storm, while slick roads and heavy winds were blamed for several deadly accidents. At least four deaths were reported in the North-east, while at least three people were killed in accidents on icy roads in Arkansas over the weekend (Feb 18-19). Trees toppled by the wind killed two motorists in New York and one in Massachusetts. Another was killed near Rochester when his vehicle slammed into a truck rig whose driver had stopped to clear storm debris from his windshield. As far south as Texas, ice and freezing rain canceled dozens of flights over the weekend at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, including 85 American Airlines flights, according to a company spokesman. Little Rock, Arkansas, had a low of 18 deg Fahrenheit this morning. Farther west, Alliance, Nebraska, bottomed out at -8 deg, the National Weather Service said. A reading of -18 deg was recorded in Allagash, Maine, while temperatures dipped to a low of 10 deg in Rochester. The fierce wind, including a 143 mph gust recorded on Vermont's Stratton Mountain on Friday, knocked out power and toppled trees, which were blamed for four deaths in the North-east. Utility officials in New York expected to have crews working through the week to restore power to the 31,500 customers still without electricity today. That was down from a peak of 328,000 customers three days earlier. Several states were operating shelters, providing havens with light and heat for those without power.

London, Feb 22 — A press report, dated Feb 21, states: According to U.S. Federal officials, it will cost about five million dollars to repair damage caused by New Year's Day weekend flooding along the Carson River in Nevada. Dan Kaffer of the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service says floods damaged bridges, water lines and diversion dams. Floods also caused considerable riverbank erosion and dumped trees, rock, gravel and sand on farm and ranch fields. Though the damage is extensive, Kaffer says, not much money is available for repairs. Kaffer says officials' top priority is to remove debris clogging the Carson and diversion ditches, then to stabilize banks and restore the river. Earlier this month, President Bush declared Carson City, and Douglas and Lyon counties along the Carson a disaster area.

## Earthquakes



### BANGLADESH

London, Feb 14 — A 5.9-magnitude earthquake today jolted Bangladesh's south-east, but no casualties or damage were immediately reported, the Meteorological Department said. The quake hit south-eastern port city of Chittagong and its neighbouring districts at around 0700 hrs, the department said in a statement. The quake lasted more than a minute in Chittagong city, 216 kilometres south-east of national capital, Dhaka, the weather office said.

### INDIA

London, Feb 14 — A press report, dated today, states: An earthquake of moderate intensity today rocked India's north-eastern and eastern regions, triggering panic among people though there were no reports of any loss of lives. The tremor measured 5.7 on the Richter scale and occurred around 0625, said A.C. Lyngdoh, an official with the seismological centre in Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya. The epicentre of the quake was plotted along the north-eastern state of Sikkim, bordering China. The quake, lasting 12 seconds, was felt in Sikkim, Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and northern parts of West Bengal. The temblor caused damage to many buildings in Sikkim, including the Raj Bhavan in capital Gangtok, and a monastery. The quake triggered panic as people rushed out into the streets of Gangtok and the neighbouring towns of Deorali, Tadong, Chandmari and Singtam as well as Assam's principal city Guwahati.

### IRAN

London, Feb 19 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: A moderate earthquake shook a southeastern Iranian province today, but no damage or casualties were reported, state media reported. The magnitude 5.9 quake occurred in Rafsanjan, about 465 miles south-east of the capital, Tehran, according to state television and the official Islamic Republic News Agency.

### NEW ZEALAND

London, Feb 16 — A press report, dated today, states: An earthquake measuring 5.9 on the Richter Scale hit central New Zealand early today, a government seismologist said. Police received no immediate reports of injury or damage. The quake, recorded at 0115, was centred 80 kilometres northeast of Collingwood on South Island. The earthquake was felt across central New Zealand, Geological and Nuclear Sciences duty seismologist Geoff Clitheroe said.

Clitheroe said that while it originated very deep below the Earth's surface, "it wasn't strongly felt, it was a very gentle shake."

### NICARAGUA

Managua, Feb 20 — A moderate earthquake hit Nicaragua today and was also felt in the neighbouring Central American nation of Honduras, but there were no immediate reports of deaths or damage. A Reuters correspondent in the Nicaragua capital Managua said local radio had not mentioned the quake, which the U.S. Geological Survey in Denver said had a magnitude of 5.6. One witness in the Honduran capital Tegucigalpa said residents were awoken in the night by the quake but there were also no immediate reports of damage. The Geological Survey's Web site said the quake struck at 0659, UTC, at lat 13.11N, long 87.61W, or 30 miles west southwest of Choluteca, Honduras, and 45 miles east south-east of San Miguel, El Salvador. — Reuters.

### TONGA

London, Feb 18 — A magnitude 5.8 earthquake occurred in Tonga at 1454, UTC, Feb 16.

## Volcanic Activity



### MIYAKE ISLAND, JAPAN

London, Feb 20 — A press report, dated Feb 19, states: A volcano on a small island off eastern Japan had a minor eruption, and residents were warned of volcanic gases and possible mudslides. The eruption triggered a minor temblor and released a small amount of ash, the Meteorological Agency said, but there was no immediate threat of a larger eruption, the agency said. The eruption on Friday (Feb 17) was the volcano's first since May. White smoke billowed from the crater today, but there was no other major activity, the agency said. The volcano dominates Miyake Island, about 110 miles east of Tokyo. An eruption in July, 2000, forced all 4,000 islanders to evacuate the island. More than half of them returned a year ago after the evacuation order was lifted. The volcano continues to belch smoke and poisonous gas that officials said poses a potentially serious risk to residents.

## Political & Civil Unrest



### CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Geneva, Feb 17 — Some 2,800 refugees from the Central African Republic crossed into Chad this week to escape further deadly attacks in

the lawless north of their country, the United Nations said today. "Some refugees told the UNHCR that they had been attacked by bandits, while others say they were victims of violent attacks by armed rebels and-or the army," spokesman Ron Redmond of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) told a briefing. Authorities in Chad as well as refugee witnesses say that since Sunday (Feb 12) alone, at least 50 civilians have been killed in the neighbouring former French colony, he said. Local aid workers reported last Friday that more than 50 villagers had been killed in recent weeks by armed gangs. Little is known about the armed groups operating in the north who have been storming villages since June, shooting randomly, looting homes and terrorising civilians, they say. So far this year, 4,300 refugees from the Central African Republic have arrived in southern Chad, according to UNHCR. New arrivals are registered in Bekoninga, a village only 500 metres from the border. They are being taken to Gondje refugee camp, opened last December to hold 15,000 countrymen who fled fighting last summer, according to Redmond. "The new influx is creating an enormous strain on the already limited financial resources available for our operation in southern Chad," he said. In all, Chad is host to 45,000 refugees from Central African Republic, who are staying in three camps including Gondje, which is 12 km north of Gore, the main town in south Chad. — Reuters.

Bekoninga, Chad, Feb 21 — The number of refugees seeking refuge in Chad after fleeing violence in the lawless northern Central African Republic (CAR) is climbing steadily, with around 200 crossing the border daily. More than 4,000 refugees have arrived so far this month and more are believed to be on the way. "Many refugees report they fled attacks by government forces on civilians who CAR troops suspected of supporting various rebel groups. Refugees also mention raids by rebel groups who attack their villages to loot food and cattle, as well as forcibly recruit young men," UNHCR spokesperson Jennifer Pagonis told journalists at a regular briefing in Geneva today. The refugees said they are also suffering from attacks by bandits or coupeurs de route. "Some refugees have told UNHCR they have been victims of all three groups of rebels, government soldiers and bandits," said Pagonis. "The situation in CAR needs to be addressed urgently by the international community, before it is too late," said UNHCR's representative in Chad, Ana Liria-Franch. "Abuses against civilians do not appear to be confined to any one side of rebel groups, bandits and government forces are all mentioned by the refugees. It is credible that they are indeed terrifying these helpless populations." Liria-Franch called for the restoration of human rights in northern CAR, noting that

everyone had the right to enjoy peace and security at home without having to flee. Nevertheless, UNHCR fears that the outflow of refugees will continue. Many civilians are still hiding in the bush in northern CAR, too scared to return home. How long they can hold out without seeking help across the border is uncertain. Most refugees cross the border and stop 500 metres into Chadian territory at BÈkoninga village, population 600. Initially, they must survive on food they bring with them, as well as handouts from generous local villagers of people who have very little to share. Clean drinking water is a major concern as there is only one well in the village. Some refugees have no choice but to drink water from a nearby swamp. The refugees are understandably anxious to move away from the border to a refugee site. Tomorrow, UNHCR will move 300 of the new arrivals to GondjÈ refugee camp. More are scheduled for transfer in the coming days. To speed up the process of registration and identifying the most vulnerable refugees, UNHCR has brought in extra staff from its other field offices in southern and eastern Chad. UNHCR and Chadian authorities are discussing the possibility of opening a third refugee site near GorÈ in light of continued refugee arrivals from the CAR. Some 45,000 refugees from the Central African Republic currently reside in three camps in the south. GondjÈ refugee camp, 12 km west of GorÈ, opened in December 2005 to decongest the overcrowded neighbouring Amboko camp site. — Reuters.

#### COLOMBIA

Bogota, Feb 16 — Colombian aircraft bombed leftist rebels in one of the country's biggest nature reserves after attacks on police guarding workers ripping out plants used to make cocaine, the air force said today. It said it attacked guerrilla camps in La Macarena national park in the southern province of Meta yesterday night — a move environmentalists said would be catastrophic for the local ecosystem. "The bombing was aimed at the narcoterrorists," Colombian air force chief Edgar Lesmez told reporters. "We are evaluating the results of the operation." Police estimate that coca fields planted in the park help the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, a 41-year-old rebel army known by its Spanish initials FARC, produce 27 metric tons of cocaine every year. A FARC mortar attack yesterday brought to 12 the number of police killed in the first month of "Operation Green Colombia," which the government says is aimed at removing illicit crops from natural parks, starting with La Macarena, in an effort to restore their biodiversity. An increasing proportion of Colombia's coca fields are being planted in the parks as growers flee a U.S.-funded crop-dusting campaign. The government decided not to dust in the parks after objections from

environmentalists who said spraying herbicide would damage protected ecosystems. More than 900 shovel-wielding civilian workers, ringed by about 1,500 soldiers and police, are moving through La Macarena, pulling up coca bushes. — Reuters.

Havana, Feb 17 — Colombia and the country's second-largest Marxist rebel group, the ELN, met today for a second round of exploratory peace talks that as yet have no agreed agenda. Colombian peace commissioner Luis Carlos Restrepo said a first meeting held in Havana in December with commanders of the National Liberation Army, or ELN, had "unfrozen" ties and created what he termed a "precarious" trust. European diplomats monitoring the talks were skeptical about any agreement but expected the talks to last through Colombia's presidential election in May. — Reuters.

#### DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

London, Feb 20 — A press report, dated Feb 19, states: The new constitution in the Democratic Republic of Congo has officially been adopted, giving the country a new flag and a new legal framework. Although the constitution has formally come into force most changes will only happen after elections due in June. The constitution, approved in a referendum, is meant to transform DR Congo into a real democracy. The text says the president has to be elected and is only allowed to rule for two terms of five years. He also has to share power with an elected prime minister. The parliament has to be elected and a judiciary is independent. All this is new for the DR Congo, a country which is trying to emerge from years of war and which had its last free elections 40 years ago. The constitution was promulgated in front of the president of the African Union, Denis Sassou Nguesso and the South African President Thabo Mbeki, who acts as a mediator in the DR Congo crisis. Elections are due before the end of June. The constitution says that until then the former warlords who are currently ruling the country remain in place.

#### ECUADOR

London, Feb 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Ecuador's state-run oil company Petroecuador suspended crude exports today following violent protests that forced the closing of the country's main pipeline, said Petroecuador executive Eduardo Naranjo. Damages caused by protestors who occupied one of the pumping stations from the Trans-Ecuadorian Oil Pipeline System (SOTE) in the Amazon region Napo province shut Ecuador's daily exports of 144,000 barrels. Protestors are demanding more funds from the country's oil wealth for infrastructure and jobs in the province. Petroecuador declared that "circumstances beyond our control in the industry", had forced

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the postponement of shipments because the "security reserve" of crude to meet domestic demand had dropped to a critical level. In Ecuador, the affected pipeline ships 380,000 bpd from the Amazon to the port of Balao. Petroecuador said the pipeline would be down for 24 to 36 hours, but a private pipeline with a 500,000 bpd capacity continued operating normally. Ecuador, which is not a member of the Opec cartel of oil producing nations, is the fifth biggest oil producer in South America extracting 532,000 barrels of oil a day.

Quito, Feb 21 — Ecuador declared a state of emergency today after soldiers opened fire on protesters who invaded an Amazonian oil pumping station and shut down one of the country's main private pipelines. The state of emergency prohibits protests and marches. Leaders of the protest and a doctor at a local hospital said at least three people were wounded in the incident. About 600 people were still occupying the Sardinia pumping station in the Amazon province of Napo, about 55 miles east of Quito. Local television showed pictures of troops firing their rifles at dozens of rock-hurdling protesters. Television stations also showed footage of wounded protesters lying in a local hospital who said they had been shot by soldiers. "We want the government to talk to us because this situation is getting out of hand," Julio Perez, a spokesman for the protesters said. "We did not order people to invade this pumping station." "The OCP (pipeline) suspended its operations after protesters invaded the station of Sardinia," confirmed a spokesman for the company that operates the pipeline, which is owned by several Ecuadorian and foreign companies. The pipeline has the capacity to transport 450,000 barrels per day but at the time of the stoppage it carried 160,000 bpd from the Amazon region to a port in the Pacific coast. Hundreds of protesters were also outside the Baeza oil pumping station, which is owned by Petroecuador, the state oil company, a police spokesman said. The activists are demanding that the government channel more than \$100 million to their local communities to build roads, bridges and a new airport. The police sent about 300 officers to the area to protect key oil infrastructure and more officers could be sent in if the violence escalates, the police spokesman said. Protesters damaged another pumping station owned by Petroecuador yesterday, forcing it to shut down its main pipeline and suspend exports for several hours. Negotiations between the government and protesters broke down late today after officials refused to meet the activists' demands until they end a general strike. Interior Minister Alfredo Castillo, the chief negotiator, was meeting with Ecuador's President Alfredo Palacio to try to seek a way to end the protests, a government source said. — Reuters.

## INDIA

Guwahati, Feb 20 — Four policemen and a civilian were killed today in an ambush by separatist guerrillas in India's restive northeastern state of Manipur, police said. Heavily armed rebels fired on a vehicle carrying at least half a dozen policemen at a busy market in Thoubal, about 35 km south of Imphal, Manipur's capital, they said. Four policemen were killed instantly and two others were wounded. A civilian bystander was also killed. — Reuters.

## INDIA-PAKISTAN

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Pakistan and India today restored train service along a line that was severed during their war 40 years ago, establishing a second rail link between the two South Asian rivals. The "Thar Express" pulled into an Indian desert town early today with 200 passengers aboard, the latest step in efforts to overcome six decades of enmity. The train connects the border towns of Munabao in India's western state of Rajasthan and Khokrapar, in Pakistan's southern Sindh province. The leaders of Pakistan and India agreed to reopen the rail link - which was cut during a 1965 war - during a summit in New Delhi in April 2005. The resumption of people-to-people contact, including new bus, rail and air links, are among the most popular measures of the peace dialogue. They are enhancing business ties and uniting citizens separated decades ago when thousands of families on both sides were divided by the 1947 partition of the Indian subcontinent that created the new nation of Pakistan.

## IRAN

Tehran, Feb 19 — A percussion bomb exploded in the restive south-western Iranian oil city of Ahvaz today, shattering windows but causing no injuries, the official IRNA news agency reported. IRNA quoted an unnamed security official as saying the bomb exploded at 2145 hrs.— Reuters.

## IRAQ

London, Feb 17 — A press report, dated today, states: Saboteurs blew up a main oil pipeline in northern Baghdad today, causing a huge fire, a police said. "A huge fire flared around 0930 hrs (0630, UTC) after saboteurs blew up a bomb under the oil pipeline that feeds the al-Doura oil refinery in southern Baghdad with crude from Iraq's northern Kirkuk oil fields," Captain Ahmed Abdullah, from Baghdad police, told Xinhua. Firefighters and Iraq security forces reached the area, where black and thick smoke could be seen pouring into the sky, he said. There was no reports of human casualties, he added. Meanwhile, a roadside bomb went off today morning near a police patrol in Baghdad's northern district of Sebea Ibkar, wounding two policemen, Abdullah said. Separately,

the police found four unidentified bodies in execution style in the Shiite district Shula in the northern capital, he said.

