

Three-year wait for Hyundai Fortune costs

An estimated 7,000 bills of lading to be checked before compensation is awarded, writes James Brewer — Friday March 31 2006

HUNDREDS of shipping, cargo and insurance interests may have to wait three years or more before they are sure exactly how much the fire disaster on the 5,551 teu Hyundai Fortune will cost them.

Market sources say settlement of claims and costs will be hugely complex, with one of the first tasks to sort through an estimated 7,000 bills of lading to attempt to establish exactly what was loaded.

"This is pure marine insurance," one expert said. "It looks as though we have here the classic perils of the sea, and this will be handled in fundamentally the same manner as if the incident had occurred in the 1700s."

Apportioned

He was referring to the system of general average — in which financial losses are apportioned to parties that have benefited from a salvage operation — which has deep historic roots, and which despite reforms is considered outdated and unfair by some underwriters.

Analysts expect that companies whose containers have escaped damage may have to contribute up to 15% of the general average finding.

Average adjusters will get down to work in detail after the boxes are discharged at a suitable port, and seek

invoice bills from cargo interests. They will secure general average guarantees, a down payment as earnest of eventual outlay, from the cargo interests, as they begin to arrange to forward the boxes to the original or new destination, on which contributory values will be assessed. Experts will then work out the contributory value of the cargo as a whole.

Seaworthy

Investigations will centre critically on whether the vessel was considered seaworthy — an aspect over which cargo interests and their legal advisers have in recent times applied increasingly stringent criteria.

Under the Hague-Visby Rules, which apply to most bills of lading, the shipowner has a responsibility to load, carry and care for cargo and to ensure the ship is seaworthy. If it can be shown that, for instance, there was a failure to stow the cargo correctly, or it was stowed at the wrong temperatures, or if a boiler-room fire was caused by gas leaking from an exhaust pipe, the cargo side will insist it is not liable for general average.

Compensation is calculated in relation to the value of the goods when they are, or should have been, discharged from the ship.

"The hull claim will be settled relatively promptly," said a London expert. "The general average will flow from this and is likely to take a good two to three years."

Calculation

Meanwhile, it looks as though it will take time before underwriters' efforts to increase cargo rates more widely will bear fruit, although an early calculation of the huge cargo loss will allow them to underline the aggregation risks inherent in transporting massive quantities of goods on one ship.

— SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage is continuing "surgical" fire fighting operations on the Hyundai Fortune writes Helen Hill .

The Ijmuiden-based company's general commercial manager Hendrik Land said the fire was under control and the salvage crews were picking containers one by one, extinguishing the fire in each one.

Negotiations were going on with a few ports but the talks were "very delicate" so he could not say where the vessel will be towed into yet.

The fire was certainly not worsening, he added.

As speculation continued about the cause, Mr Land would not be drawn.

He only said what is clear is that the steel had been forced outwards.

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

Vessel	Type	Flag	Class	GT	DWT	Bit	Casualty
<i>AZOV MARINER</i>	product tanker	MLT	RS	4,606	6,600	1999	Grounded at Kalkgrundet just after departing Malmo Mar 22. Refloated with assistance from pilot boat and returned to Malmo for inspection. Some cracks in hull and minor leakage. To proceed to Tallinn for repairs.
<i>BLACK POINT</i>	chem/oil carrier	ITA	—	27,001	46,825	1985	Reported fire in electrical insulation in lat 54 38N, long 03 53E, Mar 20, resulting in a black out. Taken in tow of Fairplay 28. In New Rotterdam Waterway Mar 22.
<i>DALSLAND</i>	container	NLD	GL	5,067	6,850	2000	Sustained rudder failure and In collision with Flinterzee between Kudensee and Duekerswisch, Kiel Canal, Mar 21. Proceeded to Inner Harbour, Kiel, for inspection.
<i>FLINTERZEE</i>	general	NLD	BV	4,368	6,075	1997	In collision with <i>Dalsland</i> between Kudensee and Duekerswisch, Kiel Canal, Mar 21. Sustained side damage. Continued voyage after inspection at Brunsbuttel.
<i>HYUNDAI FORTUNE</i>	container	PAN	KR	64,054	68,363	1996	Reported with severe fire on stern in lat 12 40N, long 47 23E, about 120 miles E of Aden, 60 miles offshore. Some containers lost. All crew evacuated to Dutch naval vessel. Still burning. Large hole in port side. LOF signed.
<i>KOREA GAS</i>	lpg	KOR	KR	3,986	3,713	1986	Struck by <i>Xin Hai 7</i> while anchored three miles south of Palmi-do, Incheon, Mar 20. Sustained minor damage to bow. <i>Xin Hai 7</i> sank. Sailed Incheon 21 Mar.
<i>MARIA A. ANGELICOUSI</i>	bulker	GRC	BV	86,201	169,163	2001	Discovered water in No's 1 and 2 forepeak tanks near lat 40 09N, long 121 30E, after striking submerged object. Pumping out effected and proceeding to Bayuquan pilot station. Discharging in port.
<i>MOL CONFIDENCE</i>	container	CYP	(NV)	51,841	61,152	1994	In collision with Changninghai at Pudong International Terminal, Shanghai, Mar 20. Sailed Mar 22.
<i>OCEAN CHALLENGE</i>	fishing	GBR	—	113	—	1980	Crew detected fire on board south-east of Sumburgh in lat 59 04.8N, long 01 30.2E, Mar 17. Crew abandoned; rescued. Smoking & drifting. Tow attached & proceeding Fraserburgh. Sank in lat 58 12.8N, long 00 42.5W, Mar 18. Crew safe.
<i>QUEEN OF THE NORTH</i>	passenger	CAN	LR	8,889	1,205	1969	Grounded, listed and subsequently sank in choppy seas in lat 53 19N, long 129 13.30W, off Queen Charlotte Islands, BC, 135 miles from Prince Rupert, Mar 22. 96 persons rescued.
<i>STAR PRINCESS</i>	passenger	BMU	(RI)	108,977	108,852	2001	Had fire in passenger accommodation near Montego Bay Mar 23. Decks 9 to 12 affected, with damage to 100 cabins. Fire extinguished and proceeding into Montego Bay same day.
<i>TOWER BRIDGE</i>	container	SGP	NK	34,245	34,245	1985	Reported a fire in No.2 generator in lat 18 06S, long 108 47E, while outbound from Fremantle Mar 19. Deployed carbon dioxide in the engine-room and currently stopped awaiting cooling down. Under way Mar 21.
<i>XIN HAI 7</i>	general	TUV	—	2,972	5,275	2005	Struck Lpg Korea Gas which was anchored three miles off Palmi-do, Incheon Mar 20. Subsequently sank. Five of the 17 crew rescued.