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated Feb 17, states: Gunmen wearing Iraqi police commando uniforms kidnapped a wealthy banker and his son in Baghdad, killing five of their bodyguards, police said. Ghalib Abd al-Hussein Kubba was abducted from his home in the western suburb of Yarmouk yesterday night. Meanwhile, police in Baghdad found the bodies of three unidentified men who had been shot in the head. Yesterday, an inquiry was launched into what the US says is evidence of death squads in the interior ministry. US Maj Gen Joseph Peterson, who is in charge of training the Iraqi police, revealed the arrest of 22 traffic policemen allegedly on a mission to kill a Sunni man. Sunnis have long accused Iraqi forces of operating death squads - but the claims have never been substantiated. Mr Kubba was the chairman of Basra's chamber of commerce before he moved to the capital to head the Baghdad office of Basra International Bank. His son, Hassan, is also a senior employee there. The kidnapers arrived at their home at 1930 hrs (1830, UTC) yesterday evening and killed five bodyguards outside, police Maj Falah al-Mohammedawi said. Maj Mohammedawi said he believed the motive for the kidnapping had been financial. "We think it is a criminal case because the bank director was not killed," he told the Associated Press. "We think the kidnapers will blackmail the family and they are after money. We have many similar cases of businessmen being abducted for money."

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated today, states: A spate of roadside bombings killed a US soldier and at least nine Iraqis in Baghdad and north of the capital today, officials said. Two Macedonians were kidnapped in southern Iraq, while a search was underway for a private German plane missing in the north. An Iraqi police major, meanwhile, was assassinated by drive-by gunmen in the insurgent stronghold of Ramadi, west of Baghdad. The US military said a roadside bomb struck an American vehicle at about 0800 hrs, in eastern Baghdad, killing a soldier assigned to the Multi-National Division-Baghdad. The death took the number of US personnel killed in Iraq to at least 2,273. Shortly after, a roadside bomb exploded on an eastern Baghdad highway and killed two Iraqi policemen guarding an oil tanker, Lt. Bilal Ali Majid said. Three other police were wounded and the tanker was not damaged. Another concealed bomb detonated at 0845 hrs, as a police patrol passed by in eastern Baghdad's Ghadir area, missing the policemen but killing three Iraqi civilians and wounding four driving in two cars, Lt. Ali Abbas said. The police chief of Baghdad's Karradah neighbourhood, Brig. Abdul-Karim



Maryoush, escaped unharmed from a roadside bomb that targeted his convoy. Two policemen were killed and one was wounded in the attack in Karradah, police Maj. Abbas Mohammed said. In Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit, a bomb blast meant for policemen hit a bus instead, killing one passenger and wounding two others, police said. A bystander was killed and five wounded when a bomb planted on a road exploded in Baqouba, 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, police said. The motive for the attack was unclear. Iraqi police said a US patrol killed three men trying to plant roadside bombs in Baghdad's troubled southern suburb of Dora. One man was shot dead while trying to place a bomb on the side of a road, while two accomplices died when soldiers fired at their car, which contained more bombs that exploded, said Lt. Maitham Abdul-Razzaq. The British military confirmed that two Macedonians working for a cleaning company in Basra were abducted Thursday (Feb 16) morning in the southern city. An employee of the Macedonian company, Ecolog, said a \$1 million ransom has been demanded for their release. Maj. Peter Cripps said the two men were abducted while driving with a Macedonian woman who worked for the same company. "They were in a vehicle traveling between two locations and during that route they were somehow abducted," Cripps told The Associated Press. The kidnappers took the two men and left the woman on the side of the road, where she was picked up by a British patrol, Cripps said. Police were investigating the case. The company employee, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was unauthorized to speak to the media, identified the hostages as Macedonian Muslims of Albanian ethnic origin. The company, whose headquarters are in Kuwait, has a cleaning contract at the British-controlled Basra International Airport. Meanwhile, hundreds of Iraqi security personnel, assisted by US personnel, searched Saturday for a German-owned plane feared crashed in northern Iraq's snow-covered mountain region. German officials were informed Thursday that the plane, carrying five Germans and one Iraqi, had gone missing en route to the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk from Azerbaijan's capital, Baku. The plane started its journey in Munich Tuesday and travelled via Hungary to Baku. Police spokesman Hans-Dieter Kammerer said the plan was for it to continue to Sulaimaniyah or Kirkuk in northern Iraq on Thursday. The insurgency has had a devastating impact on Iraq's economy, with the oil industry suffering \$6.25 billion in losses in 2005 as a result of sabotage to infrastructure and lost export revenues, Oil Ministry spokesman Assem Jihad said today. There were 186 attacks on Iraqi oil installations last year, during which insurgents killed 47 oil engineers, technicians

and workers, as well as 100 police protecting pipelines and other oil facilities, Jihad said. Most of the sabotage took place in the northern oil installations, preventing Iraq from exporting around 400,000 barrels a day from its northern oil fields via the Turkish port of Ceyhan. Iraq produces around two million barrels per day from its southern and northern oil fields, down by about 800,000 from levels before the 2003 US-led invasion.

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated today, states: A spate of roadside bombings in Baghdad killed a US soldier and at least 11 Iraqis, officials said. An Iraqi police major also was killed by drive by gunmen in the insurgent stronghold of Ramadi, west of Baghdad, in the latest attack targeting security forces that the United States hopes will eventually take control of Iraq. The US military said a roadside bomb struck an American vehicle at about 0800 in eastern Baghdad, killing a soldier assigned to the Multi-National Division-Baghdad. Iran's foreign minister yesterday demanded the immediate withdrawal of British forces from Basra, saying their presence had destabilised Iraq's second largest city. A roadside bomb exploded on an eastern Baghdad highway and killed four Iraqi policemen guarding an oil tanker. One other policeman was wounded and the tanker was not damaged. Another concealed bomb detonated as a police patrol passed in eastern Baghdad's Ghadir area, missing the policemen. But three Iraqi civilians were killed and four people driving in two cars were wounded. The British Army confirmed that two foreigners abducted in the southern city of Basra were Macedonians working for the Ecolog cleaning company. A £575,000 ransom has been demanded for their release.

London, Feb 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Attacks by insurgents on Iraq's oil industry cost the country \$6.25bn (£3.6bn) in lost revenue during 2005, according to the Iraqi oil ministry. A total of 186 attacks were carried out on oil sites last year, claiming the lives of 47 engineers and 91 police and security guards, a spokesman said. Most of attacks on Iraqi oil installations occurred in the north of the country, where crude is pumped through pipelines to the Turkish port of Ceyhan. "Iraq lost oil revenues worth \$6.25bn in 2005 due to sabotage on the country's oil infrastructure," oil ministry spokesman Assem Jihad said. The attacks prevented Iraq from exporting about 400,000 barrels of oil a day, the ministry said. Iraq currently produces about two million barrels of oil a day, mostly from oil fields in the southern and northern tips of the country. However, that is down by about 800,000 barrels from production levels before Saddam Hussein's regime was toppled in 2003. Violent attacks on foreign contractors in Iraq have also hit the economy, pushing up security costs and delaying reconstruction projects.

Mosul, Feb 20 — At least five people were killed and 21 wounded today when a bomb exploded inside a restaurant in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, police and hospital sources said. The sources said one policeman and four civilians were killed in the blast near Mosul police headquarters. The restaurant is frequented by police. — Reuters.

London, Feb 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Two Macedonian contractors kidnapped in the British-controlled area of southern Iraq have been released. The two men, who work for a cleaning contractor, were abducted from their vehicle near Basra. They were released this morning, although there were no details given of the circumstances of their release. Their company, Ecolog, had received a \$1m ransom demand after they were seized while travelling from work at the UK's Shaibah military base. The seizing of the Macedonians came days after UK forces launched an investigation following the brief capture of three Iraqis working at the base. Macedonia has a small number of troops stationed in Iraq, but at least 1,000 of its nationals, including ethnic Albanians, are also in the country working privately.

Baghdad, Feb 20 — A suicide bomber strapped with explosives blew himself up on a bus in central Baghdad today, killing at least 12 people, Interior Ministry sources said. The attack in the mostly Shi'ite Muslim Kadhimiya district wounded at least nine people, the sources said. — Reuters.

London, Feb 22 — A press report, dated Feb 21, states: A car bomb killed at least 21 people in Baghdad today. The blast in the southern Dora district, the bloodiest in about six weeks, also wounded at least 27 people, one day after three bombings killed 19 people, breaking a relative lull in guerrilla violence. Yesterday, three bomb attacks killed at least 19 people, including 12 victims of a suicide bomber who climbed on board a bus in a Shi'ite district of Baghdad and blew himself up.

## ISRAEL

London, Feb 19 — A press report, dated today, states: Two Palestinians were killed when Israel staged an air strike in southern Gaza today, Palestinian security sources said. Israeli air forces fired at least one missile at a group of Palestinians, killing two militants near the border fence on the Israel-Gaza borders close to Khan Younis, said the security sources and medical sources. The two were identified as activists of the Nasser Salah el-Dein Brigades, the armed wing of the Palestinian Popular Resistance Committees. Israel Radio said the two were attempting to carry out an attack or any terror-related activity near the border fence. The attack came one day after a Hamas-led Palestinian parliament was sworn in both in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Israel is about

to vote for adopting tough measures against the Hamas-led Palestinian National Authority today.

Nablus, Feb 20 — Israeli troops killed an Islamic Jihad commander and another gunman today, in a flareup in violence before election winner Hamas opened formal talks on forming a new Palestinian government. Israel has moved to isolate a government headed by Hamas, whose charter calls for the destruction of the Jewish state. Israel yesterday halted the monthly transfer of millions of dollars to the cash-strapped Palestinian Authority. Hamas, which became the majority bloc in parliament on Saturday (Feb 18) after a Jan 25 election victory, was expected to hold talks in Gaza with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, legislative leaders and militant groups on forming a government. Sami Abu Zuhri, a Hamas spokesman, said the militant group would try to form “the largest national coalition possible” with Ismail Haniyeh as prime minister by early next month. Western powers led by the United States have threatened to boycott a Hamas-led government unless the group renounces violence and recognises Israel, but they have also urged Israel not to take immediate steps that would increase the hardships of the Palestinians. Interim Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert told his cabinet yesterday that the Palestinian government was becoming a “terrorist authority” with Hamas in control. “Israel will not hold contacts with a government Hamas is part of,” he said. Israel’s cabinet decided to stop the monthly flow of tax revenue to the Palestinians but balked at an earlier proposal to bar all Palestinians from working in or travelling through Israel. In last month’s election, Hamas won 74 seats in the 132-member parliament, trouncing the long dominant Fatah party headed by Abbas. Hamas has rejected Abbas’s calls to continue to honour past peace deals with Israel, but has signalled readiness for a long-term truce if Israel withdraws from lands it occupied in the 1967 war. In fresh violence today, Israeli troops carried out a raid in the West Bank city of Nablus and ambushed gunmen from Islamic Jihad, killing two, including the group’s West Bank commander, Palestinian sources said. Four gunmen were wounded. Islamic Jihad, responsible for several recent suicide bombings in Israel, has been a frequent target of Israeli military strikes. Hamas has largely observed a cease-fire since last year. Israeli gunners fired artillery shells at Gaza in response to rockets fired at Israeli towns. There were no reported injuries. Four Palestinians died in violence with Israel yesterday, two of them teenagers shot by troops confronting stone-throwing protesters while searching for militants near Nablus. Two militants were killed in an air strike in Gaza. — Reuters.

#### IVORY COAST

Korhogo, Feb 20 — Foreign mediators are piling pressure on armed factions in the divided Ivory Coast to disarm in time for October elections, but rebels holding the north show no sign of laying down their guns. A new cultural centre in the northern town of Korhogo and fresh coats of paint on the town’s administrative buildings also suggest the rebels in charge are in no hurry to leave. Foreign mediators helping to oversee the implementation of a peace process to reunite the country and stage elections by October 31 repeated their call for disarmament at a meeting in the government-controlled economic capital Abidjan on Friday (Feb 17). But such calls have little impact in the north, separated from the south since a brief civil war in 2002-03. “We have to ... bring Ivorians to understand that disarmament is not necessarily the priority,” said Cherif Ousmane, a rebel commander from the rebel headquarters Bouake in town for the cultural centre’s opening at the weekend. For Ousmane and other northerners, disarmament is unthinkable until their status as Ivorian citizens is resolved. The divisive question of identity — who really qualifies as a “pure” Ivorian — lies at the heart of the war which exploded when rebels tried to oust the president and seized the north of the world’s top cocoa grower in September 2002. Former Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara, who enjoys strong support among the north’s Muslim majority, was barred from standing as president in 2000 by a clause requiring candidates to prove both their parents were Ivorian-born. Thousands of people of northern origin in both halves of the country have no identity papers. Many say police or soldiers loyal to President Laurent Gbagbo have confiscated or ripped them up during house-to-house searches or at roadblocks. The National Statistics Institute, which will administer the elections, has said it will issue special papers to citizens without identity documents allowing them to vote, if they first undergo a “hearing” in which village chiefs and local officials testify to the applicant’s Ivorian origins. Rebels say disarming before new identity papers are distributed could leave northerners further isolated if they still lack the documents after reunification. The disarmament process requires both rebel and government soldiers to turn in their weapons and take up residence in dozens of special sites around the country, with security provided by around 11,000 U.N. and French peacekeepers. Members of both forces who meet the criteria would then join a new army which would deploy across a reunited country. This plan was supposed to be carried out last year in the run up to presidential elections due last October, but rebels pulled out before serious preparations began, saying Gbagbo would try to rig the polls. Elections were delayed for a year. A

new U.N.-backed peace plan has been drawn up but like a string of previous deals it has begun to founder as pro-Gbagbo and opposition politicians bicker over how to interpret it. — Reuters.

#### NEPAL

London, Feb 19 — A press report, dated today, states: King Gyanendra of Nepal has called on the mainstream opposition political parties in the country to enter into dialogue and promote democracy. It is the first such appeal from the king since he seized direct control of the country a year ago, but his call to restart “the stalled democratic process” was dismissed as “an artificial appeal” by a leading opposition leader. As he spoke, at least 3,000 protesters marched in the capital, Kathmandu. The King called on “all willing political parties to come forth to fully activate, at the earliest, the stalled democratic process in the greater interest of the nation”. The king was speaking on National Democracy Day which marks the anniversary of a popular movement in 1990 which forced the previous monarch to establish multi-party democracy. US Ambassador to Nepal James Moriarty on Wednesday (Feb 15) said the deepening rift between the king and the country’s political parties was only benefiting the Maoist rebels. The rebels have called for a general strike from April 3, preceded by blockades on the country’s major roads from mid-March. “The regime is counting its final days,” said a rebel statement. “Time has come to make the final strike on the regime that has been isolated and defamed.” Protesters at today’s rally, organised by the country’s seven mainstream political parties, were unimpressed by the king’s speech. “If he is really serious about resolving the problems then he should have directly approached us and not made such a vague appeal,” said Khadga Prasad Oli, deputy leader of the Communist Party of Nepal.

#### NIGERIA

Wari, Nigeria, Feb 17 — Nigerian militants said that the military had launched a new helicopter attack today on land targets in the southern oil-producing state of Delta and that they had tried to shoot it down. Militants from the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) said the helicopter targeted ethnic Ijaw communities in the Gbaramatu area of the state. The group said this followed an attack on Wednesday (Feb 15) in the same area. “Our units there were authorised to shoot down this craft which they attempted with rockets and machine-gun fire. The chopper immediately abandoned its mission and fled,” MEND said in an e-mail statement. “We cannot at this point be certain if it was hit,” the group added. It was not immediately possible to reach Nigeria’s armed forces for comment. A navy source had said Wednesday’s

attack was not against communities but rather against oil barges suspected of being used for oil theft. These are the first major military operations in the Niger Delta since MEND staged a series of attacks against the oil industry last month. MEND said the helicopter took off from the Osubi airstrip in the state capital Warri, operated by Royal Dutch Shell, which the militants say is meant to be a civilian airfield. "Operators of craft using the Shell Osubi airstrip must be warned that this place is now considered a military facility and we will attempt to shoot down any planes landing or taking off from this facility," the e-mail statement said. A Shell spokesman said: "The Osubi airstrip is built and operated for use by the oil industry in Delta state." He added that any questions on military operations in the region and "the use of airstrips during such operations" should be raised with the appropriate authorities. — Reuters.

Lagos, Feb 18 — Nine foreign oil workers were taken hostage from an offshore barge in Nigeria today, a security source said. A Shell oil facility near the Forcados export terminal was also attacked, and militants said they destroyed a gas pipeline running from the Escravos area to the Kaduna refinery in northern Nigeria. A fire broke out at a Shell oil facility near Forcados export terminal, but was later extinguished, a company source said. — Reuters.