CONTENTS

Reports appear in alphabetical order under the following headings and relevant page number:

Marine, including Overdue & Missing Vessels	1
Piracy	11
Port State Control	11
Seizures & Arrests	11
Pipeline Accidents	12
Pollution	13
Weather & Navigation	13
Earthquakes	16
Volcanic Activity	17
Political & Civil Unrest	17
Kidnappings	25
Labour Disputes	25
Awards & Settlements	27
Railway Accidents	28
Miscellaneous	29
Fires & Explosions	31
Aviation	33
Product Recalls	36
Port Conditions	36
Port Conditions charts	37

© Lloyd's Marine Intelligence Unit 2005
These reports may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photographic, recorded or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Lloyd's
Marine Intelligence Unit



The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



AALESUND (Sweden)

London, Mar 21 — Following received from Stavanger RCC, timed 1000, UTC: Fishing *Aalesund*, SKBM, length 19 metres, two persons on board, is taking on water through engine-room in lat 57 41N, long 06 24E. Vessel is being assisted by rescue vessels from Egersund. Search and Rescue helicopter is flying out pumps. Situation not critical at present.

Gothenburg, Mar 21 — Fishing *Aalesund*, approximately 20 metres in length, with two crew on board, experienced a serious problem today, off Lista, southern Norway, when a pipe broke and the vessel flooded with water and was at risk of sinking. The crew got the pumps working themselves and were able to lower the water level. The helicopter sent out returned to base "without interfering". The vessel is proceeding to a port, assisted by a rescue vessel, which had attended. — Westax Marine Services AB.

London, Mar 22 — Following received from Stavanger RCC, timed 1715, UTC: Fishing *Aalesund* is proceeding, under its own power, but under escort of a rescue vessel, to the port of Mandal and will arrive in the next few minutes.

AL SALAM BOCCACCIO 98 (Panama)

London, Mar 19 — A press report, dated Mar 18, states: Egyptian authorities have agreed to lift immunity from the owner of passenger ro/ro *Al Salam Boccaccio 98*, which sank in the Red Sea last month drowning more than 1,000 passengers. Ferry owner Mamdouh Ismail is a member of the Shura Council, or upper chamber of Egypt's parliament, whose members are usually immune from investigation. The council's committee for constitutional and legislative affairs agreed to lift Ismail's immunity today, after a request from the justice minister. Experts examining how the ferry sank will submit their findings to prosecutors in about four months. The ship's black box, or data recorder, is being studied in Britain and a preliminary report on the disaster is expected in about two months.

ALESSIA (Switzerland)

Brest, Mar 20 — General cargo *Alessia*: Reloading operations are scheduled to last until Mar 22 and the vessel is expected to depart late that evening at the earliest. — Lloyd's Agents.

ALEXANDROUPOLIS (Malta)

London, Mar 16 — Bulk *Alexandroupolis* sailed from Amsterdam at 0610 hrs, Mar 15, bound for Southampton.

ALLEGRO (Netherlands)

London, Mar 23 — At 0815, local time, yesterday, general cargo *Allegro* sank in the River Rhein when they were discharging the cargo of aluminium at Sturzelberg, at Km 726, near Dormagen. After discharging about 80 blocks of aluminium, the cargo of aluminium blocks started to shift and the vessel started to sink by the bow. The five people on board safely left the ship. A car belonging to the master, which was placed on the foredeck, slid off the vessel and sank in the Rhine. The fire brigade tried to pump out the water, but could not prevent her from sinking. The cause of the sinking could have been caused by the fast passing river traffic, vessels which did not slow down after *Allegro* started to list. All shipping traffic was stopped after the sinking until 1500, local time. *Allegro* will be raised by a Dutch company.

London, Mar 23 — Information received from Sandnes, dated today, states: General cargo *Allegro* sank on Mar 22 in Dusseldorf while unloading aluminium blocks. The vessel came from Rotterdam and unloaded its cargo of 1400 tons while berthed in Sturzelberg. Part of it shifted, the ship listed, and the firefighters could not prevent it from sinking. Some hatches went adrift, thus the Rhine shipping had to be stopped until they were recovered. The crew of five and three workers escaped from the sinking vessel. Dutch cranes will first have to salvage the cargo and then the ship.

AMIRAL AKDENIZ (Libya)

Piraeus, Mar 20 — General cargo *Amiral Akdeniz* arrived Kalamata Mar 18 from Gythion and sailed Mar 19 for Misurata. — Lloyd's Agents.

AMUR 2525 (Russia)

Tallinn, Mar 20 — General cargo *Amur 2525* completed repairs and sailed Tallinn for Hamburg on Mar 19. — Lloyd's Agents.

ANDREW J. BARBERI (U.S.A.)

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated Mar 20, states: Despite earlier reports, lawyers for a victim of the Staten Island Ferry, (*Andrew J. Barberi*) crash now say they never actually reached a multi-million dollar settlement with the city. Paul Esposito lost both his legs in the 2003 disaster. Esposito's lawyers originally said today the city offered him a \$25.5 million tax-free settlement, but the city denied it. Now Esposito's lawyers say no settlement was reached and no offer is on the table. Eleven people were killed and dozens of others wounded when the ferry smashed into a Staten Island pier. Assistant Captain Richard Smith and former director of ferry operations Patrick Ryan both pleaded guilty to seaman's manslaughter. Ryan is serving a one year sentence, and Smith is set to turn himself in later this month to begin serving an 18 month sentence. The city has already paid more than

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

\$3 million to settle dozens of other liability suits connected to the accident.

ANNE-S. (Netherlands)

Esbjerg, Mar 23 — General cargo *Anne-S.* is awaiting a new rudder to arrive. We have been informed that the rudder should arrive Mar 29 and be installed Mar 30. Vessel should be departing then. — Lloyd's Agents.

AUTORACER (Sweden)

London, Mar 21 — Following received from Coastguard Portland MRSC, timed 1526, UTC: Vehicle *Autoracer* (9693 gt, built 1994), bound Santander (from Zeebrugge), fully loaded with vehicles, had a spillage of 700 litres of hydraulic fuel caused by a leaking mooring winch between lat 50 05N, long 02 27.5W, and lat 50 02.5N, long 02 40W, about 27 nautical miles south of Portland, today. The spillage was controlled at 1200, UTC, today and the pollution broken up by weather conditions. Vessel is continuing voyage to Santander, where ETA 1400, UTC, Mar 22.

AZOV MARINER (Malta)

Gothenburg, Mar 22 — Product tanker *Azov Mariner* (4606 gt, built 1999) grounded at 1236 hrs, today, just after departing Malmo port, where it had discharged. The vessel was heading south in the fairway, but got caught at "Kalkgrundet". The vessel later refloated around 1630 hrs, with some assistance from a pilot vessel, but no tugs were involved. The vessel returned to Malmo, where it is now berthed and it will undergo a divers inspection tomorrow. The grounding is being reported as a result of human error, the vessel having passed on the wrong side of a lightbouy. The incident could be seen from the office of the Board of Shipping and Navigation and together with Police and Coast Guard they attended onboard for questioning, but confirmed it was a human mistake. There was no danger to crew nor vessel and no "outlets" observed. — Westax Marine Services AB.

Malmo, Mar 23 — At about 1130, local time, Mar 22, while en route from Malmo, Sweden, to an unknown port, product tanker *Azov Mariner* grounded just outside Malmo, on the Kalkgrundet. The vessel had no cargo and no pilot on board. *Azov Mariner* was refloated at 1610, local time, by her own power and taken into Malmo Harbour, Mar 23, for divers inspection. No oil leakage has been noted. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Mar 23 — Following received from the managers of product tanker *Azov Mariner*, dated today: *Azov Mariner* berthed at Malmo yesterday evening and underwater damage survey was carried out. There are some cracks in the hull and minor leakage has been experienced. Some surveyors and inspectors are currently on board and classification society surveyor is expected today. Intention is for the vessel to proceed

to Tallinn for drydocking once authorities give permission for it to depart.

BANG XING I (Panama)

London, Mar 17 — Following navigation warning issued today: Numerous logs (from bulk *Bang Xing I*) about 10 metres long and approximately 0.5 metres in diameter, adrift in area bounded by lat 28 00N, long 126 30E, long 28 08N, long 126 04E, lat 28 37N, long 126 41E, long 28 29N, long 126 43E, at 0512, UTC, today.

BETELGEUSE (Bulgaria)

London, Mar 20 — Chem.tank *Betelgeuse* passed Gibraltar 0824, Mar 15, from Algeciras and, according to LMIU AIS, was 22 nautical miles from Valletta, in lat 36 03 29.28N, long 14 51 34.36E, at 0831, UTC, today.

BLACK POINT (Italy)

London, Mar 21 — Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 0254, UTC: Chemical/oil carrier *Black Point* (27001 gt, built 1985) reported a fire in its electrical insulation Mar 20, in lat 54 38N, long 03 53E, resulting in a black-out. Tug *Fairplay-28* proceeded to assist and took the vessel in tow at 0030 today, bound for Rotterdam, ETA this evening.

London, Mar 21 — Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 1645, UTC: Chemical/oil carrier *Black Point*, in tow of tug *Fairplay-23*, was in lat 52 48.4N, long 03 50.37E, at 1635, UTC, course 165 deg, speed seven knots, ETA Rotterdam 2000, UTC, today.

London, Mar 21 — Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 2047, UTC: Chemical/oil carrier *Black Point*, in tow of tug *Fairplay-23*, is in lat 52 21.6N, long 03 54.46E, Vessels are proceeding to Rotterdam, where ETA "in a few hours".

London, Mar 21 — Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 2117, UTC: ETA of chemical/oil carrier *Black Point* and tug *Fairplay-23*, at Rotterdam, is 0100, UTC, Mar 22.

London, Mar 22 — Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 0601, UTC: Chemical/oil carrier *Black Point* is now in the New Rotterdam Waterway and is due to moor at Keppel Verolme Quay No 6 at 0630, UTC.

BREMER VICTORIA (Gibraltar)

London, Mar 21 — General cargo *Bremer Victoria* sailed Swinoujscie Mar 17 for Oxelosund.

CAMPERDUIN (Netherlands)

London, Mar 20 — Following received from Kiel, dated today: Tug *Camperduin* (250 gt, built 2004) experienced a fire in the engineroom whilst working off Dubai for Van Oord dredging (date of fire unknown). No persons are reported injured.

CHANGNINGHAI (China)

Antwerp, Mar 22 — C.c. *MOL Confidence* (51841 gt, built 1994), that

was scheduled to call at Shanghai, Ningbo, Hong Kong, Japanese ports, American ports, and bulk *Changninghai* (4560 gt) were in collision on the afternoon of Mar 20, when the former completed loading/discharging at the Pudong International Containers Terminal (No.1), port of Shanghai, on its way to Ningbo. *Changninghai* sustained damage on stern. *MOL Confidence* sailed from anchorage at 1500, local time, Mar 22, after two days' waiting at anchorage. — DPS Teamhead Surveyors. (Note — *MOL Confidence* sailed Kobe Mar 17 for Shanghai.)

CONCEL PRIDE (Nigeria)

Cadiz, Mar 17 — Product tanker *Concel Pride* remains at Algeciras, situation unchanged. — Lloyd's Agents.

CORSAR (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Mar 20 — Information received from Kiel dated today, states: C.c. *Corsar* (3999 gt, built 1998) was in collision with vehicle *Thames Highway* (23498 gt, built 2005) in the locks of the Kiel Canal in Brunsbuttel, Mar 20. Both vessels were slightly damaged, the damage size has still to be investigated. (Note — *Corsar* sailed Hamburg Mar 19 for Gdynia.)

Malmo, Mar 22 — Vehicle *Thames Highway* arrived Malmo Mar 20 from Cuxhaven and sailed Mar 21 for Hanko. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Mar 23 — C.c. *Corsar* arrived and sailed Gdynia Mar 21 and subsequently arrived Gdansk same day.

DALSLAND (Netherlands)

See *Flinterzee*.

DEANNA (North Korea)

London, Mar 21 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1020, UTC: General cargo *Deanna* resumed voyage for Damietta on Mar 18.

DORIA (Germany)

Durban, Mar 20 — C.c. *Doria* sailed Durban Mar 18. — Lloyd's Agents.

E.R.AMSTERDAM (Germany)

London, Mar 20 — C.c. *E.R.Amsterdam* arrived Hong Kong Mar 18 and sailed Mar 19 for Yantian.

EAST CARRIER (Cambodia)

London, Mar 20 — According to LMIU AIS, general cargo *East Carrier* was in lat 35 57 50.52N, long 129 44 26.58E, at 1058, UTC, Mar 20.

EASTERN DRAGON (Panama)

Yokohama, Mar 20 — Chem.tank *Eastern Dragon* arrived Mizushima Mar 19 from Itozaki. — Lloyd's Agents.

EMC 423 (U.S.A.)

Chicago, Mar 17 — Understand tank barge *EMC 423* still on the slip at Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal in Lemont. Ninety percent of the slurry oil has been cleaned out of barge and

the operators are waiting for warmer weather in order to complete the cleaning, so that they can scrap the barge. — Lloyd's Agents.

FACAL VEINTE (Canary Islands)

London, Mar 23 — Following received from Madrid MRCC, timed 1125, UTC: Anchor handling tug *Facal Veinte* (630 gt, built 1974) sank in lat 45 27.9N, long 08 27.7W, yesterday. Crew was rescued by Spanish fishing vessel.

FLINTERZEE (Netherlands)

London, Mar 22 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: General cargo *Flinterzee* (4368 gt, built 1997) and c.c. *Dalsland* (5067 gt, built 2000) were in collision between Kudensee and Duekerswisch in the Kiel Canal Mar 21. Both vessels were able to proceed under own power. The *Dalsland* reached Kiel and berthed in the inner harbour and *Flinterzee* at the South Quay in Brunsbittel. The amount of damage will be assessed in the respective ports. (Note — According to LMIU AIS *Flinterzee* was in lat 54 36 47.4N, long 11 8 2.4E at 0804, Mar 21, and *Dalsland* was reported in lat 54 34 37.2N, long 11 11 30E at 0836, today, 5.3 nautical miles from Puttgarden, speed 17.3 knots.)

London, Mar 22 — At about 1830, local time, yesterday, a collision occurred between c.c. *Dalsland* and general cargo *Flinterzee* when they were passing in the Kiel Canal between Kudensee and Dukerswisch. *Dalsland* swerved from the course and grazed along *Flinterzee*, which was going in the other direction. Both vessels had side damage. The *Flinterzee* bulwark was pushed in and the hatchcrane was damaged. There were no personal injuries. *Dalsland* went to the Inner Harbour in Kiel, where an inspection was held. *Flinterzee*, which was on voyage from Tornio to Terneuzen, sailed to Brunsbittel and moored to the Sudkai. After the authorities went on board for inspection and an inspection of the Classification Bureau, this vessel proceeded her voyage this morning, to the port of Terneuzen.