London, Feb 19 — A press report, dated today, states: Nigerian militants launched a string of attacks in the world's eighth largest oil exporter overnight, abducting nine foreign workers, bombing a major oil export platform and sabotaging two pipelines. Royal Dutch Shell suspended exports from the 380,000 barrel-a-day Forcados tanker terminal, a senior industry source said, cutting at least 16 percent of Nigeria's 2.4 million barrels of daily supply to world markets. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta said the attacks were a response to military air raids on villages in Delta state earlier this week and would be followed by another wave of violence "on a grander scale". "These hostages are human shields. Subsequent attacks on other installations will be drastic as we have no intentions of taking hostages," the militants said, calling on all oil workers to leave the delta. The militants said they wanted more local control over the Niger Delta's vast oil wealth and the release of two ethnic Ijaw leaders, including a militia leader who is on trial for treason. "Expatriates must realise that they have been caught up in a war and the Nigerian government can do nothing to guarantee the security of anyone," they added. In military-style pre-dawn attacks, militants in six speed boats stormed an offshore barge operated by U.S. oil services company Willbros and abducted nine workers - three Americans, one Briton, two

Thais, two Egyptians and a Filipino. They caused an explosion and fire on the Forcados loading platform, which delivers crude oil through pipes to large buoys where tankers load, but it was later extinguished. They blew up a major Shell crude oil pipeline nearby, and another pipeline taking natural gas to a refinery in northern Nigeria operated by state-run Nigeria National Petroleum Corp, militant and oil industry sources said. Shell began to close oilfields feeding the Forcados terminal but the full impact of the attacks was not immediately clear. The company had already shut 106,000 barrels a day of output from the Forcados area because of an attack in January. The militants warned Shell not to try to repair the offshore loading platform, threatening a more brutal attack. The United States confirmed three Americans were among the hostages. Militants said these attacks were focused on Delta state in response to military air raids on Wednesday (Feb 15) and Friday. Delta state is on the western side of the Niger Delta and accounts for about a quarter of Nigerian output. They accused Shell of allowing the military to use an airstrip operated by the company to launch its attacks, and threatened to attack any aircraft, including civilian planes, using it. The Osubi airport in Delta state was closed as a precaution, a security source said. The military said their aerial bombardment was aimed at gangs stealing crude oil from pipelines.

London, Feb 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Nigeria is facing a serious escalation in the conflict that has hit the oil-rich but poverty-stricken Niger Delta region, as rebels threatened yesterday to blow up offshore tankers, a day after seizing nine foreign hostages, including a British man. The warning from the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta came after a series of military-style raids that disabled oil and gas pipelines and sabotaged a key oil loading platform, halting millions of pounds of production. Shoreline gun-boat attacks have been a key feature of the upsurge in rebel violence but so far raids have focused on damaging pipelines, platforms or kidnapping staff, not firing rockets at the giant oil tankers out to sea. The fighting in Africa's largest oil exporter has regularly sent prices climbing in global oil markets. Efe Alari, a self-declared commander of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, said yesterday his group was poised to attack foreign crude oil tankers offshore. "We'll use our rockets on the vessels to stop them from taking our oil," Mr Alari said. The group kidnapped nine foreign oil workers on Saturday, forcing a 20% cutback in shipments from the world's eighth largest oil exporter. It said it could also destroy shipping. "That can easily be achieved by setting the engine-room and accommodation space on fire. As long as the integrity of the storage tanks has been

compromised, whatever stored products will serve as fuel to ensure a complete destruction," the group said. The militants snatched the Briton, three Americans, two Egyptians, two Thais and one Filipino from a barge operated by US services company Willbros during a string of attacks on Saturday (Feb 18) which crippled Shell's 380,000-barrel-a-day Forcados loading platform and two pipelines.

London, Feb 21 — A press report, dated today, states: A curfew has been imposed in Bauchi in northern Nigerian after at least 13 people were killed in a sectarian riot. It began as an argument between a teacher and a pupil over the confiscation of a Koran in school, but rumours swept the city that the book had been desecrated and that was the cue for youths, some armed with machetes, to rampage in the streets. Reports say two churches were burnt in Bauchi before police fired tear gas and live rounds to disperse the crowd. The state governor and senior security officials in the state are meeting to discuss security and consider whether to hold an inquiry into the incident. The Red Cross say they have recovered 13 bodies but this may rise as they hope to recover more bodies.

London, Feb 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Militants holding nine foreign hostages said today they have no plans to release their captives in the immediate future and scoffed at Nigerian government attempts to secure their release. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, or MEND, accused the government of a "time wasting venture" in searching for a high-level negotiation team to end the hostage crisis that began Saturday (Feb 18). "We have no immediate intention of setting these guys free," a spokesperson for the group said in an e-mail. The militants said yesterday negotiations hadn't yet been arranged for the release of the three U.S. citizens, two Egyptians, two Thais, one U.K. citizen and one Filipino seized from a barge belonging to Houston-based oil services company Willbros, which was laying pipeline for Royal Dutch Shell PLC. The militants say they plan to widen their campaign across the vast region of swamps and creeks. The militants say their key aims are winning the release of the delta's two most prominent leaders, Mujahid Dokubo-Asari and former Governor Diepreye Alamieyeseigha. Dokubo-Asari, who waged a struggle for autonomy for eight million Ijaws that dominate the Niger delta for years, was jailed on treason charges in September. Alamieyeseigha was arrested recently in Nigeria after fleeing the U.K. on money laundering charges. Militants are also demanding Shell pay local communities \$1.5 billion to compensate for environmental pollution, which Shell has rejected. The Nigerian government says the militants are little more than criminal gangs.

**PAKISTAN**

Karachi, Feb 18 — Three gas pipelines in Loti and Pir Koh gas fields owned by state owned Oil and Gas Development Corporation were blown up on yesterday and a driver was seriously injured when a landmine exploded in the eastern part of Balochistan province of Pakistan. According to local media reports, a pipeline supplying gas to the Pir Koh gas plant from well No.24 was blown up. "Miscreants planted a powerful bomb under the pipeline and blew it up," Dera Bugti DCO Abdul Samad Lasi said, adding that a landmine planted at well No.10 stopped engineers and other staff from repairing a pipeline that had been damaged earlier. "A bomb disposal squad has been sent to Pir Koh to defuse the landmine," he said, adding that the plant closed earlier in the week could not resume work because of the explosion in the main 16-inch diameter pipeline. The OGDC driver was injured when a landmine blew up his tanker that was carrying water for the Pir Koh gas plant. Two pipelines in the Loti gas field blown up yesterday disrupting gas supply to the plant from wells No 3 and 10. According to official sources, some people attacked the Loti gas field area and fired a number of rockets which hit the pipelines. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Karachi, Feb 21 — Pakistan state owned Oil and Gas Development Co (OGDC) with the help of local gas utility engineers is yet to start repair work on the ruptured pipelines in Loti and Pir Koh gas fields in Balochistan Province of Pakistan. As such gas supply is stopped to some cities. It could not be started due to the presence of landmines in the area, local media pointed out. Meanwhile, tribesmen further blew up a pipeline in the Pir Koh gas field yesterday. It is reported that armed men planted a bomb under the pipeline supplying gas to the Pir Koh gas plant from well No 19 and detonated it yesterday morning. The engineers had already closed the plant due to disruption of gas supply to the plant from at least 7 gas wells following attacks by tribesmen. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

**PERU**

Lima, Feb 20 — Peruvian police killed a senior Shining Path leader during a weekend raid on a rebel stronghold in the country's central jungle, the government said today. Hector Aponte, known by the alias Comrade Clay, headed Shining Path's rebel operations in the remote Alto Huallaga region and was shot dead yesterday night after a police assault that lasted several hours, Interior Ministry Romulo Pizarro told reporters. "He was a man responsible for a lot of deaths," Pizarro said. He added that two suspected rebels and a haul of weapons were also captured in the operation. The raid followed an attack on police last week in Alto Huallaga that killed two officers.

Authorities attributed the attack to remnants of Shining Path, which fought to try to impose communism in Peru between 1980 and the mid-1990s. Shining Path rebels killed at least 19 police and military officers in 2005, according to government reports. Currently, Shining Path has several hundred die-hard members holed up in Andean and jungle areas. — Reuters.

**PHILIPPINES**

Manila, Feb 17 — Mudslides triggered by heavy rains buried two villages in central Philippines today, killing at least four people, officials and witnesses said. Congressman Roger Mercado told Reuters that as many as 2,000 people may have died, according to estimates by local officials. Sixteen people were killed earlier this week when heavy rains and flash floods hit southeastern provinces. — Reuters. (See issue of Feb 16.)

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated today, states: An explosion near a Philippine army base being used by US troops has wounded about 20 people, reports say. The blast happened at a karaoke bar on Jolo, an island hit by attacks by Abu Sayyaf Islamic rebels. US troops are on Jolo for counter-terrorism exercises. US military officials said that no US servicemen were among those hurt, and said planned exercises would continue. A spokesman said Abu Sayyaf, which has kidnapped Americans in the past, did have the capability to attack the bar. The blast happened at a temporary karaoke bar erected close to the gates of Jolo's army base, Brigadier General Alexander Aleo said. About 250 US troops are due to join Filipino units for annual exercises beginning on Monday. We don't know who was behind the attack. But there's only one group capable of doing this, it's the Abu Sayyaf.

**PROTESTS AGAINST PUBLICATION OF CARTOONS OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD**

Copenhagen, Feb 17 — Denmark said today it had temporarily closed its embassy in Islamabad as a result of days of violent protests over cartoons of the Prophet Mohammad which first appeared in a Danish newspaper. "We are not satisfied with the security situation and have temporarily closed the embassy," Foreign Ministry spokesman Lars Thuesen said. The ministry also issued a new travel warning for Pakistan, urging Danes in the country to leave as soon as possible. "The demonstrations that are currently being held in Pakistan have created an atmosphere of very strong antipathy against Denmark and Danes," the ministry said in a statement. Five people have been killed in clashes between police and demonstrators in Pakistan this week during violent protests against the cartoons, first published last September in the Danish daily

Jyllands-Posten and later reprinted by papers in many Western countries. Pakistani police fired tear gas and detained more than 100 Islamists today to contain fresh protests. Pakistan's foreign ministry said it was recalling its ambassador to Denmark for consultations but did not elaborate. A Pakistani Muslim cleric and his followers offered rewards today amounting to more than \$1 million to anyone who killed Danish cartoonists who drew the caricatures of the Prophet. The cartoonists have been under police protection since the storm of protest over the cartoons broke out last month. A Danish foreign ministry spokesman said the ministry would decide on Monday (Feb 20) whether to reopen the Islamabad embassy. Danish ambassador Bent Wigotski said he was staying in Pakistan, at a secure location. The Danish foreign ministry said the embassy in Islamabad could not at present carry out its consular mission and Danes in need of help should contact the German embassy. Denmark has already closed its embassies in Syria, Lebanon, Iran and Indonesia because of threats against staff and the difficult security situation. — Reuters.

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated Feb 17, states: Libyans angry over caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad rioted at the Italian consulate in Benghazi today, storming the building and setting it on fire. A diplomat said at least 10 people were killed in clashes with police. It was the deadliest demonstration yet against the cartoons, which have set off violent protests throughout the Muslim world. Libyan security officials said 11 people were killed or wounded during the riot in the eastern city of Benghazi when police firing bullets and tear gas tried to contain more than 1,000 demonstrators hurling rocks and bottles. The casualties included police officers, but the officials declined to say how many people had died. Rioters charged the consular compound and set fire to the first floor of the building, the Italian Foreign Ministry said. Domenico Bellantone, an Italian diplomat, said 10 or 11 people - all Libyan - had died. Antonio Simoes-Concalves, an Italian consular official in Benghazi, Libya's second-largest city, said Libyan police were not able to control the crowd. The riot appeared to be a reaction to Italian Cabinet Minister Roberto Calderoli, who said this week he would wear a T-shirt printed with the cartoons, which have provoked protests across the Muslim world. His remark was widely published in Libya. Calderoli wore the T-shirt beneath a suit today. Hours later, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi asked for his resignation, the ANSA news agency reported. In Pakistan, the cleric Mohammed Yousaf Qureshi said the mosque and the religious school he leads would give a \$25,000 reward and a car for killing the cartoonist who drew the

caricatures - considered blasphemous by many Muslims. He said a local jewellers' association would also give \$1 million, but no representative of the association was available to confirm the offer. Qureshi did not name any cartoonist and he did not appear aware that 12 different people had drawn the pictures. In Denmark, a spokesman for the newspaper, Jyllands-Posten, declined comment on the bounty offer, but Mogens Blicher Bjerregaard, president of the Danish Journalist Union and spokesman for the cartoonists, condemned it. He said the cartoonists - who have been living under police protection since last year - are aware of the reward and are "feeling bad about the whole situation." Denmark, meanwhile, said it had temporarily closed its embassy in Pakistan and urged Danes to leave the country. Last week, Denmark temporarily shut its embassies in Lebanon, Syria, Iran and Indonesia. Before today, a total of 19 people had died in protests over the caricatures, with the deadliest day being February 8, when police in Afghanistan shot and killed four protesters outside the U.S. military base in the southern city of Qalat.

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated today, states: At least 16 people have been killed in northern Nigeria in violent protests by Muslims over the cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad. Eleven churches were burned during the riots in Maiduguri, the capital of the north-eastern state of Borno. Soldiers have been deployed and a curfew imposed, police say. These are the first violent protests over the cartoons in Nigeria, whose population is nearly equally split between Muslims and Christians. Christian leaders in the mainly Muslim north of the country had been quick to denounce the publication of the cartoons. Residents in Maiduguri described demonstrators running wild after police tried to disperse the protest with teargas. Some were deliberately targeting the city's Christian minority, they said. At least 10 churches, some hotels, more than 20 shops and over 10 vehicles were burned by the protesters. Violent clashes State governor Modu Sheriff said the state was shocked and disgusted by the civil disturbance in Maiduguri. At least 15 died in the city, while one person was killed in similar riots in north-central Katsina state. Around 115 people were arrested in Maiduguri and 105 in Katsina, a police spokesman said.

### SOMALIA

Mogadishu, Feb 19 — At least 12 people were killed and more than 40 others wounded when rival militias using mortars, anti-aircraft guns and artillery clashed in Somalia's capital today, residents said. They said civilians including women and children were among the casualties when heavy fighting over territory broke out between gunmen loyal to Mogadishu's Islamic courts and a local warlord in the south of the capital.

Each side blamed the other for the hostilities, which highlight general lawlessness in the Horn of Africa country that has been without a functioning central government for the last 15 years and is run by various clan-based militias. Residents said the fighting started early yesterday and continued through the day. Among the dead, at least four were civilians, residents said. Hospital officials in the capital said 41 wounded were brought in, including seven children and 12 women. — Reuters.

Nairobi, Feb 20 — At least 15 people have been killed and hundreds of families displaced in fighting that started on Saturday (Feb 18) between rival militias in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, witnesses said. The violence erupted when armed militias reportedly loyal to Mogadishu militia leader, Abdi Nure Siyad, also known as "Abdi Wal", attacked others who guard the Islamic courts which are located in a former military academy south of city. Siyad is a member of a newly created group — the Alliance for Peace and Fight Against International Terrorism — which comprises several Mogadishu-based faction leaders. Other members include Muhammad Qanyare Afrah, Muse Sudi Yalahow, Omar Finnish, Bashir Raghe and Abdirashid Shire Ilqeyte. The weekend fighting subsided but resumed today "with intensity," Hassan Ade, a local resident, said. Siyad denied starting the violence. "I was attacked by these people (Islamic court militias) and I am defending myself," he said. "These groups are only after one thing — power — and are hiding behind Islam." Abdullahi Shirwa, a member of Civil Society in Action, an umbrella organisation made up of over 12 groups in Mogadishu, however, said the fighting was an attempt by the alliance "to arrest the influence of the Islamic courts," which, he said, has brought a semblance of order in areas they control. Shops, secular and Koranic schools were closed and public transport disrupted as fighting raged. Hospital sources said many of the dead and wounded were civilians hit by stray bullets. The number of those wounded in various hospitals yesterday stood at "over 100," a local doctor said. Most of the wounded were taken to the Medina and Hasan Jis hospitals, he said. "In our hospital we treated 100 injured — 50 of them serious," Shaykhdon Salad Ilmi, a doctor at Medina said. Elders and civil society groups were trying to mediate between the combatants. In a statement issued today, the Civil Society in Action urged an immediate cessation of hostilities. — Reuters.

London, Feb 22 — A press report, dated Feb 21, states: At least seven more people have been killed on the fourth day of the heaviest fighting seen in the Somali capital Mogadishu for several years. Supporters of some of Mogadishu's militia leaders have clashed with an armed Islamist group which says it is trying to establish law

and order. Their opponents say the Islamic courts are terrorising local people. More than 22 people have died since fighting began on Saturday (Feb 18), many of them civilians hit by stray bullets. A witness said today that they had seen two people die and 15 wounded in a clash in southern Mogadishu's Daynile district. The main airstrip there which is used by aid agencies and businessmen has been shut.