London, Mar 23 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: After the collision on the Kiel Canal between c.c. *Dalsland*, homeport Heereven, and general cargo *Flinterzee*, homeport Delfzijl, on Mar 21, close to Burg, investigations have been completed. *Dalsland* had sustained a rudder failure and came into the course of *Flinterzee*, which grounded after the collision. Both vessels resumed their voyages.

FORTES (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

London, Mar 20 — General cargo *Fortes* (3219 gt, built 1986) Hansweert to Rotterdam, had an engine black-out near buoy 12 A off the Braakman Harbour near Terneuzen, at about 0945, local time, today. Vessel came at anchor in the River Scheldt. At 1145, local time, engine trouble has been repaired and the vessel proceeded on voyage via the Oostgat to Rotterdam.

Maassluis, Mar 22 — General cargo *Fortes* arrived Rotterdam at 1705, Mar 21, from Hansweert. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

FUNCHAL (Madeira)

See "Outbreak Of Virus On Madeira Flag Vessel" under "Miscellaneous".

GENOA (Bahamas)

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Traffic in the Istanbul Strait was interrupted at 0915 hrs, today after ref *Genoa* (8254 gt, built 1983) experienced engine breakdown. Movement in both directions resumed at 1030 hrs, after the *Genoa* had been towed to Buyukdere Anchorage.

London, Mar 23 — Following received from the managers of ref *Genoa*, dated today: *Genoa* is on voyage from Central America to Ilichevsk with a cargo of bananas. It had a small generator problem for around half an hour which necessitated it having to proceed to the anchorage. Problem is minor and we anticipate the vessel will resume voyage shortly. (Note — *Genoa* sailed Guayaquil Feb 23 and passed Dardanelles Mar 21.)

GERONIMO (Netherlands)

London, Mar 21 — General cargo *Geronimo* completed repairs at Koninklijke Niestern Sander Shipyard at Delfzyl and sailed last week.

GLOBULUS (Panama)

London, Mar 17 — A press report, dated Mar 16, states: Investigators are still working to put out a fire that broke out this afternoon in the hold of a large cargo vessel docked in Long Beach Harbour. Tons of scrap metal are burning. The fire has spread smoke across the massive Long Beach Port area. Long Beach fire spokesman Paul Rodriguez says the blaze was reported shortly after 1500 hrs, but it took firefighters hours to work their way to the bottom of the ship where the fire is burning. He says "It's a very labour-intensive process." He says "Our current operation is to flood that hold area and drown out the fire, but it's going to take some time to fill it with water." The cause of the fire was not immediately known. The cargo ship was scheduled to leave for Asia with the scrap metal.

London, Mar 17 — Following received from Coast Guard San Francisco, timed 1025, UTC: The vessel involved in the incident at Long Beach yesterday afternoon is wood-chip *Globulus* (40328 gt, built 1996). The fire is reported to be under control. (Note — *Globulus* arrived at Long Beach at 1350 hrs, Mar 6, from Shimizu.)

London, Mar 17 — Following received from Coast Guard San Francisco, timed 1920, UTC: Wood-chip *Globulus*, fire in Long Beach harbour: A crane was used to pull some scrap metal away from the location of the fire and smoke in order to allow fire-fighters access to the fire. According to Long Beach Fire

Department the fire has now been extinguished and the vessel will require dewatering of the affected areas. The cause of the fire was the accidental crushing of some refrigerators on board, an event which triggered a chemical reaction leading to the blaze.

London, Mar 18 — A press report, dated today, states: It took more than 11 hours and nearly 600,000 gallons of seawater to snuff a blazing pile of scrap metal on wood-chip *Globulus* in the port yesterday. The fire was reported shortly before 1500 Thursday but continued to burn until the wee hours of the morning yesterday, said Long Beach Fire Battalion Chief Jeff Reeb. About 45 firefighters battled the flames, which burned within a 30-foot scrap metal pile stored in the hold of the ship, which was docked at the Port of Long Beach, Reeb said. Ten units were dispatched to the vessel, which was anchored in one of the holds at Pacific Coast Recycling on Pier T. Firefighters used thermal imaging cameras to find the hottest point of the fire through the dense smoke. With the seat of the fire pinpointed, Long Beach fire boats were brought alongside her. A total of 595,000 gallons of salt water was used and the fire was extinguished at 0204 hrs, Reeb said. The scrap metal was expected to be a total loss because salt water sprayed from fire boats rusts the metal, rendering it useless, he added. Helping firefighters was a health/hazmat officer from the Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services to ensure there was no contaminated runoff into the ocean and an assessment team from the South Coast Air Quality Management District. Investigators are still trying to determine the cause for the blaze.

GOLAR FREEZE (U.K.)

London, Mar 16 — A press report, dated today, states: Lng/Lpg *Golar Freeze* (95879 gt, built 1977) broke away from its moorings while unloading liquefied natural gas at the Southern LNG terminal on Elba Island, on the Savannah River, about five miles from the city of Savannah, early Tuesday morning (Mar 14). However, safety measures prevented a gas spill. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is investigating the accident, which shut down the dock for 36 hours at the terminal. Initial reports said the *Golar Freeze*, while unloading, was pulled 15 feet from the pier by surge from a passing vessel. An emergency disconnect coupling on the terminal unloading arm prevented any release of the liquefied gas or vapours, said Charlie Johnson of the US Coast Guard's Marine Safety Office Savannah. Two tractor tugs quickly stopped the tanker from drifting and returned it to the dock. "All the safety equipment and procedures worked as planned," Bill Baerg, a spokesman for El Paso Corp, the parent company of Southern LNG, said yesterday. The Elba Island terminal uses four massive tanks, the

largest with a capacity of one million barrels, to store liquefied natural gas. The gas is returned to a gaseous state and then pumped into pipelines.

GRACHTBORG (Netherlands Antilles)

London, Mar 17 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: General cargo *Grachtborg*, which had recently been damaged in a collision with general cargo *Marietje Benita*, left the Norderwerft, Hamburg, after completion of repairs at the bow and entered the Kiel Canal towards the Baltic, to resume its service on Mar 16.

GRASMERE MAERSK (U.K.)

Valletta, Mar 20 — C.c. *Grasmere Maersk* arrived Valletta Mar 17 from Genoa. — Lloyd's Agents.

H.LEE WHITE (U.S.A.)

Troy, Michigan, Mar 22 — After 14 years of litigation, a federal judge has again sided with the owners of bulk *H.Lee White*, that collided with the Grosse Ile Toll Bridge in 1992, knocking one of its sections into the Detroit River. US District Judge Denise Page Hood ruled last week that the bridge company was 97% at fault and that American Steamship Co. of suburban Buffalo, N.Y., was 3% to blame. That means the ship company must pay the bridge owner \$51,396. The 700-foot-long *H.Lee White*, hit the bridge, causing \$1.8 million in damage and closing it for five months. The bridge is one of only two bridges to the island. Hood ruled in 2000 that the bridge company was totally at fault because its tenders failed to open the bridge in time, even though the company knew for 24 hours that the ship was coming. The US 6th Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati disagreed, ruling in 2002 that the ship captain waited too long to long to drop an anchor to slow down the vessel after realizing tenders weren't opening the span. Steamship company lawyer Thomas Emery of Detroit said he was pleased with the decision. Bridge company lawyer Robert Coniam of Cleveland said he was disappointed and that he would confer with bridge owners to decide whether to appeal again. — Great Lakes and Seaway Shipping News.

HOEGH GANDRIA (NIS)

Singapore, Mar 15 — Lng/Lpg *Hoegh Gandria* is still berthed at Quay 2, Hitachi Shipyard, Singapore. — Lloyd's Agents.

HYUNDAI FORTUNE (Panama)

Aden, Mar 21 — C.c. *Hyundai Fortune* (64054 gt, built 1996) in lat 12 40N, long 47 23E, about 120 miles east of Aden, 60 miles off coast, with fire on stern, some containers lost overboard. Coalition naval vessels assisting. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — *Hyundai Fortune* sailed Singapore Mar 15 for Rotterdam.)

London, Mar 21 — Following received from Stavanger RCC, timed

1235, UTC: C.c. *Hyundai Fortune*, fire in Gulf of Aden: Vessel's crew have been evacuated onto a Dutch naval vessel.

London, Mar 21 — Following received from Stavanger RCC, timed 1610, UTC: Understand the fire on board c.c. *Hyundai Fortune* is severe. The crewmen are on their way to Djibouti on a Dutch naval vessel with the exception of one injured seaman, who has been taken by helicopter to a French naval vessel.

London, Mar 22 — Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 0601, UTC: The fire on board c.c. *Hyundai Fortune* is still burning. The vessel has a large hole in its port side, in way of the engine-room.

Muscat, Mar 22 — Salalah Harbour Control report that c.c. *Hyundai Fortune* is still on fire following an explosion in lat 12.36N, long 47.18.7 E. Some crew members have been rescued. At the request of Wijsmuller, Salalah Port has dispatched one tug to assist in firefighting. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Mar 22 — Understand salvage services are being rendered to c.c. *Hyundai Fortune* under Lloyd's Open Form by SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage BV.

Ymuiden, Mar 22 — The Royal Navy reported about 1230, UTC, today that c.c. *Hyundai Fortune* was still afloat and in stable condition with no water ingress. — Wijsmuller Salvage BV.

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: C.c. *Hyundai Fortune* is reported to be on fire in position lat 12 14N, long 47 24E, about 60 nautical miles south-east of the Abwar area. The ship's astern is ablaze. Laden containers are said to be dispersed around the vessel which may be containing explosive materials. Ships of coalition forces in the area have mobilized to offer the necessary assistance to the burning vessel. Ships in the vicinity are advised to take caution and to keep clear for safety purposes.

London, Mar 23 — A press report, dated today, states: HNLMS *De Zeven Provinciën*, a destroyer from the Netherlands and the command ship of Combined Task Force 150, came to the aid of distressed c.c. *Hyundai Fortune* and rescued 27 people off the coast of Yemen earlier this week, while conducting maritime security operations (MSO) in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in the area, a statement issued by the US Naval Forces Central Command, said in Doha yesterday. "MSO set the conditions for security and stability in the maritime environment and complement the counter-terrorism and security efforts of regional nations. Coalition forces have a longstanding tradition of helping mariners in distress providing medical assistance, engineering assistance, and search and rescue. CTF 150 is one of three task forces acting under the direction of Vice-Admiral Patrick M Walsh, US Naval Forces Central Command. While operating as a part of their MSO

mission in the Gulf of Aden, *De Zeven Provinciën* provided assistance to *Hyundai Fortune* at approximately 1100, local time. Approximately 43 miles off the coast of Yemen, the vessel was in distress as the result of a large fire onboard. The cause of the fire is not known at this time," it sadded. The *De Zeven Provinciën* crew came to the aid of the vessel by rendering fire fighting assistance, evacuating the crew and offering humanitarian aide and medical care once onboard. The fire could not be contained; the master of the vessel gave orders to evacuate the ship. *De Zeven Provinciën* commanding officer, Captain Maarten Stenvert, said his crew performed the rescue in a "superb manner." "They were continuously aware what was going on and of the potential dangers that the *Hyundai Fortune* posed to them such as explosion, falling containers, among others" said Stenvert. The *Hyundai Fortune*'s crew is comprised of 27 personnel. One crewmember sustained non-life threatening injuries and has been evacuated to the French Navy aircraft carrier FS *Charles De Gaulle*, which hosts the nearest surgical facility, by a Lynx helicopter from the French destroyer FS *Montcalm* (D 642) for further examination. *Charles de Gaulle* and *Montcalm* are part of coalition TF 473, which is led by French Rear Admiral. Xavier Magne and is supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. The remaining 26 crewmembers evacuated from *Hyundai Fortune* will be transported to shore, according to Stenvert. Stenvert credits the MSO mission for enabling coalition forces to rescue and provide humanitarian aide. "Because of the active patrolling in the light of MSO," said Stenvert, "*De Zeven Provinciën* was able to close the merchant vessel under distress with no time delay. Therefore, it was possible to render assistance immediately." *De Zeven Provinciën* is the Combined Task Force 150 command ship. Commodore Hank Ort of the Royal Netherlands Navy leads CTF 150. The coalition forces of CTF 150 conduct MSO in international waters of the Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Arabian Sea, parts of the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea.

IRAN BAYAN (Iran)

Chittagong, Mar 21 — General cargo *Iran Bayan* sailed Chittagong Mar 21 for Jubail. — Lloyd's Agents.

ISACCEA 8 (Romania)

Edinburgh, Mar 23 — At 1740 hrs, Mar 22, a six barge Danube convoy pushed by tug *Isaccea 8* hit the shore at the entrance to the Danube-Black Sea Canal within the Port of Constantza-South (Agigea). The convoy was laden with iron ore and the incident has been blamed on a jammed rudder. The port side of the bow of barge number 1471 sustained a hole above the waterline. This barge has now been moved to berth 98 for

repair. The incident is now under the investigation of the Constantza Port Administration. — Danube Research.

ISOLA DELLE PERLE (Italy)

Genoa, Mar 21 — No significant developments have been reported and situation is basically unchanged. Repairs to ro/ro *Isola delle Perle* and to shore building are progressing. — Lloyd's Agents.

JOSEPHINA MARIA (Netherlands)

London, Mar 17 — Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 1330, UTC: Fishing *Josephina Maria* (510 gt, built 1999) in collision with bulk *Oluja* (24610 gt, built 1996) in lat 55 52N, long 06 35E at 0540, UTC, yesterday. *Josephina Maria* proceeded to Flushing for minor repairs. *Oluja* proceeding to Tarragona, ETA Mar 22.

London, Mar 23 — Bulk *Oluja*, Atlantic for Tarragona, passed Gibraltar Mar 21.