### SUDAN

Khartoum, Feb 21 — Chadian farmers are being beaten, harassed and killed in cross-border raids by Sudanese militia, at times with support from Sudanese army helicopters, the rights group Human Rights Watch said today. The report quoted dozens of interviews with some of the tens of thousands of Chadians who have fled their homes, flooding already overcrowded refugee camps along the long and porous Chad-Sudan border. The United Nations accuses Khartoum of arming the feared Arab militia Janjaweed to fight mostly non-Arab Darfur rebels who took up arms three years ago complaining of neglect, a charge Sudan denies. That conflict has spilled over into Chad where Darfur refugees have swelled camps and fighters have brought their campaign of violence. A Chadian farmer said the Janjaweed were targeting non-Arab tribes. "This is not your land ... if you stay you will be killed but if you run we won't kill you," he quoted the Janjaweed as saying when he fled his land. Chad, which is under threat from its own insurgents, withdrew its border troops to protect its main frontier towns, including Adre, which was attacked in December by rebels sworn to oust President Idriss Deby. Janjaweed militias are believed to have taken advantage of the vacuum and are raiding deeper into Chadian territory, unchecked by either Chadian or Sudanese armed forces. — Reuters.

### UGANDA

Kampala, Feb 17 — Ugandan opposition leader Kiiza Besigye has appealed to his supporters to remain calm after an incident in the capital city, Kampala, in which two people were shot dead and four others wounded by an armed man. The shooting occurred on Wednesday (Feb 15) in the Kampala suburb of Mengo, where Besigye was meeting officials of Buganda, Uganda's largest ethnic kingdom. Witnesses said a large crowd of about 3,000 Besigye supporters grew angry when a vehicle carrying some men — among them a suspected security agent — attempted to push its way through the throng. "They tried to force their way through the crowd, but people refused," said Charles Mugerwa, a witness. "One of them (the men in the car) pulled out a gun and fired in the air. When the people started throwing stones at them, he jumped out of the vehicle and started firing at close range. Two

people were killed, while four others were injured. We are still investigating what triggered off the commotion that ended up in the shooting," said Patrick Ogwanga, a police spokesman. Besigye, the leader of the Forum for Democratic Change, is the main challenger to President Yoweri Museveni in the Feb 23 elections. He was unharmed in the shooting. — Reuters.

## Labour Disputes



### AUSTRALIA

London, Feb 16 — A press report, dated today, states: Industrial action to halt QR trains Freight and passenger train services across Queensland will be disrupted tomorrow due to industrial action by the Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU). Members will stop work from 1000 to 1300, AEST, to consider their next move in a pay dispute with Queensland Rail (QR). Union spokesman Owen Doogan says the timing has been chosen to avoid affecting the morning and afternoon peak hour. He says further industrial action cannot be ruled out. Tomorrow's stoppage is the latest chapter in an on-going row between rail unions and QR.

### CREW OF PANAMANIAN VESSEL AT FREDERICIA, DENMARK

See *Vertigo* under "Marine."

### GREECE

Piraeus, Feb 17 — The Panhellenic Seamen's Federation has announced that the strike will continue for another 48 hours, 0600, Feb 20. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Feb 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Seamen decided yesterday to extend their strike action to Wednesday (Feb 22), creating supply problems to Greece's islands while also isolating passengers in different parts of the country. Ferries have been moored since Thursday (Feb 16) after workers walked off the job in a bid to push ahead with their economic demands, which include higher pensions and measures to tackle unemployment in their sector. The Panhellenic Seamen's Federation (PNO) announced that the strike will now run through to 0600 Wednesday. Merchant Marine Minister Manolis Kelafoyiannis met with the workers yesterday but failed to convince them to go back to work. Farmers said that the strike is having a crippling effect on their business as hundreds of trucks transporting fresh produce remain stuck at the country's ports. Problems have also been caused at the Italian ports of Bari and Ancona by vehicles waiting to cross to Greece.

London, Feb 21 — A press report, dated Feb 20, states: Farmers on the island of Crete clashed with striking

seamen who kept Greece's ports closed for a fifth day today. The protest has caused food and gasoline supply problems for some Greek islands, and forced farmers to dump perishable goods. The clashes broke out at the ports of Iraklio and Hania, where protesting farmers stormed into a local government building and tried to cut ropes keeping vessels in port. Protesting seamen began the strike on Thursday (Feb 16), seeking better pay and pension rights. They are due to end the stoppage on Wednesday. The government has put navy vessels on standby to transport emergency supplies, and today appealed to the striking Greek Seamen's Federation to restart some commercial ship services. "This is a very serious issue which concerns not only the seamen but the farmers whose produce is being destroyed because of the delays created by the strike," government spokesman Theodoros Roussopoulos said. "In every strike there are usually provisions made for emergencies," he said. "We request that one vessel be allowed to sail to each destination to cover emergency requirements."

London, Feb 21 — Hundreds of trucks have been stranded at Greek ports today after seafarers extended a four-day strike for two more days, Merchant Marine Ministry officials said. Trucks at ports around the country have turned off their engines since the strike, over pensions and unemployment benefits, began on Thursday (Feb 16) with fresh produce and supplies for the Greek islands stranded. Supplies from the mainland are the main lifeline for the Greek islands for products such as food and fuel. "We have problems on the islands, we are getting calls of shortages," a ministry official told Reuters. "Producers are also demanding the produce be moved." Five naval ships were ready to begin transporting products to the islands if needed, particularly fuel, a defence ministry source said. The strike also affected trucks transporting international goods from ports such as Italy. "This is a catastrophe for us," Thanasis Kakos, President of the Greek International Lorry Drivers Association, said, adding: "Goods are rotting." Hundreds of trucks were trapped at Italian ports waiting to bring goods to Greece, Kakos said.

London, Feb 21 — A press report, dated today, states: The ships will remain docked until 0600 Friday, as the Panhellenic Seamen's Federation (PNO) decided on extending the strike for another 48 hours. In addition, Merchant Marine Minister Manolis Kefalogiannis met with PNO representatives at 1900 today. "We are expecting that the Panhellenic Seamen's Federation will suspend the strike, continue the dialogue and to deescalate this crisis affecting all social classes and mainly the islands of Greece," stated the Minister of Merchant Marine following the meeting. Meanwhile, the continuous maritime strike has resulted in

serious shortages in basic commodities and fuel on the Greek islands, while hundreds of trucks carrying perishable goods remain stranded at the ports. Economy Minister Giorgos Alogoskoufis and the Mercantile Marine Minister, who met to discuss the matter, noted that the relevant authorities are reviewing the maritime employees' financial demands, taking into consideration the particularities of the profession. In the meantime, the Piraeus First Instance Court rejected the restraining order filed by the Union of Coastal Shipowners and ruled the strike legal. Government spokesperson Thodoros Roussopoulos rejected once again the possibility of politically mobilising the strikers, stressing that the Government is in favour of dialogue, while the Opposition attacked the Greek administration for the way it is handling the case. Speaking at PASOK's parliamentary group meeting, party leader George Papandreou attributed full responsibility for the situation with Greek shipping to the Government. Mr Papandreou accused the Government of acting like Pontius Pilot and hiding behind the disagreement and disputes between farmers and maritime employees, drivers and maritime employees and new and old workers. At the same time, as he noted, the islands are in trouble. "For one, it is hypocritical for PASOK and its President to appear today as judges and it is politically irresponsible of them to politically exploit the demands of the workers," responded Government spokesperson Thodoros Roussopoulos. Referring to the clashes of interests between social groups, Mr Roussopoulos said, "The President of PASOK knows very well who the ones who excelled in social automatism practices are." The Government spokesperson also stressed that the institutional demands of the maritime employees have been satisfied through dialogue, while only the financial demands remain to be discussed. Finally, PAME (All Workers' Militant Front) has scheduled a rally for 1800 today at Piraeus's central station. In the meantime, trailer trucks are forming long queues at all of the country's ports. Trucks carrying over 2,000 tonnes of perishable goods remain stranded, while if the strike continues for another two days, 50% of the production will be lost. The problems from the continuing strikes are accumulating and as a result, many islands are facing serious shortages in basic commodities. The ships remain docked in Piraeus, but the situation is calm, since everyone is awaiting the unionists' meeting. The Piraeus Prosecutor had to intervene this afternoon, as a ship under foreign flag sailed for Crete to collect some 100 trucks carrying perishable goods. The PNO filed a written complaint, claiming that the ship, which is expected in Crete in the early hours of tomorrow morning, sailed with

inadequate personnel, while it has not implemented the necessary safety measures, although it received a permit to sail from the Piraeus Port Authority. In Crete, producers of fruit and vegetables, and mainly tomatoes, are witnessing their crops perish. In Heraklion, the producers have blocked the new and old national Heraklion-Lasithi highways, close to the airport, asking for the products to be transferred. In Kavala, after discussing with the masters of the ships, the employees from two local shipping companies decided to perform some shipping routes in order to transfer food and fuel. Major problems were also recorded in Igoumenitsa. As per the truck drivers, the maritime employees' strike is leading them to destruction. On Cephalonia and Zakynthos, there are serious shortages in fuel and medical oxygen. On Corfu, the situation is better, since a ferry transferred patients and oxygen cylinders. On Lesbos, more than 100 trucks carrying local products remain stranded at the port of Mytilene. On Paros, long queues are being formed at the Olympic Airways counter for a seat in the daily flight to Athens, while the island is facing serious shortages in drugs, dairy products and construction materials. Similar problems are being recorded on the islands of Serifos, Kythira, Naxos, Donousa, Schoinousa, Koufonisia and Tilos. On Chios, the strike has created major problems for the fisheries, as 100 tonnes of fish for export remain refrigerated. No ships have sailed into Amorgos since last Tuesday, while 15,000 lambs will spoil if they are not distributed to the country's markets. Finally, on Kastelorizo, the locals are using their private boats to get to neighbouring Turkey in order to purchase food and drugs.

Piraeus, Feb 22 — The Panhellenic Seamen's Federation (PNO) has announced the continuation of the strike until 0600 hrs, Friday, Feb 24. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **SOUTH AFRICA**

London, Feb 17 — A press report, dated Feb 16, states: The staff strike at the University of KwaZulu-Natal has ended, university management said today. The dispute was over a pay increase, with the university offering four per cent while the workers asked for eight per cent. "We acknowledge that staff salaries at UKZN are falling behind," management said. However, there was a broad agreement on the principles governing salary dispute resolution. "As a result of this agreement industrial action has been suspended and the university is being returned to normality." The terms of agreement are subject to council approval. Management apologised to students and parents for any inconvenience caused and promised they would make up for the time lost in classes. They also agreed to set up a joint executive/union task team to discuss matters raised during the strike.

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated today, states: The Transnet workers strike moves to the Eastern Cape today and in particular the port cities of East London and Port Elizabeth. While the effect is not expected to be as dramatic as it has been in Durban and Cape Town, companies outside of Transnet are bracing themselves for staff shortages because the commuter trains won't be running. The effect on the two ports is hard to judge but a union spokesman said they didn't expect mass support. Marches are however planned for East London and Port Elizabeth. On Monday (Feb 20) it becomes the turn of Gauteng and the busy metropolis of Johannesburg and Tshwane (Pretoria) as a three day strike is extended to that part of the country.

London, Feb 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Tens of thousands of South African commuters were stranded today as a strike at state rail group Transnet plunged parts of the country's economic hub of Johannesburg into transport chaos. A spokeswoman for Metrorail, Transnet's commuter rail network, said just six percent of trains in the greater Johannesburg area were running, leaving most of the 660,000 people who use the service daily struggling to get to work. The black township of Soweto was worst hit, with only a handful of replacement buses shuttling commuters into Johannesburg's central business district, said spokeswoman Thandi Mlangeni. "In Johannesburg the situation is not good... In Pretoria the service level is about 40 percent," she said. Transport unions launched the three-day strike in the Gauteng, North West, Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces today after talks with management broke down over the weekend, local media said. Workers are walking out in a series of strikes across the country over government plans to restructure the rail and logistics group.

#### **UNITED KINGDOM**

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Postal workers in Belfast are back at work at the end of more than two weeks of unofficial industrial action. Royal Mail said there was a backlog of seven million items, but that mail was now moving to Britain and deliveries in Belfast had commenced again. Extra people and vehicles are being brought in and the company is using other mail centres across the UK to help process undelivered post. However, it is expected to take up to four weeks to clear the backlog. Royal Mail had asked staff to go back to work after it agreed to a review of employee relations. The strike ended yesterday after agreement between the company and the Communication Workers Union. The union said its members regretted the inconvenience the strike had caused to the public. In a statement today, Royal Mail said all staff returning to work had attended "welcome back" meetings. "These have

been useful and constructive sessions for employees and managers," it said. "They have been a forum for employees to start feeding back issues and for Royal Mail to get commitment to a shared understanding of the way forward, including the work of an independent third party and the need to agree a flashpoint resolution process that will ensure that there will be no form of industrial action over the next 12 months." A CWU spokesman said: "At the request of Royal Mail, the union became involved in discussions to help resolve the dispute and is pleased that Royal Mail has now given a written statement to the union, via the Labour Relations Agency, which has enabled the dispute to be brought to an end and facilitated a return to work." The union had said it wanted assurances from the company that it would not interfere with the independent body brought in to review employee relations at the firm. It also said it did not want its members victimised when they returned to work. On Thursday (Feb 16), the company said it had given the union the assurances it had asked for. The company's offer also required staff to agree to a 12-month ban on industrial action.

#### **UNITED STATES**

London, Feb 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Nearly 3,600 Sikorsky Aircraft workers in Connecticut and Florida went on strike yesterday, blaming higher health insurance costs in the company's contract offer as the reason for their walkout. Workers with Teamsters Local 1150 overwhelmingly rejected the contract and voted Sunday (Feb 19) in favour of the strike, the company's first since 1963. The union represents 3,500 workers at the helicopter maker in Connecticut and 90 in Florida. Union members began picketing early Monday morning at the company's Stratford headquarters and locations in West Haven, Bridgeport, Shelton and West Palm Beach, Fla. The most recent contract expired at midnight Sunday. Sikorsky officials countered that they believed the contract was a good offer, considering that it also included 3.5 percent pay raises in each year of the three-year deal, pension improvements and a \$2,000 ratification bonus. Sikorsky, a unit of United Technologies Corp., employs about 9,500 workers in Connecticut, including about 3,500 Teamsters and 6,000 salaried workers. The company makes civilian and military helicopters, including S-76 executive transport models, Army Black Hawks and Navy Seahawks. No new contract talks were scheduled. Negotiators and the union's secretary treasurer, Rocco Calo, cited a doubling of health care co-payments in the first year and a 15 percent increase over the next two years, according to the Web site. The proposed contract also would have raised prescription costs and doctor visit copays, "among other costly increases."

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## Awards & Settlements



### BREACH OF CONTRACT, UNITED STATES

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Hinds County jury has awarded over \$36 million in damages in a lawsuit against Prudential Insurance. The family of Dr. Edsel Stewart of McComb filed the lawsuit before the state put a cap on jury awards beginning in January 2003. Stewart died in 1999 after his family claimed he had purchased a \$1 million life insurance policy. Prudential Insurance said a policy never existed. On Wednesday (Feb 15), the jury awarded \$1.4 million in compensatory damages and \$35 million in punitive damages against Prudential. The insurance agent was assessed damages of \$9,600. The Stewart's four children sued Prudential Insurance, Prudential Life Insurance, Pruco Life Insurance, agent James Bateman and others in 2002, claiming breach of contract for not honouring the policy. Prudential spokesman Bob DeFillippo said the verdict will be appealed.

### PERSONAL INJURIES, UNITED STATES

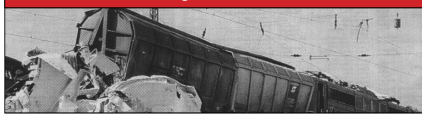
London, Feb 23 — A press report, dated Feb 22, states: The Chicago Transit Authority has agreed to pay \$5 million to a University of Chicago student who was severely injured after she was struck by a CTA bus in Hyde Park in 2001, according to a copy of the agreement. Ki Shih was bicycling to class on Hyde Park Boulevard when a bus travelling in the same direction hit her, knocked her off her bicycle and ran over her, according to a copy of the lawsuit filed against the CTA and the bus driver. Shih suffered multiple fractures in her pelvis and lost the skin off her heel, according to one of her attorneys, Greg Harris of Maywood. Harris and Leonard Becker, who also represented Shih, said the bus was pulling to a stop when it cut her off, but the CTA believes that Shih was responsible.

### PERSONAL INJURY, CANADA

London, Feb 16 — A press report, dated Feb 15, states: Canadian Pacific Railway must pay four people nearly \$1.86 million US for injuries they suffered as a result of a 2002 derailment near Minot, N.D., that spilled a cloud of anhydrous ammonia, a jury here decided today. The company had admitted it was at fault for the derailment, so the jury of 11 men and women was responsible for deciding how much money each plaintiff would receive. Jodi Schulz, 47, who claimed she has suffered from asthma and other respiratory problems since the derailment was

awarded \$938,482 for past and future losses. She had been seeking more than \$1.24 million to cover medical expenses and emotional pain and suffering. Jeanette Klier, 51, who claimed she has suffered dry eyes, was seeking nearly \$360,000 but got \$300,191. Melissa Allende, 37, claimed she suffered from asthma, dry eyes and post traumatic stress disorder. She was awarded \$450,872, compared with the \$705,000 she sought. Her husband, Richard Allende, 37, who also claimed to suffer from dry eyes and some emotional issues, was seeking more than \$250,000. He got \$168,071. All told, the plaintiffs in the case sought about \$2.65 million. The company had offered them about \$120,000 - \$50,000 each for Schulz and Melissa Allende and \$10,000 each for Klier and Richard Allende. The trial was held in Minneapolis, where Canadian Pacific has its US headquarters. The company is based in Calgary. Tim Thornton, a lawyer for the company, declined comment after the awards were announced. But the company had contended the plaintiffs were seeking too much. "The railroad does not dispute that that night was a horrific night," Thornton said during his closing argument Friday. "It should not be a lottery ticket." Jurors received the case at the end of the day Friday and began deliberations Monday morning, reaching their decision around midday today. The trial lasted about three weeks. Thirty-one cars in the Canadian Pacific train went off the tracks in January 2002 on Minot's western edge. Five tank cars ruptured, releasing anhydrous ammonia, a common farm fertilizer. One man was killed and hundreds of people reported injuries ranging from burns to breathing problems from the chemical cloud that hung over the city. More than 100 claims were filed against the company. Six cases were settled out of court earlier, including a wrongful death lawsuit by the widow of John Grabinger, 38, who died while trying to escape the toxic cloud.

## Railway Accidents



### QUEBEC AREA, CANADA

London, Feb 19 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: No one was injured after a CN trail derailed just south of Quebec City. Officials say two locomotives and five cars skipped the tracks and ploughed into a woman's backyard in Val-Alain. Residents are worried because the train was carrying fuel from an Ultramar refinery to Montreal. The accident is believed to have been caused by ice on the tracks.

London, Feb 21 — A press report, dated Feb 20, states: Traffic is not yet back to normal after the weekend derailment in Quebec of two trains, one loaded with diesel fuel that skidded and ended up in a woman's backyard. No one was hurt when the two locomotives and five tanker cars jumped the track, and only a small amount of fuel leaked. Canadian Pacific is optimistic a train line between Delson and Montreal will be running by Tuesday (Feb 21), after a dramatic derailment during Friday's windstorm. The high winds blew a number of cars carrying tall containers off the tracks as a freight train crossed a bridge over the St. Lawrence River that links Montreal's Lasalle area to communities on the river's south shore. Some of the cars are still leaning at a 45-degree angle over the river. The derailment is preventing commuters from travelling to and from Montreal by train. CP freight trains are being rerouted onto Canadian National lines. Today, CP spokesman Michel SpÈnard said large cranes had started moving the cars.

### SERRES AREA, GREECE

London, Feb 17 — A press report, dated Feb 16, states: Two people were killed and 19 injured today when an intercity train collided with a truck and derailed near the northern Greek city of Serres, railway and fire brigade officials said. "We have two dead people, one man who is thought to have been driving the truck and a woman passenger on the train," a fire brigade official told Reuters. The train, on the Athens-Thessaloniki-Alexandroupoli route, had four coaches and was carrying 101 passengers, according to a statement by Hellenic Railways (OSE). The accident occurred in a remote area near the village of Chryssos. "The train crashed at 1407 today with a truck that was attempting to illegally cross the track, leading to the derailment," OSE said. Emergency services rushed to the scene and the more seriously injured were taken to hospital in nearby Serres. "Seven of the injured were taken by ambulances to Serres hospital, two of whom were seriously injured," a Greek ambulance service spokesman told Reuters. Officials earlier said a total of 30 had been injured but later reduced the figure to 19.

## Robberies & Thefts



### CASH FROM SECURITY DEPOT, TONBRIDGE, KENT, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Feb 23 — A press report, dated today, states: An armed gang posed as policemen to abduct a security manager and his family



before stealing up to £40m in one of Britain's biggest robberies. A gang of at least six people tied up 15 members of staff at the Securitas depot in Tonbridge, Kent, before making off with the cash. The highly orchestrated raid involved the synchronised kidnaps of the depot manager and of his young son and wife, who was told that her husband had been injured in a car accident in order to leave her home in Herne Bay, Kent. Robbers threatened the manager at gunpoint and forced him to help them gain access to the cash at the depot, enabling them to pull off the crime which police have said was "planned in detail over time." Within hours of the theft, the Bank of England had been alerted that the cash, which was due to be distributed to banking customers around south-east England, had been stolen. Senior Government ministers were also told of the theft. The Bank confirmed last night that Securitas has reimbursed them with an initial £25m and will reimburse the exact amount stolen once a full audit has been conducted. Unconfirmed reports suggest that up to £40m was taken, making the robbery Britain's biggest ever cash heist. The Bank of England is reviewing its security arrangements for storage of banknotes as a result. As forensic officers examined the scene last night, details of the meticulously planned kidnaps that enabled the robbery to take place emerged. On Tuesday evening (Feb 21), while his wife and son were being abducted from their home, the manager of Securitas' main cash depot south of the Thames was pulled over in his car near Maidstone, by what he believed was an unmarked police car. A man wearing a high-visibility jacket and "police-style" hat got out of the vehicle, which had blue lights in the radiator grill, and spoke to him. The manager, believing the men to be officers, got into their car and was handcuffed. The manager was then driven in the car, which may have been a Volvo or similar vehicle, westbound along the M20 on to the West Malling bypass, where he was tied up and put into a white van. At an unknown location, gang members threatened the manager at gunpoint and told him to "co-operate or his family would be at risk," a Kent police spokesman said. He was forced to help the armed robbers gain access to the guarded site and the cash stored at the Vale Road depot, one of 11 cash management centres run by Securitas. At 0100 yesterday, at least six men wearing balaclavas, some armed with handguns, threatened and tied up about 15 members of staff. The gang spent the next hour loading the cash into a 7.5-tonne white lorry, before driving off at about 0215 hrs. Kent police were alerted to the crime when the shocked but unhurt staff activated an alarm. The manager, his wife and son were also uninjured.

## Miscellaneous



### **COLLAPSE OF WHEAT SILOS, NORRKOPING, SWEDEN**

Gothenburg, Feb 20 — Shortly after 1400 today two silos containing 5,800 tons of wheat collapsed, at Norrkoping when one fell into the other and both collapsed. It was in the morning, when the staff came to work, that one silo was found slightly broken and commenced to discharge into another unit, total of 5,800 tons. Later a crack was noted and after some hours emptying, the unit started to lean and while discharging the content, the broken unit first "sat down" then turned towards the other and into same and which also broke. No persons were injured. Tonight other units and silos in the area are being checked, but so far there is no explanation to the incident. — Westax Marine Services AB.

### **OUTBREAK OF "BIRD FLU"**

Ljubljana, Feb 17 — Bird flu took a firm hold on Europe yesterday, moving officially into Slovenia, and putting countries in the Middle East and Africa on alert. Germany discovered 10 more H5N1 cases, Greece detected an additional two and Austria also reported one more. Hungary was awaiting results from a specialist laboratory in Britain to determine whether the H5 virus detected in three dead wild swans on Wednesday (Feb 15) was the H5N1 strain. Iraq declared a bird flu alert in a province south of the capital Baghdad to prevent people from transporting birds in and out of the area, Al Arabiya television reported. The virus killed an Iraqi teenage girl in January. Poultry markets in Europe and Africa alike were hit hard and "a loss of appetite" was evident in West Africa, where H5N1 outbreaks in Nigeria are worrying neighbouring countries. The Lowy Institute for International Policy, an independent Australian think tank, predicted that a pandemic could wipe US\$4.4 trillion off global economic output and kill more than 140 million people. — Reuters.

Jakarta, Feb 18 — Bird flu has killed a 23-year-old market worker in Indonesia, a senior government official said today, citing test results from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. The man, the country's 19th victim of the H5N1 avian flu virus, died on February 10 in a Jakarta hospital. He had worked at a traditional market transporting chicken eggs. "We have received the test result from CDC Atlanta. Purnomo (the victim) was positive," Hariadi Wibisono, director-general of control of animal-borne disease at Indonesia's health ministry, told Reuters. He said that brought the

total number of confirmed Indonesian human cases of the H5N1 virus to 27. Eight of those who have had the disease have survived. The latest Indonesian casualty takes the number of known cases of the disease worldwide to 171 and the death toll to 93. Controlling the virus is a huge, if not impossible, task in Indonesia, an archipelago of about 17,000 islands and 220 million people. The government has resisted the mass culling of fowl seen in some other nations, citing the expense and the impracticality in a country where the keeping of a few chickens or ducks in backyards of homes is widely practiced in cities as well as the countryside. Agencies have concentrated instead on selective culling, and on public education and hygiene measures aimed at prevention. — Reuters.

London, Feb 19 — A press report, dated today, states: France has confirmed it has found the deadly H5N1 bird flu strain in a wild duck, the first case of the virus in Europe's biggest poultry producer. The Farm Ministry says tests show a duck found dead in eastern France on Monday (Feb 13) had the virus, which is transmissible to humans and has spread from Asia to Europe and Africa. "This virus is to 99 per cent identical with the virus of Asian origin," the Ministry said in a statement. The tested bird was one of several wild ducks found dead near Lyon in a region famous for the quality of its chickens. Officials say they have installed a security zone of three kilometres around the spot where the bird was found. Veterinarians are checking birds within the zone, in accordance with emergency measures planned by the European Union. A few hours before the test results were confirmed, President Jacques Chirac said the Government would be vigilant and ready to act on a possible outbreak. "It is a situation which we have to take with calm, but which also has to be taken very seriously," Mr Chirac told a news conference in Bangkok during a trip to Thailand. The highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 virus has infected 171 people and killed 93 of them.

London, Feb 19 — A press report, dated today, states: Health officials in India are engaged in a huge cull of half a million birds, after finding the country's first cases of the H5N1 strain of bird flu. Thousands of chickens which died on a farm in Maharashtra, in western India were found with the infection. Officials said a dead man, suspected of being the first human victim in India, had not died of bird flu. The cull in Maharashtra killed at least 200,000 fowl to a. A three km exclusion zone has been established around the infected farm, and another one million chickens in farms up to 10km away will be vaccinated. More than 200 veterinary specialists in Maharashtra have been sent to help destroy the birds and about 80 people are being

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tested there for possible human infection as a precaution. Officials expect to cull around 300,000 birds initially. The outbreak is centred on Navapur in Nandurbar district, 400km north of the Maharashtra state capital, Mumbai. "Culling of chickens will continue today and tomorrow," TP Doke, Maharashtra health director, told Reuters today. "We hope to complete the process of containing the spread completely in four to five days in phases." State authorities have also begun distributing protective clothing, masks and preventative drugs to poultry workers. In other developments, Bangladesh increased surveillance of its borders in an attempt to prevent the smuggling of live birds or poultry into the country and authorities in Egypt closed Cairo zoo after several of its birds died from bird flu.

Mumbai, Feb 20 — India began door-to-door checks for people with fever and began culling up to a half-million birds to contain the first bird flu outbreak in the world's second-most populous country. France tried to calm consumer fears at the weekend (Feb 18-19) after its first case of the H5N1 virus by asking people to eat chicken. As the two distant nations coped with their first cases of bird flu, which has infected 171 people worldwide and killed 93, authorities in Egypt shut down a Cairo zoo and seven other zoos from yesterday after 83 birds died there, some containing the deadly H5N1 strain. At least 11 countries have reported bird flu outbreaks over the past three weeks, an indication the deadly virus is spreading faster. In India, officials in the remote district of Nandurbar in western Maharashtra state launched a door-to-door check for people with fever. India, known for its poor health care system, was testing about 30 people for avian flu after 50,000 birds died in Nandurbar and tests on some fowls showed H5N1 strain. "There is no confirmed case of human avian influenza. I would like to assure that the situation is closely monitored and under control," India's health minister Anbumani Ramadoss told parliament. His statement came after preliminary tests yesterday on a dead farmer suspected to have been India's first human victim proved to be negative for the disease. Two persons, including a child had been quarantined in a hospital in Nandurbar after they showed flu-like symptoms, Maharashtra's top health official, Vijay Satbir Singh, said. "We are culling all chickens in the affected area," Maharashtra health director T.P. Doke said. Earlier, Ramadoss had said between 300,000 and 500,000 birds would have to be slaughtered in the area. Bird flu's march into the heart of Europe from Asia continued with the virus reaching the German mainland at the weekend and Romania detecting further cases of dead poultry. French Agriculture Minister Dominique Bussereau said yesterday consumers should help falling chicken farmers by continuing

to eat chickens. France, Europe's biggest poultry producer, confirmed its first case of the H5N1 virus in a dead duck on Saturday. Indian shares dropped today as investors fretted about the economic impact. Investors sold shares in farm products makers and hotels, fearing a drop in revenues, and bought shares of generic drug firms that may begin to sell influenza drugs. Domestic poultry prices fell up to 40% and were likely to remain depressed for a couple of weeks, Shashi Kapur, president of the Poultry Federation of India, said. Nepal today banned imports of Indian poultry and Bangladesh said it had ordered a high alert along its porous border with India to prevent any poultry smuggling. Indian analysts have warned if the outbreak is not contained the economic costs to Asia's third-largest economy — which is forecast to grow around 8% in the financial year to March, 2006 — would be "very, very high". More than 200 million birds across Asia, parts of the Middle East, Europe and Africa have died of the virus or been culled. So far, most victims of bird flu have had direct or indirect contact with chickens, but experts fear the virus might mutate into a strain easily passed among people, causing a pandemic in which millions could die. Across the globe, authorities were taking no chances. In Bulgaria, a man was put in an isolation chamber and was being tested for the H5N1 virus after two of his ducks died. In Nigeria, authorities were culling poultry and urging people not to eat sick birds after outbreaks there. — Reuters.

Mumbai, Feb 21 — Outbreaks of bird flu continue to increase with Malaysia and Hungary the latest countries to report outbreaks today, while in India hundreds of people turned up at medical camps in flu-hit areas. At least 15 nations have reported outbreaks in birds this month. Migratory birds are thought to be at least one way the disease is being carried and more than 30 countries have now reported cases since 2003, seven of them recording human infections. Bosnia confirmed its first cases of bird flu yesterday, while Malaysia said the H5N1 avian flu virus killed chickens near the capital. Tests also confirmed the virus in three dead swans found in Hungary last week, the government said today. The World Health Organization (WHO) said yesterday that mutations in the H5N1 virus are seemingly making it more deadly in chickens and more resistant in the environment, but without yet increasing the threat to humans. In India, 10 people have been quarantined as officials attempted to contain a major outbreak of bird flu in poultry. So far, there are no confirmed human cases but thousands of people have been tested just in case. "About 500 people have walked into makeshift medical camps in Navapur (town) to get checked for coughs and colds since yesterday evening," said

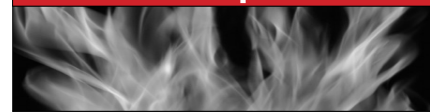
T.P. Doke, health director of the western state of Maharashtra. Doke said authorities had completed a door-to-door search in Navapur where 30,000 people had been examined. Another Maharashtra state official said about 300,000 birds have been culled so far with tens of thousands more to be killed. Malaysia stepped up its defenses against bird flu today, killing poultry and sending health officials to track any human infections, after it reported its first case of the H5N1 virus in more than a year. The fresh case of bird flu hit shares of poultry farms and prompted neighbouring Singapore to suspend imports from the central Malaysian state of Selangor, where officials said the virus had killed 40 chickens last week. In Europe, officials urged people to carry on eating poultry meat after a string of outbreaks in birds, saying European Union authorities had the means available to wipe out the disease. The WHO says thoroughly cooked poultry meat and eggs are safe to eat but that assurance has failed to calm consumers. Sales of poultry and poultry products have plunged in Europe, parts of Africa and now India. In Italy, 30,000 workers have been laid off in the poultry industry as demand for chicken meat plunged by 70 percent. Egyptian officials said bird flu had spread to new parts of the country, adding to the devastation in a poultry industry which provided a vital part of Egyptians' diet. Sales of poultry products have fallen 25 to 30 percent in India since the outbreak was first reported at the weekend, an industry official said today. China's agriculture minister told state media more bird flu outbreaks were possible this spring because of the movement of migratory birds after the winter and more shipping of poultry as the new breeding season begins. Eight people have died of bird flu in China and more than 30 outbreaks in poultry and wild birds were recorded last year. State media said today the government has banned imports of pet and wild birds from 10 countries recently hit by bird flu. — Reuters.