KAPITAN BOLSUNOVSKIY (Russia)

London, Mar 23 — According to LMIU AIS, fish factory *Kapitan Bolsunovskiy* is at Busan, in lat 35 03 55.44N, long 129 00 40.32E, at 1137, UTC, today, in stationary position.

KATHRIN (Switzerland)

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: The Romanian master of general cargo *Kathrin*, which ran aground in the Channel was later found drunk and incapable after docking, a court heard yesterday. Adrian Ferichel, 45, was at the helm of the vessel when it missed a lightship by a few feet and hit the Goodwin Sands off Kent. The crew managed to refloat the vessel and later docked at New Holland. Ferichel, who was four times over the drink-drive limit, and admitted being drunk in charge of a vessel, is expected to be sentenced at Grimsby Crown Court on Friday (Mar 24).

KOREA GAS (South Korea)

Busan, Mar 20 — Lpg *Korea Gas* (3986 gt, built 1986) was struck by general cargo *Xin Hai 7* (2972 gt, built 2005), Qingdao for Incheon with steel products, at about 0405, Mar 20, while *Korea Gas* was lying anchored some three miles south of Palmi-do, Incheon. *Xin Hai 7* sank soon after the collision and *Korea Gas* sustained very minor damage to its bow area. Five of the 17 crew members on board *Xin Hai 7* were safely rescued, three were found dead and the remaining nine crew are missing. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

London, Mar 20 — A press report, dated today, states: General cargo *Xin Hai 7* in collision with lpg *Korea Gas* near the port of Incheon, leaving at least three Chinese crew members dead and nine missing. South Korean Coast Guard officials say the collision took place a few kilometers west of Incheon. They say the *Xin Hai 7* sank after it slammed into *Korea Gas*. Five

Chinese crew members were rescued by a nearby vessel. South Korean authorities are searching by boat and helicopter for the nine missing Chinese. There were no serious injuries to the crew of *Korea Gas*, which was slightly damaged.

Busan, Mar 21 — The nine missing crew members of general cargo *Xin Hai 7* have not yet been located. No plan to salvage the vessel has been formulated as yet. Lpg *Korea Gas* sailed Incheon at 0700, Mar 21, for Yosu. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated Mar 21, states: Nine missing sailors from general cargo *Xin Hai 7* which sank following a collision with Lpg *Korea Gas* at Incheon had still not been found as of this morning, said the Chinese Ministry of Communications. A vessels collided at 0405 yesterday, and all 17 crew members of *Xin Hai 7* fell into the water. Three have been confirmed dead and five were rescued. South Korean maritime police sent 45 vessels, one helicopter and four divers to conduct the ongoing search and rescue operation. The Chinese Consul General to South Korea is at the scene to help deal with the accident. The five sailors who were rescued are in a stable condition. According to the China Maritime Rescue Centre, *Xin Hai 7* was chartered by Xinbei International Shipping Corp, (HK). The company has set up a special leadership group to deal with the accident. It said that the sailors, who mainly come from North China's Hebei and East China's Jiangsu provinces, had personal accident insurance of US\$25,000.

KOZA (Marshall Islands)

London, Mar 19 — General cargo *Koza*, Piraeus for Ambarli, passed Dardanelles Mar 16.

LA SURPRISE (Canary Islands)

London, Mar 20 — Following received from Kiel, dated today: Vehicle *La Surprise* (15224 gt, built 2000) grounded near Setubal at 0715 hrs, Mar 16. The vessel was refloated in the afternoon and towed to Setubal for inspection by the local tugs *Resistente* and *Cabo Espichel*. (Note — *La Surprise* sailed from Southampton at 1251 hrs, Mar 14 and was subsequently reported passing Gibraltar at 1443 hrs, Mar 19, bound for Valencia.)

London, Mar 22 — Vehicle *La Surprise* arrived Setubal Mar 17 and sailed Mar 18. Vessel subsequently arrived Valencia Mar 20 and sailed same day for Las Palmas.

LEONID SOBOLEV (Russia)

Quebec, Mar 16 — Bulk *Leonid Sobolev* departed Port Alfred at 1400 hrs, Mar 15, bound for Casablanca. Permanent repair to main mast was carried out in Port Alfred. — Lloyd's Agents.

LORE D. (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Mar 20 — Following received from Aarhus RCC, timed

1040, UTC: General cargo *Lore D.* (1127 gt, built 1981), Odense for Uddevalla, cargo rapeseed oil, grounded in lat 55 57.1N, long 10 27.9E, during the morning of Mar 17. Vessel was refloated at 1200, UTC, Mar 18, and subsequently released by Danish maritime authorities to continue its voyage. No leakage, pollution or water ingress reported.

Gothenburg, Mar 20 — The grounding of general cargo *Lore D.* actually took place at around 2100 hrs, Mar 16 and the first information to SOK of the incident was given at 0920 hrs, the following day. The vessel was held back for further investigation. No outlet or damages noted, but the vessel remained until Saturday (Mar 18) when permission to refloat was given. At 1242 hrs, the vessel was afloat after assistance from tug *Asterix*. Authorities gave permission for the vessel to proceed, but a fine of DKK 10.000 (for not reporting the incident earlier) to be paid before being allowed to sail. The vessel is currently discharging at Uddevalla. — Westax Marine Services AB.

MAERSK VAASA (Germany)

London, Mar 19 — C.c. *Maersk Vaasa*, Ilichevsk for Port Said, passed Istanbul Mar 16. (See issue of Mar 8.)

Messina, Mar 20 — C.c. *Maersk Vaasa* arrived Augusta Mar 18 and sailed Mar 19 for Port Said. — Lloyd's Agents.

MANTENHA (Panama, not Portugal as before reported)

London, Mar 16 — Following received from Institute of Ports and Shipping, Maritime Safety Division, Lisbon, dated today: General cargo *Mantenha* has not flown the Portuguese flag since July 2005. It is now Panamanian flag.

MARIA A.ANGELICOUSI (Greece)

London, Mar 22 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1300, UTC: Bulk *Maria A.Angelicoussi* (86201 gt, built 2001) discovered water in Nos 1 and 2 forepeak tanks near lat 40 09N, long 121 30E, Mar 20. Pumping out operations have been effected and vessel is proceeding to Bayuquan pilot station.

Antwerp, Mar 23 — Bulk *Maria A.Angelicoussi*, on voyage from Australia to northern China, was reportedly in contact with an unidentified submerged object Mar 20, causing forepeak leakage. It is said that no cargo damage has been found so far and there were no crew injuries. Vessel is now discharging cargo at port of destination. — DPS Teamhead Surveyors.

MERWEDESTROOM (Netherlands)

London, Mar 16 — C.c. *Merwedestroom* arrived at St. Petersburg on Mar 11 and sailed on Mar 15, bound for Hamburg.

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

MIJARA II

See *Premship X*.

MOL CONFIDENCE (Bahamas)

See *Changninghai*.

MORANT BAY (Panama)

London, Mar 16 — Ro/ro *Morant Bay* was reported arriving at Trabzon on Mar 15, from Sochi.

MSC GRACE (Panama)

London, Mar 17 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: After its grounding off Flushing on Mar 15, general cargo *MSC Grace* was towed to Flushing roads for inspections. After completion of these the vessel was allowed to resume its voyage from Antwerp to St. Petersburg the same day.