#### **SEIZURE OF DRUGS FROM FISHING VESSEL NORTH OF PANAMA**

London, Feb 17 — A press report, dated Feb 16, states: A joint operation between the US Coast Guard and Navy netted more than 2,200 pounds of cocaine from a fishing vessel about 40 miles north of Panama, the Coast Guard announced on Thursday. On Feb 6, a Coast Guard crew deployed from San Diego and a Navy frigate based out of Everett, Wash., stopped and boarded 40-foot fishing *Victoria*, north of Panama. Initially, the master of *Victoria* indicated he had approximately 300 pounds of fish on board, but during the boarding the master stated he had discarded the fish, according to the Coast Guard. The master also claimed to have fishing poles and line, but none was found. During the boarding, Coast

Guard and Naval personnel discovered a freshly painted bulkhead. The wall was removed and the contraband was found, the Coast Guard said. Four foreign nationals were also detained.

## Fires & Explosions



### CHEMICAL FACILITY, CAMP POINT, ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES

London, Feb 19 — A press report, dated today, states: The Illinois State Fire Marshall's Office is investigating an early morning blaze that destroyed much of the Helena Chemical Company's facility in the Adams County town of Camp Point. Camp Point Assistant Fire Chief said the biggest problem in fighting the blaze early yesterday morning was the intense cold. It was well below zero at the time. Potts said there was some concern about chemicals at the site, and the Quincy Fire Department's hazardous material team was called in. The business provides farm chemicals, fertilizer and seed to area farmers. In addition to the state fire marshall, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency also was called in to inspect the site.

### CHEMICAL PLANT, BAKERFIELD, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: An explosion and fire occurred at a chemical plant today and numerous firefighters were dispatched, the Kern County Fire Department said. The blaze at Hondo Chemical was a three-alarm fire, the Fire Department said in a recorded statement on a media information line. It said crews would be on the scene for some time. KUZZ-AM radio reported that a forklift accident sparked the blaze and 10,000 gallons of glycerin was on fire. Two employees were in the building where the fire started and both escaped unharmed, KUZZ reported.

### COAL MINE, COAHUILA STATE, MEXICO

Mexico City — An explosion in a coal mine in northern Mexico trapped 66 people underground and injured seven others, rescue workers said today. Civil protection staff were working to free those trapped in the mine, located in the state of Coahuila, which borders Texas in the United States. "The information that we have is that 66 people are trapped and seven others, who were outside the mine but affected by the explosion, are injured," said Miguel Angel Beltran, of the Civil Protection agency in Saltillo, capital of Coahuila state. Local media said the explosion occurred in the early hours of the morning and was caused by gases that ignited. — Reuters.

San Juan de Sabinas, Feb 20 — Rescue workers today dug frantically to reach 65 miners trapped in tunnels underground after an explosion at a Mexican coal mine but there was little hope of finding them alive. Soldiers and civil protection workers had not yet been able to make contact with the miners and, one day after the gas explosion in a remote, semi-desert region, the workers' six-hour oxygen tanks had almost certainly run out. Scores of anxious relatives waited for news overnight outside the mine in the state of Coahuila, which borders Texas. Soldiers stood at the gates of the mine at the town of San Juan de Sabinas, stopping family members from going inside. "There is an explosive mix of methane gas and it is very dangerous," said Sergio Robles, head of Coahuila's civil protection agency, speaking about rescue conditions underground. "We hold out hope but we have to be realistic," Robles said. "With the atmosphere and the risks and with time passing, everything is running against us." Robles said rescuers were working around the clock in shifts but it was not clear how near they were to the miners. Ventilators were pumping out gas but the miners' oxygen tanks had now surely been used up, he said. The explosion occurred in the early hours of Sunday. Coahuila Red Cross spokesman Sergio Guajardo said the miners were stuck two miles underground. The miners' union said the men were trapped only 500 yards below ground, but a further 1.25 miles along tunnels. The mine is owned by Grupo Mexico, the world's No 3 copper miner, which also works other mineral deposits. Seven miners who were working closer to the surface were rescued after the explosion. They were taken to a hospital with first and second-degree burns. — Reuters.

San Juan de Sabinas, Mexico, Feb 20 — Chances of survival dimmed today for 65 Mexican miners trapped underground by a blast at a coal mine, where emergency workers wielding only picks and shovels struggled to dig through to the men. A rescue team got within 110 yards of where two men had been working on a conveyor belt when the gas explosion occurred Sunday (Feb 19) but poor ventilation and the risk of rock falls hampered efforts to save them. Rescuers were using only hand tools for fear of sparking another blast. The rest of the men were thought to be in groups up to 1.25 miles into the mine, near the town of San Juan de Sabinas, 60 miles south-west of Eagle Pass, Texas. Robles said no contact had been made with any of the miners but there were unconfirmed rumours that rescuers had heard knocking in the mine. Explosive methane gas underground made the rescue dangerous and one worker said it could take days to reach most of the trapped. Forty hours after the explosion, the miners' six-hour oxygen tanks had almost certainly ran out but mine operators said air pockets might still keep the men alive. "There is always hope,"

said Juan Rebolledo of Grupo Mexico. "Because we really don't know what conditions they are in, there could be pockets of air down there," he said. — Reuters.

### HOSPITAL, LIAOYUAN, CHINA

Beijing, Feb 21 — Chinese police have charged four people with selling low-quality electrical cables that sparked a fire in a hospital in December which killed 39 people, state media said. Patients were forced to jump out of windows to escape the blaze at City Central Hospital in Liaoyuan city in north-east Jilin province, Xinhua news agency said. The owner of the store which sold the cables to the hospital, two company managers and another man involved in the sale were among 11 people detained in connection with the fire, the agency said in an overnight report. The hospital's president and vice director have also been detained. — Reuters.

### HOSPITAL, SANA'A, YEMEN

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated Feb 17, states: Firemen and Civil defense teams put out a dangerous fire on Wednesday (Feb 15) afternoon that started in the Saudi-German Hospital in Sana'a, but an estimated US\$5million worth of damage was caused. Ismail Abdullah, Director of the Police and Civil Defense, told Saba news that firefighters managed to prevent the fire from spreading to other floors in the flagship hospital. The fire broke out in the meeting hall in the upper floor of the hospital. It took firemen an hour to put the fire out. No one was killed or injured in the blaze due to the quick response by firemen, but there was a lot of damage caused. It is suspected that the fire was caused by an electrical fault, but police investigations are continuing. Ghazi Saleh said that the hospital was due to open officially next May, and that the hospital consists of six floors with capacity of 300 beds, in addition to accommodation buildings for doctors and employees of the hospital. The hospital costs US\$100 million he said, adding that the project is a joint Yemeni-Saudi investment. Al-sahwa.net cited sources in the hospital that said losses of the hospital from the fire ran to US\$5 million. Initial results of the investigation said that the reason was a technical defect.

### OIL DEPOT, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Feb 21 — Investigators have so far failed to determine the exact cause of a huge blast at a fuel depot north of London that led to Europe's biggest peacetime blaze, an initial report said today. A series of explosions at the Buncefield oil depot early on Dec 11 last year spawned a three-day inferno that destroyed most of the site and sent up a pall of black smoke that cast a shadow across a swathe of southern England. A progress report on the inquiry into

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what happened said the extensive damage meant no firm conclusions had yet been reached. "I am not in a position to say anything with sufficient confidence for it to be other than a line of inquiry amongst others," said Taf Powell, the Buncefield Investigation Manager. "Speculating publicly on causation would be undesirable because I am not in a position to confirm the likelihood of the theory, nor to deal authoritatively with the implications arising out of the theory." However, he said the initial fires were probably caused by the ignition of a flammable mixture of fuel and air. A "thick fog" with a strong smell was reported by eyewitnesses and caught on security cameras shortly before the blasts. Powell's report said the source of the release was not yet known but "the most plausible scenarios involve large-scale loss of containment of vessels or pipework within bund A". The explosions, one of which "was of massive proportions", engulfed 20 large fuel storage tanks at the depot, jointly owned by oil companies Total and Texaco and the country's fifth-largest, located near Hemel Hempstead. There were 43 people injured in the incident, none seriously, and it took 180 firefighters using 250,000 litres of foam and 25 million litres of water to douse the flames. Around 2000 residents had to evacuate their homes, 80 business premises on an adjacent industrial estate were destroyed or badly damaged, and the fuel supply to the capital and south-east England was disrupted. The report said London Heathrow Airport was still suffering supply problems. The Major Incident Investigation Board, which was set up to supervise the inquiry, said it was important to discover why the explosion had occurred, to prevent any repeat. — Reuters.

**OIL REFINERY, TEHRAN, IRAN**

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated today, states: A fire which broke out in the Tehran Oil Refinery this morning was extinguished without any casualties, the head of the Tehran Medical Emergency Center told IRNA. Mahmoud-Reza Peiravi said that the centre rushed ambulances to the refinery, located south of the Iranian capital, immediately after it received the report. The fire broke out at 0526 hrs, (0156, UTC) and was extinguished five hours later by firemen which arrived from five fire stations. Meanwhile, the chief of the Tehran Fire Department's Public Relations Office, Gholam-Reza Kohan, confirmed that the blaze left no casualties. The fire began from one of the lubeoil tanks in the refinery, Kohan said, and added that an investigation has been launched to find the cause.

**OIL WELLHEAD, SOUTHERN DELTA AREA, NIGERIA**

Lagos, Feb 16 — A fire broke out at an oilwell head in Nigeria's southern delta today, forcing Royal Dutch Shell to shut a platform handling 37,800

barrels per day (bpd), the company's Nigerian arm SPDC said. The cause of the fire was not known. It comes days after a militant group, which has staged a series of attacks against the oil industry over the past two months, had threatened to resume its campaign of sabotage. "A fire incident was reported at a well at SPDC's Cawthorne Channel field early this morning. The cause of the incident is not known and the company's fire crew and oil spill control as well as technical intervention teams are being mobilised to the site," SPDC said in a statement. "An overfly showed some oil leakage, but the fire appeared contained within the wellhead area. A nearby flowstation, Cawthorne Channel-1 has been shut down as part of efforts to contain the blaze. This has resulted in a deferment of some 37, 800 bpd," it added. The firm said it had informed the Nigerian authorities of the incident and the cause of the fire, volume of oil spilled and effects were under investigation. — Reuters.

**PLASTICS FACTORY, GLASGOW, SCOTLAND, UNITED KINGDOM**

London, Feb 17 — The operators of a Glasgow plastics factory where nine people were killed in a 2004 explosion are to be prosecuted under health and safety laws, the office of Scotland's Procurator Fiscal said today. Up to 40 other workers of ICL Plastics Limited and ICL Tech Limited were injured after the May 11 blast which flattened the factory in the Maryhill area of the city. The charge against the two companies is that they failed to maintain pipes carrying hazardous gas or gases and failed to ensure the health and safety of their employees. The morning explosion which rocked the city prompted a huge emergency response with rescuers using thermal imaging equipment and special hydraulic supports to find survivors trapped under the rubble. The explosion shattered windows in nearby buildings and flying debris crushed cars parked in surrounding streets. The Procurator Fiscal said no trial date had been set. — Reuters.

**PLASTICS RECYCLING FACTORY, OTAKI, NEW ZEALAND**

London, Feb 17 — A press report, dated Feb 16, states: Nearly all of the staff from an Otaki plastic recycling factory destroyed by fire in January will lose their jobs after earlier hopes they would be able to be kept on. Pacific Plastics Recyclers burned to the ground in a suspicious fire on Jan 23 but the plant's management had hoped to keep the 35 staff on with help from Work and Income, pending rebuilding the factory. But company general manager John Cribb has now said 27 will be made redundant. Mr Cribb had believed Work and Income would have been able to help and said a case manager had given them assurances the government department would help the company retain the workers. "Winz indicated

they would subsidise us, possibly through Task Force Green, so we could clean up the site and at the same time keep our staff employed till a new factory was completed in about six months," Mr Cribb told the Dominion Post. The company also faced having to find and train new staff in six months' time when the factory was rebuilt. But Work and Income Kapiti manager Jacqui Ferrel said no assurances or commitment had been given that it would be able to help the company financially.

**PLASTICS WAREHOUSE, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA**

London, Feb 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Part of a Sydney plastics warehouse has been extensively damaged by a blaze that broke out late last night. About 50 firefighters took 30 minutes to bring the fire at the two-level warehouse in Wetherill Park, south-west Sydney, under control after a number of emergency calls about 2330, AEDT, fire brigade spokesman Inspector Gordon Boath said. Although an office area area was extensively damaged, a plastics storage area was limited to smoke and heat damage. Insp Boath said the firefighters did well to prevent the fire from spreading to the plastic products.

**PREMISES, WESTMINSTER, MARYLAND, UNITED STATES**

London, Feb 20 — A press report, dated Feb 19, states: Faulty wiring was the cause of a fire that caused \$1 million in damage to one of Westminster's oldest buildings, the State Fire Marshal's office said. The blaze, reported at 0518 hrs, today, damaged the three-story structure at 172 East Main Street, which housed the Fat Cat Cafe and three apartments. The building dates to the 1900s. Investigators determined that the fire was sparked by a wiring failure above the ceiling of the third-floor apartment. The occupant of that apartment told investigators that she left and went to stay with friends because the electrical breakers kept tripping, the fire marshal's office said. More than 100 firefighters from ten companies spent more than two hours bringing the blaze under control.

**RESTAURANT, BRAINERD, MINNESOTA, UNITED STATES**

London, Feb 16 — A press report, dated Feb 15, states: A fire at Iven's on the Bay in Brainerd caused between \$1.2 million and \$1.5 million in damages to the restaurant, the state Department of Public Safety said today. Firefighters found the restaurant on North Long Lake engulfed in flames around 2230 Monday (Feb 13) and put the fire out by 0300 the following morning. The restaurant had smoke detectors and an electronic alarm system, but the alarm company said it didn't receive an alert, the Public Safety Department said. Investigators said they suspect that phone lines were destroyed by the fire before the

alarms could go off. The building didn't have an automatic sprinkler system. The cause and origin of the fire haven't been determined



**ACCIDENT, TAMPA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, UNITED STATES**

London, Feb 17 — A press report, dated Feb 16, states: At approximately 1650 today a Cessna Citation 701 with five people on board landed at Tampa International Airport with a collapsed landing gear. It is currently off Runway 18 left/36 Right (east side of the airfield). The runway is currently closed. It is not impacting commercial arrival and departures at this time. Runway 18 Right/36 Left is open and operating (West-side runway). One minor injury is reported. Tampa Fire Rescue/Aircraft Firefighting personnel have responded along with Airport Operations and Airport Police. The emergency response crew is waiting for the Federal Aviation Administration Safety Inspector to release and then it will be towed to one of the general aviation facilities — Raytheon Aircraft Services or Tampa International Jet Center.

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Authorities say the brakes on a private aircraft failed to work when it landed at Tampa International Airport, injuring one person. The rough landing sent a 90-year-old man to the hospital and caused significant damage to the Cessna Citation 701. Tampa Fire Rescue spokesperson Jace Kohan says the aircraft touched down yesterday afternoon when the pilot pulled the braking system and felt the right side lock up. The aircraft pulled hard to the right and veered into the grass where it stopped. Five people were onboard but only the 90-year-old man was taken to the hospital after he complained of nausea. The aircraft was flying from Miami to Tampa. TIA officials closed the runway for a few hours, but airport spokeswoman Brenda Geoghagan says commercial airline service was not interrupted.

**AIRCRAFT DIVERTED TO LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES**

London, Feb 23 — A press report, dated today, states: An Alaska Airlines flight en route to Seattle landed at Los Angeles International Airport a few minutes after take-off yesterday because of cabin pressure problems, an airline official said. No one was injured and the 121 passengers who had left from Ontario International Airport were put on other flights to Seattle, said Alaska Airlines spokeswoman Amanda Tobin.

It was the second Alaska flight in as many days to fail to reach its destination because of pressurization problems. Flight 397 left Ontario International at 0637. The MD-80 landed at Los Angeles International, about 35 miles away, at 0716 after crew members noticed the pressurization problem. On Tuesday (Feb 21), an Alaska flight returned to Portland International Airport after the cabin's oxygen masks dropped 15 minutes into a flight to Denver. Alaska Airlines has had three similar problems in the last two months. The incidents involved different types of aircraft, however, and Tobin said they appear to be unrelated. The Seattle-based airline has commenced pressurization inspections of its entire fleet of 110 aircraft, she said.

**CRASH, BOWIE AREA, MARYLAND, UNITED STATES**

London, Feb 23 — A press report, dated Feb 22, states: Two men were killed and a woman was injured today when their Cessna 172S (Skyhawk) crashed while preparing to land at a suburban airport near Washington, DC, during a brief snowstorm. The aircraft had taken off from Warrenton, Virginia, and was making its second approach to Freeway Airport, Bowie, Maryland, using a global positioning system. Mark Brady, spokesman for the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department, said two men in the front of the aircraft were killed. Freeway's chief flight instructor, Marcel Bernard, said a woman in the rear seat suffered serious injuries to her upper body and was later taken to a hospital. The crash site is about a quarter of a mile from the runway. Bernard said it was snowing heavily with low clouds when the aircraft crashed just before 1000 hrs. County officials said visibility in the area, about 18 miles east of Washington, DC, was between zero and 500 feet at the time with a cloud ceiling of less than 500 feet. Authorities said the National Transportation Safety Board was sending investigators to the scene.

**CRASH, MT. ISA AREA, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA**

London, Feb 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Air safety officials will investigate the cause of a helicopter crash that has claimed four lives near Mt Isa in Queensland's north-west. A team of police officers arrived at the crash site near Gunpowder late this afternoon. It is believed a pilot from Bundaberg, a 50-year-old Mt Isa man, and two Brisbane men aged 35 and 38 were on board the helicopter when it crashed in rugged terrain late yesterday. The pilot was 28-year-old Vita Stott from Bundaberg. The names of the three passengers have yet to be released. Acting Superintendent Ian Claridge from Mt Isa police says reaching the crash site was difficult. "It's rough country and not easily accessible," he said. "At this stage we don't know

what time the crash happened, and we don't know what the conditions were." Police will remain at the scene overnight while officers from the Disaster Victim Identification Squad and the Australian Transport Safety Bureau will arrive tomorrow. The helicopter was scheduled to pick up two more passengers from the Mt Kelly mine yesterday afternoon. People at the mine reported hearing the chopper but it failed to arrive. It was reported missing last night, with extensive searches carried out overnight and this morning. The chopper had been fitted with a crash-activated emergency beacon that had not been activated.

**CRASH, UZBEKISTAN**

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated today, states: A helicopter crashed in southwest Uzbekistan today, killing five people on board, said an official with the country's emergency situations ministry. The crash happened 15 km from the mining town of Zarafshon and investigations for the causes of the incident are underway. The five people killed were two crew members of the Mi-2 helicopter and three local factory employees.

**D-IMRX**

Sulaimaniya, Iraq, Feb 19 — Six bodies were found today in the wreckage of a small plane that crashed in the snow-covered mountains of northern Iraq three days ago, officials said. The plane was carrying at least three Germans from Azerbaijan to Sulaimaniya airport in Kurdish-run northern Iraq when aviation officials lost contact on Thursday (Feb 16). "I am standing by the wreckage right now. There are six bodies and we have asked for a helicopter to come from the American base and pick them up," said Kameran Ahmad, director of Sulaimaniya airport. "The plane crashed and experts are here to investigate what happened." Ahmad said he had received an email the day before the plane was due to arrive listing the passengers as four Germans and an Iraqi, but a German police spokesman said the Cessna plane was carrying three German employees of a company from a town north of Munich, along with an Iraqi business partner and two pilots whose nationality was not known. The plane belonged to the firm and the passengers were on a business trip, the police spokesman said, declining to name the company. The plane had already flown from Munich to Azerbaijan en route to northern Iraq. Villagers found the wreckage in mountainous terrain in the Arbad region on Iraq's northeastern border with Iran, said Saho Mohammed Saeed, representative of the Kurdish regional government in the nearby town of Halabja. Around 1,000 Iraqis, including Kurdish peshmerga militiamen who know the territory well, Sulaimaniya rescue teams, border guards and government teams

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had been scouring the area, backed up by a five-member U.S. military team and U.S. aircraft. Ahmad said aviation officials lost contact with the plane in daylight when it was flying at 8,000 feet in northern Iraq. There was a snow storm at the time, he said. — Reuters.

London, Feb 20 — Cessna 501 Citation I/SP D-IMRX departed Munich Feb 14 for a flight to Iraq. Intermediate stops were made at Budapest and Baku. The aircraft did not arrive at its intended destination and was declared missing. There were two crew and four passengers on board.

#### **EMERGENCY LANDING, BERMUDA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

London, Feb 22 — A press report, dated Feb 21, states: An American Airlines passenger plane was diverted to the Island after losing power in one of its engines while flying from the Caribbean to New York last night. Almost half the Island's fleet of fire-fighting vehicles were sent to Bermuda International Airport as the aircraft, carrying 162 passengers, prepared for an emergency landing. Eleven fire service vehicles and 27 firefighters were called out to deal with the incident, but were able to return to their stations soon afterwards as the AA flight landed safely just after 2115 hrs. The plane was on route from St. Maarten to New York's JFK when the pilot reported an emergency and said he was running low on power in the left side engine.

#### **EMERGENCY LANDING, FERIHEGY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, BUDAPEST, HUNGARY**

London, Feb 20 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: A Turkish Airbus-320 Atlasjet flight with a total of 144 people on board made an emergency landing at Budapest's Ferihegy international airport today after reporting an engine fault, the airport authority said. Ibolya Forika, spokeswoman at the airport authority, said the Turkish charter aircraft was en route from Antalia in Turkey to Dresden in Germany. Nobody was injured during the landing and the plane is currently being examined.

#### **EMERGENCY LANDING, SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, UNITED STATES**

London, Feb 19 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Northwest Airlines flight heading from San Francisco to Japan today returned to the San Francisco International Airport with a hydraulic problem. Northwest Airlines Flight 27 took off from SFO at 1526, today, on its way to Narita, Japan, said airport Duty Manager Dennis Neves. Once in the air, the pilot noticed a problem with the aircraft's hydraulic system, and returned to SFO at about 1620 hrs. "It was a normal emergency landing," Neves said. The aircraft landed

smoothly and was towed to a Northwest Airlines gate. Neves said the hydraulic problem affected the its nose wheel directional gear. None of the 240 passengers was hurt during the landing and the emergency slides were not deployed, Neves said.

#### **EMERGENCY LANDING, SUKKAR, PAKISTAN**

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated today, states: A Cessna aircraft was badly damaged in an emergency landing at Sukkar airport, after its front wheel jammed. The airport runway was also damaged, but there were no injuries to the persons onboard. Sukkur airport remained under red alert during the emergency landing. The aircraft after taking several rounds in the air landed at the airport, but in the process its front portion suffered severe damage, as it had skidded off the runway. The runway was also damaged.

#### **INCIDENT AT DAEGU AIRPORT, SOUTH KOREA**

London, Feb 22 — A press report, dated today, states: An airplane, belonging to China's Eastern Airlines damaged its left wing yesterday during its take off from a Daegu Airport runway, in South Korea. No casualties were reported. The accident happened when the left wing of the MU5054 plane, which was carrying 160 passengers, collided with radar equipment. The Precision Approach Radar Equipment is in charge of the navigation of airplanes landing and taking off in bad weather. It was also "partly" damaged. Eastern Airline has begun an investigation with the local airport authorities. Some South Korean media reports said the airport authorities had asked the Chinese pilots to taxi alongside the runway several times before its actual take off. But Eastern Airlines denied the accusation and said its taxiing airplane was on the correct course. It was the recent airport construction projects and expansions that caused the incident. Eastern Airlines sent a replacement plane to pick up all the passengers. The plane landed in Shanghai's Pudong Airport at 2130 hrs.

#### **INCIDENT, STANSTED AIRPORT, UNITED KINGDOM**

London, Feb 16 — A press report, dated today, states: Emergency services were called to Stansted Airport this morning after two aircraft collided. A First Choice Airbus 321 clipped a parked Ryanair 737 as it was being pushed back in the airport parking area, known as the apron. The airport's emergency services and Essex police were alerted, but were soon stood down. No passengers were on either aircraft and services at the airport have not been affected. The aircraft suffered some damage and an internal investigation has been launched by First Choice into the accident. A First Choice spokeswoman said passengers due to board the aircraft, bound for

Arrecife, Spain, have had their flight delayed for three and half hours while another aircraft was prepared. A BAA Stansted Airport spokesman described the incident as "like a small bump in a car park". "The Air Accidents Investigation Branch has decided that no investigation is needed," he said.

#### **N469MD**

London, Feb 23 — Beechcraft Baron 58P N469MD crashed near Bellingham, Washington, at 0245, Feb 23, while on a flight from Bellingham to Ogden, Utah. The aircraft was destroyed. The one person on board was killed.

#### **N667WP**

London, Feb 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Bodies believed to be those of two men missing in a February 4 plane crash off Hutchinson Island were discovered yesterday in wreckage on the ocean's bottom, Martin County sheriff's officials reported. Commercial salvage company workers found the wreckage in about 50 feet of water, and deputies recovered the bodies about 1700 hrs, today, sheriff's spokeswoman Jenell Atlas said. The bodies were presumed by detectives to be those of Glen Fornell, 67, of Jupiter, and Mario Alberto Castillo-Zavala, 32, of Honduras. The discovery came three days after the Coast Guard recovered the decomposed body of Fornell's wife, Barbara, 52, in the ocean about 20 miles northeast of Fort Pierce. The Fornells and Castillo-Zavala, who was visiting the couple from Honduras, had been missing since February 4, when the Cirrus SR22 four-seat single-engine propeller aircraft crashed about 3 miles off the House of Refuge on Hutchinson Island. The Treasure Coast Medical Examiner's Office planned to perform autopsies to identify the bodies. Glen Fornell, who piloted the plane, reportedly told air traffic controllers that he was having problems with flight instruments shortly after liftoff from Witham Field in Stuart. The plane, which reportedly was heading to St. Augustine, was returning to the airport when it crashed, officials said. The National Transportation Safety Board and the Federal Aviation Administration are investigating.

#### **N7512G**

London, Feb 23 — A press report, dated Feb 22, states: A helicopter crashed between two homes in north Scottsdale today, killing a man and woman who were on board, authorities said. No one on the ground was injured and officials do not believe anyone else was on board the helicopter, said Dave Cieslak, a spokesman for the Scottsdale Fire Department. It was not immediately clear what caused the crash, but the pilot apparently tried to avoid hitting the homes, Fire Battalion Chief Chris Schibi said.

London, Feb 23 — Robinson R22 Beta N7512G crashed in Scottsdale,

Arizona, at 1836, Feb 22, while on a flight from Scottsdale. The two persons on board were killed.

#### **N759KE**

London, Feb 17 — A press report, dated Feb 16, states: Federal aviation investigators still don't know what caused Cessna 172RG (Cutlass) N9531B and Cessna 182Q (Skylane) N759KE to collide over El Cajon last Wednesday (Feb 8), killing three people and scattering burning debris over neighbourhoods in La Mesa and El Cajon. A preliminary report issued today by the National Transportation Safety Board said the two aircraft collided at an altitude of about 2,300 feet, about three miles south of Gillespie Field. A professional airline pilot told investigators he saw the Feb 8 crash. The witness said he saw an eastbound aircraft strike the right side of an aircraft that was headed south-west. However, the report does not make it clear which aircraft, the Cessna 172RG, which was flown by two Swedish men, or the Cessna 182Q, which was flown by La Jolla orthodontist William Kupiec, 68, was travelling east and which was travelling south-west. "We have to continue our investigation to determine what happened and see what actually struck what," said Keith Holloway, a NTSB spokesman. Holloway said more information will be gathered and analyzed before a factual report can be issued, possibly in six to nine months. According to the report, Rangeby and Sigurdsson, in the Cessna 172, took off from Gillespie Field at 1637 hrs and were followed by Kupiec in the Cessna 182 about a minute later. Both were planning to fly to Brown Field. The report does give quite a bit of detail about where specific pieces of the aircraft landed after the collision. Much of the Cessna 172 landed in a grassy area of Harry Griffen Park and smaller pieces scattered throughout a nearby neighborhood. Much of the Cessna 182 crashed through a mulberry tree in a home's back yard, with the top portion of the aircraft's vertical stabilizer found about 1,180 feet away and its left wing in the park, the report said.

#### **N9531B**

See N759KE.



#### **FIRE SPRINKLERS, UNITED STATES**

London, Feb 16 — A press report, dated Feb 15, states: Four years after the government announced the recall of 35 million defective fire sprinkler heads used in nursing homes, hospitals, schools and other buildings, almost two-thirds of them remain in use in many areas of the nation. But

fire department officials in the Truckee Meadows yesterday said that fire marshals routinely check for the older or recalled sprinkler products during regular inspections. Bill Burney, acting Reno fire marshal, said the Division of Fire Prevention checked buildings throughout the community when the recall was announced in 2001. He said inspectors have continued to check on installations of sprinklers and he is unaware of any inspector finding any of the recalled sprinkler heads. Reno Fire Department spokesman Steve Frady said even if a recalled sprinkler head were to turn up in a business, the department wouldn't immediately cite the owner for violations. "The Division of Fire Prevention would work with the affected facility and sprinkler vendor on any recall to retrofit or remove and replace, as appropriate," he said. "A citation would generally only be necessary if there was non-compliance." No deaths or injuries have been tied to the recalled sprinklers. But Tyco Fire & Building Products, the sprinklers' manufacturer, says there have been several claims of property damage. Virginia, Ohio, New York, New Jersey and Washington are among the states trying to identify facilities still using the sprinklers, the National Association of State Fire Marshals reported. The recall began in 2001 after investigations found that a rubber O-ring in the sprinklers' valves can be corroded by waterborne minerals. That can prevent the valve from releasing water, a failure in 20% to 45% of the sprinklers in lab tests. The sprinklers were sold under three brands — Central, Star and Gem — all since purchased by Tyco. Tyco began the voluntary recall under an agreement with the Consumer Product Safety Commission. The company provides free replacement and installation. Tyco has replaced 12 million sprinklers and identified another 6 million to be replaced by mid-2007, Tyco Vice President Carmine Schiavone says. Gib Mullan, head of compliance at the CPSC, says the recall replacement rate is better than average for such a big recall, the fourth-largest in commission history. Many fire marshals said more can be done. Replacing 30% to 40% of the faulty sprinklers "is not acceptable," says Emory Rodgers, deputy chief of Virginia's Division of Building and Fire Regulation, which aims to get 90% of the sprinklers replaced. "People's lives could depend on it." The 35 million faulty sprinklers equal the number of sprinkler heads sold nation-wide in a year, according to the National Fire Sprinkler Association, a trade group.

#### **LITHIUM ION BATTERIES, WORLD-WIDE**

London, Feb 18 — A press release, issued by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, dated Feb 17, states: The U.S. Consumer Product

Safety Commission, in co-operation with Polycom Inc., of Pleasanton, Calif., today announced a voluntary recall in the U.S. of about 21,000 lithium ion batteries in SoundStation2W wireless conference telephones (about 27,700 units worldwide). These batteries can overheat, which could pose a fire or burn hazard. Polycom has received two reports of batteries overheating and causing minor damage to the tables on which the units sat. No injuries have been reported. The recalled batteries were sold with the SoundStation2W wireless conference phones, and separately as replacement batteries. The SoundStation2W Part Number is printed on the underside of the telephone. Polycom are business to business resellers who sell through catalogs, online, telesales, through office supply stores or on the Polycom Web store and the batteries, manufactured in China, were sold from August 2004 through January 2006 for between \$700 and -\$900. Replacement batteries were sold for between \$50 and \$90.

#### **PAINTBALL MARKERS, UNITED STATES**

Washington, DC, Feb 15 — The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with Brass Eagle, of Bentonville, Ark., today announced a voluntary recall of about 243,000 Blade Turbo and Paintball Breakout Players Kit. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. The carbon dioxide cartridges can be forcibly ejected out the back of the paintball marker and break the plastic screw-on cap. This poses a serious risk of injury to the paintball marker's operator who can be hit forcefully by the CO2 cartridges or the plastic screw-on cap. Overtightening the screw-on cap after the cartridges are pierced can result in a serious impact injury. The firm has received reports of at least 73 incidents involving the recalled paintball markers. Seven injuries have been reported including an eye injury, facial bruises, and lacerations. The recalled Blade Turbo paintball marker is bright blue with a black handgrip on the nozzle. Two carbon dioxide cartridges are inserted into the back of the marker covered by a clear plastic screw-on cap. The silver-colored carbon dioxide cartridges are about three-inches long. The Paintball Breakout Players Kit includes a Blade Turbo, black mask and CO2 cartridges. "Blade Turbo" is printed on the side of the paintball marker. Paintball markers are sometimes referred to as paintball guns. The Blade Turbo was sold at Wal-Mart, Kmart and sporting goods retailers nation-wide from January 2005 through January 2006

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for about \$20. The Paintball Breakout Players Kit was sold at Wal-Mart from October 2005 through January 2006 for about \$25. Manufactured in China. Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled Blade Turbo paintball marker and contact Brass Eagle to receive a free replacement screw-on cap which is black, instead of clear. — Consumer Product Safety Commission.



**ITALY**

Genoa, Feb 20 — Port situation: Genoa: No vessels awaiting berth.

Savona: Three vessels awaiting normal berth, average berthing delay two days. Two vessels waiting for special berth. La Spezia: No vessels awaiting berths. — Lloyd's Agents.