MSC IRIS (Panama)

London, Mar 16 — C.c. *MSC Iris* sailed from Le Havre on Mar 14, bound for Le Verdon, where it arrived at 0755 hrs, today.

MYSTIC (Netherlands Antilles)

London, Mar 20 — Ref *Mystic* sailed Szczecin Mar 13 for Turkey and subsequently passed Dover Strait Mar 19 for Aliaga.

NAPOCOR POWER BARGE NO.106 (Philippines)

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

NAPOCOR TUGBOAT NO.1 (Philippines)

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

NICE (France)

London, Mar 17 — At about 1800, local time, yesterday, general cargo *Nice* ran aground near buoy 28 in the River Scheldt, near De Griete, east of Terneuzen. The cause of this accident is not known. The loaded vessel was on her way from Hansweert locks to Ghent. The master refused help from *Multrasalvor* of the salvage company Multraship. He wanted to wait for the next incoming tide to refloat the vessel under her own power. At 0130, local time, today, the vessel did refloat and sailed for the locks in Terneuzen. Although tug *Multratug 12* was in the vicinity, her assistance was not required. Soundings were made, but there was no damage reported. After the reports had been made, *Nice* proceeded on voyage for Ghent.

OCEAN CHALLENGE (U.K.)

London, Mar 17 — A Maritime And Coastguard Agency press release, timed 0536, UTC, states: At 0300 hrs Aberdeen Coastguard received a Mayday call from fishing *Ocean Challenge* (113 gt, built 1980) after the crew detected a fire on board. The vessel is currently 100 miles south-east of Sumburgh. The crew of four were trying to contain the fire in the engine-room when they contacted the Coastguard for assistance. Aberdeen Coastguard scrambled the Coastguard

rescue helicopter Oscar Charlie which was on standby to evacuate the crew. Two further vessels, fishing *Constant Friend* and supply *Northern Wave P.* were also on scene assessing the situation. The crew abandoned *Ocean Challenge* and launched their liferaft and have now been picked up by *Constant Friend*.

London, Mar 17 — Following received from Coastguard Aberdeen MRCC, timed 0605, UTC: Fishing *Ocean Challenge*, PD977, in in lat 59 05N, long 01 30E. All crew are off the vessel. Supply *Northern Wave* is spraying water and foam on the vessel trying to put out the fire. The vessel is currently smoking and drifting.

London, Mar 17 — Following received from Coastguard Aberdeen MRCC, timed 0624, UTC: Fishing *Ocean Challenge* reported fire on board in lat 59 04.8N, long 01 30.2E, at 0259, UTC. Crew abandoned to liferaft and were picked up by fishing *Constant Friend*. Rescue helicopter stood down 0438, UTC, and is returning to base. Supply *Northern Wave* is currently dousing *Ocean Challenge* in attempt to extinguished fire. *Constant Friend* also standing by.

London, Mar 17 — Following received from Aberdeen MRCC, timed 0836, UTC: At 0613, UTC, the crew of fishing *Ocean Challenge* transferred from fishing *Constant Friend* to supply *Northern Wave*. Skipper reports smouldering deck and wheelhouse. At 0814, UTC, fishing gear cleared and tow attached by *Northern Wave*. Vessel under tow and proceeding to Peterhead. ETA unknown.

London, Mar 17 — Following received from Coastguard Aberdeen MRCC, timed 1725, UTC: Fishing *Ocean Challenge* is now reportedly heading for Fraserburgh, ETA 0830, UTC, Mar 18.

London, Mar 17 — Following received from Coastguard Aberdeen MRCC, timed 1811, UTC: Fishing *Ocean Challenge* has no visible sign of fire on board. At 1540, UTC, supply *Northern Wave* transferred tow of *Ocean Challenge* to fishing *Deliverance* for passage to Fraserburgh.

London, Mar 18 — Following received from Coastguard Aberdeen MRCC, timed 0254, UTC: Fishing *Ocean Challenge* sank 51 nautical miles north-east of Fraserburgh, in lat 58 12.8N, long 00 42.5W, at 0123, UTC, Mar 18. The vessel's crew are being taken to Fraserburgh on board fishing *Deliverance*, ETA 0800, UTC.

OLIVIA (Bahamas)

See *Sosnogorsk*.

OLUJA (Croatia)

See *Josephina Maria*.

OLYMPIA (North Korea)

See "Cyprus" under "Port State Control."

P&O NEDLLOYD MONDRIAAN (Liberia)

London, Mar 16 — A SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage report,

dated today, states:SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage today continued operations to recover the lost containers from c.c. *P&O Nedlloyd Mondriaan* from an area in the North Sea just north of the island of Terschelling. The about 40 containers are located at about 20 to 25 metres below sea level and are dispersed over a considerable area. Discussions with the Dutch authorities, the owners of the container vessel and the underwriters resulted in further contract confirmation on Mar 14 for SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage to also recover the sunken containers, this after successfully having completed the beach container/debris recovery operation last month. Preparations were started immediately upon confirmation and early this morning the special recovery vessel departed the port of West Terschelling with a SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage crew and equipment on board. The vessel during today has recovered part of one of the container remnants and brought it ashore, this despite the bad weather with windforce 5-6 Bft (fresh breeze) - (strong breeze) and waves of 2.5 metres. The operations are executed in close co-ordination with the Dutch Coastguard and the Ministry of Transport and Public Works.

PACIFIC HARMONY (Singapore)

Yokohama, Mar 20 — Lpg *Pacific Harmony* sailed Chiba Mar 16 for Singapore. — Lloyd's Agents.

PANDION (Sweden)

Estonia, Mar 17 — Asphalt tanker *Pandion* arrived at Tallinn Shipyard following the grounding incident off Umea and was drydocked Mar 16. Scattered holes and cracks found on both sides forward of amidships. Repairs to ruptured bottom plating are expected to take about 10 days. — Lloyd's Agents.

Gothenburg, Mar 20 — Asphalt tanker *Pandion* is at Tallinn "for some weeks" - to repair hull/bottom and heating equipment. — Westax Marine Srevicees A.B.

PREMSHIP X (Philippines)

Manila, Mar 20 — General cargo *Premship X* continues to block part of the busy Mactan Channel despite a second order by the Philippine Coast Guard to immediately remove the wreck. Cebu District Coast Guard Commander Lito Malic-on said that prolonged negotiations between Premiere Shipping Lines, owner of the vessel, and the vessel's insurer were delaying the refloating of the wreck. In the meantime, the wreck has become a navigational hazard along the 12-kilometre-long Mactan Channel. The channel is a major sea route where at least 200 passenger and cargo vessels pass daily. *Premship X* sank after colliding with general cargo *Mijara II* on Mar 11 — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

QUEEN OF SAANICH (Canada)

London, Mar 16 — Ro/ro *Queen of Saanich* (9302 gt, built 1963) struck

the side of the berth at Tsawwassen Ferry Terminal, BC, in lat 49 00N, long 123 08W, at 1318, PST, Mar 6. (Note — According to LMIU AIS, *Queen of Saanich* was in lat 48 43 06.48N, long 123 23 43.86W, at 1914, UTC, today, speed 17.4 knots, course 015 deg.)