**SYRIA**

Lattakia, Feb 18 — The waiting period for Lattakia port is currently two days and for Tartous it is five 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
<b>Australia</b>		
Abbots Point	20-Feb-2006	Coal: 1 vessel waiting to load; 1 vessel due 3/3; up to 8 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; stacker reclaimers No. 1 will be shut down for maintenance from 07.00 hrs. 20/2 to 07.00 hrs. 26/2.
Brisbane	20-Feb-2006	Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth: 3 vessels due by 4/3; no delays expected.
Dalrymple Bay	20-Feb-2006	Coal: DBCT berth 1: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 3 waiting; 3 vessels due by 22/2; DBCT berth 2: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 3 waiting; 2 vessels due by 23/2; DBCT berth 3: 3 vessels due by 22/2; 7 vessels waiting, not scheduled; 20 vessels due by 3/3.
Dampier	20-Feb-2006	Iron ore: Parker Point A berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 4 waiting; 4 vessels due by 1/3; Parker Point berth 2: 3 vessels waiting; 2 vessels due by 25/2; Parker Point berth 3: 1 vessel loading; 1 vessel due 19/2; East Intercourse Island: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 4 waiting; 6 vessels due by 28/2.
Esperance	20-Feb-2006	Iron ore: 2 vessels due by 3/3; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Geraldton	20-Feb-2006	Iron ore: 1 vessel due 23/2.
Gladstone	20-Feb-2006	Coal: R.G. Tanna coal terminal: 2 vessels berthed and loading, 1 berthed and waiting, 17 vessels waiting; 38 vessels due by 6/4; shiploader No. 2 will be shut down for maintenance from 3-7/4; Barney Point: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 3 waiting; 13 vessels due by 20/3.
Hay Point	20-Feb-2006	Coal: Berth 1: operations due to resume late March/early April; Berth 2: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 2 waiting; 2 vessels due by 6/3.
Newcastle	20-Feb-2006	Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: 3 vessels berthed and loading, 13 waiting; 36 vessels due by 9/3; 7-10 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; 14 vessels off port awaiting berths; Dykes 4+5: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 3 waiting; 17 vessels due by 10/3; 7-9 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; 3 vessels off port awaiting coal.
Port Hedland	20-Feb-2006	Iron ore: BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Mt. Newman (Nelson Point), "A" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 3 waiting; 4 vessels due by 28/2; "B" berth: 3 vessels waiting; 5 vessels due by 28/2; 3 other vessels due by 8/3, no eta received; BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Goldsworthy (Finucane Island) "C" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading; 1 vessel due 24/2; "D" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 1 waiting; 5 vessels due by 2/3; there will be a 24 hour shiploader maintenance ca. 25/2; Cockatoo Island: 1 vessel due 24/2.
Port Kembla	20-Feb-2006	Coal: 2 vessels waiting at anchor; 10 vessels due by 9/3; no delays expected.
Port Walcott	20-Feb-2006	Iron ore: 2 vessels berthed and loading, 3 waiting; 12 vessels due by 6/3; shippers currently experiencing products shortages which will effect berthing.
<b>Azerbaijan</b>		
Apsheron	20-Feb-2006	Oil products: Dubendi terminal: 3 vessels berthed, of which 2 loading (1 crude oil, 1 gasoil), 1 empty vessel; 2 vessels due by 21/2, both to discharge crude oil.
Baku	20-Feb-2006	Oil products: Bay of Baku: no vessels; Azerneftiyag terminal: no vessels; AzerTrans terminal - Nobel avenue: no vessels; Sangachal district: no vessels; Transserve terminal: closed.
<b>Bulgaria</b>		
Bourgas	20-Feb-2006	Nine vessels in port operating, of which 7 loading (1 bagged ammonium nitrate, 4 coils, 2 metals), 2 discharging (1 reinforced concrete, 1 benzene); 2 vessels in roads, both to load, of which 1 coils, 1 empty vessel; 12 vessels due, of which 5 to load (1 coils, 1 gasoil, 1 copper concentrate, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 wheat), 7 to discharge (1 iron ore, 3 coal, 1 salt, 1 fuel, 1 zinc concentrate).

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## Port Conditions

Varna	20-Feb-2006	Varna East, Varna West, Electrical Power Station, Balchik: Conditions 13-19 February: Twenty-nine vessels in port operating of which 21 loading (1 chamotte/kaolin, 1 scrap, 1 bulk silica sand/chamotte, 2 bulk wheat, 1 sunflower seeds, 1 bulk sulphuric acid, 1 bulk clinker, 8 soda, 1 hydrochloric acid, 1 silica sand, 1 bagged kaolin, 2 bulk maize), 2 discharging (1 bagged cocoa, 1 equipment in packing cases), 6 discharging/loading (4 containers, 1 containers/small consignments, 1 equipment in packing cases/miscellaneous cargo); no vessels waiting in roads.
<b>Chile</b>		
Antofagasta	20-Feb-2006	Three vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 19 vessels due this week to load/discharge concentrates, bulk copper, containers and general cargo.
Arica	20-Feb-2006	Three vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 21 vessels due this week.
Iquique	20-Feb-2006	Four vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 21 vessels due this week.
Puerto Montt	20-Feb-2006	Two vessels at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 9 vessels due this week.
Punta Arenas	20-Feb-2006	Five vessels at terminal, 2 berths vacant; 14 vessels due this week.
San Antonio	20-Feb-2006	Six vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 22 vessels due this week.
San Vicente	20-Feb-2006	Two vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 19 vessels due during the week; Steel pier: 1 vessel at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 3 vessels due this week; Coronel pier: 2 vessels at terminal, 2 berths vacant; 4 vessels due this week; Oil terminal: 1 tanker at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 2 tankers due this week.
Valparaiso	20-Feb-2006	Three vessels berthed, 5 berths vacant; 5 vessels anchored; 20 vessels due this week.
<b>Cyprus</b>		
Larnaca	21-Feb-2006	Two conventional vessels discharging at berth; 1 conventional vessel due 22/2; no delays expected.
Limassol	21-Feb-2006	Five container vessels loading/discharging at berth, 2 conventional vessels discharging at berth, 1 Ro/Ro discharging/loading at berth; 4 container vessels, 1 conventional vessel due 22/2; no delays expected.
<b>Egypt</b>		
Adabiya	20-Feb-2006	Seven vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 1 general cargo, 1 tanker, 1 containers, 1 reefer, 3 bulk carriers.
Alexandria	20-Feb-2006	Thirty-seven vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 28 general cargo, 5 bulk carriers, 3 containers, 1 cruise vessel; 16 vessels dry-docked; 32 vessels at inner anchorage, 12 at outer anchorage.
Damietta	20-Feb-2006	Twenty vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 14 general cargo, 1 bulk carrier, 5 containers; 2 vessels at outer anchorage, none at inner anchorage.
Dekhelia	20-Feb-2006	Ten vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 1 general cargo, 5 bulk carriers, 1 tanker, 3 containers; 1 vessel at outer anchorage.
Port Said	20-Feb-2006	Six vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 2 general cargo, 4 containers.
Suez	20-Feb-2006	Twelve vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 4 general cargo, 1 containers, 5 reefers, 2 passenger vessels; 2 tugs, 1 vessel dry-docked.
Suez Canal	20-Feb-2006	Twenty-six vessels transiting Northbound, 23 Southbound.
<b>Israel</b>		
Ashdod	21-Feb-2006	No labour problems. Two general cargo vessels loading at berth, 13 vessels discharging at berth (8 general cargo, 5 bulkers), 5 vessels loading/discharging at berth (3 containers, 2 tankers); 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 general cargo, 1 bulker); 16 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Eilat	21-Feb-2006	No labour problems. One general cargo vessel discharging at berth, 1 container vessel loading/discharging at berth; no vessels waiting at anchorage; 3 vessels due, with no delays expected.
Haifa	21-Feb-2006	No labour problems. Six vessels discharging at berth (2 general cargo, 4 bulkers), 10 vessels loading/discharging at berth (6 containers, 2 car carriers, 2 tankers); 4 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 general cargo, 3 bulkers), 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to load/discharge (1 containers, 1 tanker); 5 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; 24 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
<b>Pakistan</b>		
Karachi	20-Feb-2006	Four vessels loading at berth (1 naphtha, 2 rice, 1 ethanol), 6 discharging at berth (1 crude oil, 1 fertiliser, 1 coils, 1 general cargo, 2 SB meal), 2 container vessels loading/discharging at berth; 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to load (1 containers, 1 rice), 7 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 containers, 1 vehicles, 3 crude oil, 2 fuel oil); no vessels bunkering, none under repairs/dry-docked, none awaiting orders; 5 vessels due (1 containers, 3 general cargo, 1 MOL), with no berthing delays expected.
Port Qasim	20-Feb-2006	One rice vessel loading at berth, 3 vessels discharging at berth (1 wheat, 1 iron ore, 1 HSD), 1 container vessel loading/discharging at QICT berth; 2 container vessels waiting at anchorage to load, 4 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (2 containers, 1 canola, 1 yellow peas).

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## Port Conditions

### Poland

Gdansk	20-Feb-2006	Four vessels loading at berth (1 coal, 2 general cargo, 1 bulker), 2 discharging at berth (1 coal, 1 bulker); 12 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; no vessels waiting at anchorage, 1 coal vessel waiting in roads; 23 vessels due.
Gdynia	20-Feb-2006	Four vessels loading at berth (2 coal, 1 bulker, 1 grain), 3 discharging at berth (1 bulker, 1 general cargo, 1 grain); 18 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; no vessels waiting at anchorage, none waiting in roads; 58 vessels due.

### Russia

Novorossiysk	20-Feb-2006	Twenty-three vessels in port operating, of which 20 loading (1 pipes/steel, 1 bulk cement, 1 HBI, 1 scrap, 1 pig-iron, 3 copper, 1 coils/steel billets/pipes, 1 slabs, 2 steel billets, 1 coils, 1 bulk fertiliser/bulk ammonium nitrate, 2 wheat, 1 cellulose, 2 vegetable oil, 1 UAN solution), 1 discharging bulk sugar, 2 discharging/loading containers; 22 vessels waiting in roads of which 20 to load (2 steel billets, 1 bulk urea, 1 bulk NPK, 1 wheat, 3 copper, 1 WRIC/coils/steel sheets, 1 scrap, 1 slabs, 1 steel billets/tin plate/coils, 1 barley, 3 vegetable oil, 1 steel billets/WRIC/tin plate, 1 bulk cement, 1 pig-iron, 1 coils), 2 to discharge bulk sugar; 86 vessels due, of which 84 to load (6 bulk NPK, 1 steel billets/WRIC/pipes/wire rods, 3 vegetable oil, 2 HBI, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 3 pipes, 2 wheat, 4 DRI, 15 coils, 2 copper, 7 aluminium, 4 slabs, 1 WRIC/tin plate, 1 coils/steel billets, 16 steel billets, 1 H-beams, 3 steel sheets, 1 copper/zinc/lead, 1 WRIC, 1 UAN solution, 1 steel sheets/coils, 1 scrap, 3 bulk urea, 2 diesel oil, 1 pig-iron, 1 cellulose), 1 to discharge debar, 1 to discharge/load containers; Oil terminal: 2 tankers berthed, both loading, of which 1 crude oil, 1 diesel oil; 5 tankers in roads, all to load, of which 3 crude oil, 2 fuel oil; 10 tankers due, all to load crude oil.
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### Slovenia

Koper	20-Feb-2006	Port working normally. Eight vessels berthed of which 2 loading sawn timber, 4 discharging bulk cargo, 1 discharging/loading containers, 1 car carrier discharging/loading vehicles; 2 vessels waiting at anchorage, of which 1 to load bulk cargo, 1 to discharge bulk cargo; 15 vessels due over the next 2 days of which 2 to discharge/load containers, 2 car carriers to discharge/load vehicles, 1 vessel to discharge bulk cargo, 3 to load bulk cargoes, 6 to load sawn timber/general cargo, 1 tanker to discharge liquid cargo.
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### Spain

Bilbao	20-Feb-2006	Seventeen vessels operating (1 tanker, 16 other vessels), of which 5 loading, 6 discharging, 6 loading/discharging.
Sagunto	20-Feb-2006	Twenty-two vessels in port operating, of which 3 loading (1 steel products, 1 cement, 1 bulk fertiliser), 17 discharging (14 steel products, 1 fruit, 1 anhydrous ammonia, 1 gas), 2 loading/discharging general cargo; no vessels outside commercial wharf; no berthing delays at present.

### Sri Lanka

Colombo	20-Feb-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. Seven container/feeder vessels loading at berth, 19 vessels discharging at berth (13 containers/feeders, 1 steel cargo, 1 bagged fertiliser, 3 bulk cement, 1 Ro/Ro); 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 container/feeder, 1 bagged soya bean meal); 6 vessels dry-docked, none at new tanker berth; 7 vessels due (6 containers/feeders, 1 bulk fertiliser), with no delays expected.
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### Turkmenistan

Okarem	20-Feb-2006	Oil products: 1 vessel berthed, completed loading crude oil.
Turkmenbashi	20-Feb-2006	Oil products: 2 vessels in roads, both to load, of which 1 gasoline, 1 unknown cargo; 1 vessel due 20/2 to discharge crude oil.

### Ukraine

Ilichevsk	20-Feb-2006	Ten vessels in port operating, of which 7 loading (5 steel products, 1 sunflower seed oil, 1 general cargo), 1 discharging ore, 2 loading/discharging containers; 6 vessels in roads, all to load, of which 4 sunflower seed oil, 1 steel products, 1 sulphur; 19 vessels due, of which 9 to load (7 steel products, 1 barley, 1 oil), 3 to discharge (2 ore, 1 general cargo), 7 to discharge/load containers.
Mariupol	20-Feb-2006	Seven vessels in port operating, all loading, of which 3 steel, 1 sulphur, 1 coal, 1 carbamide, 1 fire-clay; 22 vessels in roads, all to load, of which 12 steel, 4 coal, 1 coke, 3 sulphur, 1 wheat, 1 sunflower beans/husks; 40 vessels due, of which 31 to load (17 steel, 7 coal, 1 sulphur, 2 fire-clay, 1 sunflower beans/busks, 1 ammonia/saltpetre/carbamide, 1 ammonia/saltpetre), 5 to discharge equipment, 4 to discharge/load (2 containers/fire-clay, 1 containers, 1 feldspar/containers/fire clay).

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**Port Conditions**

Odessa	20-Feb-2006	Seventeen vessels in port operating, of which 12 loading (5 metal, 3 scrap, 2 barley, 1 pig-iron, 1 soya beans), 4 discharging (1 bananas, 1 luggage, 1 citrus, 1 sand), 1 passenger vessel; 12 vessels in roads, of which 10 to load (7 metal, 1 corn, 1 pig-iron, 1 ore), 2 to discharge sugar; 70 vessels due, of which 45 to load (34 metal, 2 scrap, 2 pig-iron, 1 equipment, 1 timber, 1 ferro alloy, 1 corn, 2 ore, 1 wheat), 7 to discharge (1 fertiliser, 1 bananas, 3 citrus, 1 general cargo, 1 luggage), 18 to discharge/load containers.
<b>United States</b>		
Beaumont, TX	21-Feb-2006	No new restriction in draft (40 ft. 0 ins. FW max. channel draft reported). Traffic schedule: outbound 21/2 AM, inbound PM 22/2; Louis Dreyfus terminal: no delays expected.
Galveston, TX	21-Feb-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	21-Feb-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. (Normal Max channel draft is 45 ft 0 ins. to Shell.) LDC Dreyfus terminal: 3-4 days delay expected; Cargill terminal: 2-3 days delay expected.
Kalama, WA	21-Feb-2006	Kalama export terminal: 8 days delay expected; United Harvest terminal: no delays expected.
New Orleans, LA	21-Feb-2006	Mississippi River terminal berthing delays: Cenex-Harstates/Myrtle Grove: no delays expected. Cargill-Westwego: 2 days delay expected. ADM/Ama: 2-3 days delay expected. Bunge/Destrehan: 4 days delay expected. ADM/ Destrehan: 2-3 days delay expected. ADM/Reserve: 2-3 days delay expected. Cargill/Reserve: 2 days delay expected. ADM/Paulina: 2-3 days delay expected. Zen-Noh/Convent: 1-2 days delay expected. Cargill/Baton Rouge: No delays expected. Mississippi River mid-stream buoys - estimated berthing delays based on new vessel presented as load-ready and weather permitting: Mile 121.5 ADM (Gemini) - Destrehan: 1 day's delay expected; Mile 158.0 Myrtle Grove Midstream terminal: 2 days delay expected; Mile 180.0 Cooper (America) - Darrow: 7 days delay expected.
Portland, OR	21-Feb-2006	Columbia Grain terminal: 2 days delay expected; CLD Irving terminal: 1 day's delay expected; CLD, O Dock terminals: no delays expected.
Seattle, WA	21-Feb-2006	Louis Dreyfus (Pier 86) terminal: 2 days delay expected.
Tacoma, Wa	21-Feb-2006	Temco terminal: 2 days delay expected.
Vancouver, WA	21-Feb-2006	United Harvest terminal: 1 day's delay expected.

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