QUEEN OF THE NORTH (Canada)

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Rescuers plucked dozens of people from lifeboats off B.C.'s Queen Charlotte Islands early today after passenger ro/ro *Queen of the North* (8889 gt, built 1969) sank in choppy seas. At least 96 of the 102 people on board were rescued, said Capt. Leah Byrne of the Search and Rescue Centre in Victoria. She said a search was continuing. Byrne did not say why the *Queen of the North* went down. The vessel was en route to Port Hardy from Prince Rupert, a trip of about 450 kilometres. The 125-metre-long vessel is reported to be completely submerged about 135 kilometres from Prince Rupert. "The joint rescue co-ordination centre dispatched a large number of assets to the scene, including a cormorant helicopter and buffalo aircraft," she said. Unformed reports said fishing trawlers also responded to the initial call and help in the rescue. Seas were reported to be choppy and winds were blowing at about 75 kilometres-per-hour. Survivors were taken to a community centre in Hartley Bay. Nicole Robinson, a receptionist at the nursing station in Hartley Bay said some people were hurt, but not seriously.

London, Mar 22 — Following received from Victoria BC MRCC, timed 1150, UTC: All persons from passenger ro/ro *Queen of the North* are believed to have been rescued. Vessel sank in lat 53 19N, long 129 13.5W, at 0826, UTC.

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Rescuers plucked dozens of people from lifeboats off B.C.'s Queen Charlotte Islands early today after a passenger ro/ro *Queen of the North* sank in choppy seas. At least 101 of the 102 people on board were accounted for, said Capt. Leah Byrne of the Search and Rescue Centre in Victoria. She said a search was continuing for one person. The vessel went aground, started listing badly and then sank.

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: It appears all 102 passengers and crew have been accounted for after passenger ro/ro *Queen of the North* bound for Port Hardy sank off the coast of British Columbia near the Queen Charlotte Islands early this morning. According to the BC Ferries website, the *Queen of the North* would have left Prince Rupert on at 2000, local time, yesterday, and was to arrive in Port Hardy at 1330, local time, today.

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Rescuers plucked dozens of people from lifeboats off B.C.'s Queen Charlotte Islands early today after a large ferry hit a rock

and sank in choppy seas and high winds. All of the people on board were rescued and accounted for, B.C. Ferries said in a statement released several hours after the incident. Most of them were taken to a community centre in Hartley Bay where workers there had given them blankets and coffee; others were on board a Coast Guard vessel. *Queen of the North* was reported to be completely submerged about 135 km from Prince Rupert after hitting the rock, listing to one side and then sinking. Rescuers were on the scene soon after the 1243 hrs incident, said Capt. Leah Byrne of the Search and Rescue Centre in Victoria.

London, Mar 22 — At 0400 hrs, today, passenger ro/ro *Queen of the North* ran aground in lat 53 19.00N, long 129 13.30W, at Juan Point, Gill Island British Columbia. Passengers and crew abandoned into liferafts and the vessel sank some one hour 20 minutes later.

London, Mar 23 — A press report, dated Mar 22, states: Search and rescue crews were today looking for two people who may have been on board passenger ro/ro *Queen of the North*, which sank in the choppy waters off the coast of British Columbia early today. Coast Guard Capt Leah Byrne said they were trying to track down "two personnel" whose whereabouts were unknown. "We're not sure if they were on the ferry or not," she said. Earlier, the vessel's operator reported that all 99 passengers and crew members were rescued after the vessel hit a rock shortly before 0100, PST, about 135 km south of Prince Rupert. The vessel reportedly began to tip to one side before it sank off Gil Island in Wright Sound. Eleven people were flown by helicopter to a Prince Rupert hospital and treated for minor injuries. The vessel is completely submerged, said the Search and Rescue Centre in Victoria. BC Ferries president David Hahn earlier confirmed that all passengers were safe and sound. He would not speculate on what caused the accident. "I think something went catastrophically wrong," he said. "We'll have to dig through all the evidence. We don't want to draw any quick conclusions." Rescue vessels carried survivors to Hartley Bay, an isolated community of about 200 people south of Prince Rupert. The passengers were transported to Prince Rupert by the Coast Guard, and were expected to arrive around 2300, local time. Many passengers were asleep when the incident occurred at 0043 hrs, about five hours into a 15-hour trip from Prince Rupert south to Port Hardy. It took about an hour for the vessel to sink, giving passengers time to scramble into lifeboats in the rough waters, the Coast Guard spokeswoman said. Fishing vessels from nearby communities, a helicopter and several Coast Guard vessels responded to the distress call. The company has suspended service on the route and Hahn and BC Premier Gordon Campbell will meet with survivors later today. An eight-person

team from the Transportation Safety Board was on its way to the scene.

London, Mar 23 — A press report, dated today, states: Just after midnight, passenger ro/ro *Queen of the North* was pushing its way through the cold, dark waters of the Inside Passage when a massive jolt reverberated through the hull, waking passengers who had retired for the night. The ferry apparently had strayed from safe shipping lanes early yesterday, officials said, and struck a rock, ripping open the hull. *Queen of the North* sank in about 1,100 ft of water near the remote Gil Island in B.C.'s Inside Passage. There were no confirmed deaths but, by late yesterday, two passengers were unaccounted-for. They are believed to have survived the sinking but could not be found in the final count of passengers. Investigators from Canada's federal Transportation Safety Board and BC Ferries scrambled to the scene to begin work. The ship sent out a Mayday call at 1226 hrs and within a half-hour passengers and crew took to the life rafts. *Queen of the North* was thought to be carrying some 58,000 gallons of diesel fuel, prompting fears of an ecological disaster. The 16 vehicles on board also could be leaking gasoline. The B.C. Environment Ministry dispatched emergency crews to try to contain the spill.

London, Mar 23 — A press report, dated today, states: Passenger ro/ro *Queen of the North* was "clearly off course" when it sank off the British Columbia coast early yesterday, a BC Ferries official says. Capt. Trafford Taylor, B.C. Ferries executive vice-president of operations, said the *Queen of the North* was out of the shipping channel when it hit submerged rocks and sank within an hour. David Hahn, president of BC Ferries, wouldn't speculate on the cause of the accident. "It was clearly off course," he said. "There's no other way to look at it. The question is, how did it get to be where it was?" The captain was not on the bridge at the time, but Hahn would not say who was. BC Ferries regulations require the captain to have a backup for the 15-hour voyage. The Transportation Safety Board is investigating what caused the sinking. About eight fishing boats, five speed boats and a couple of larger fishing vessels that were already out in the water formed the rescue effort before the Coast Guard could get its ice-breaker, the *Sir Wilfrid Laurier*, to the site. The Coast Guard also called in two Cormorant search-and-rescue helicopters, two CC-115 Buffalo aircraft and six other vessels in the search and rescue mission.

RAFFLES LIGHT (Hong Kong)

Yokohama, Mar 23 — Bulk *Raffles Light* arrived Kashima Mar 20 from Alcoy and sailed Mar 22 for Qingdao. — Lloyd's Agents.

RED FALCON (U.K.)

London, Mar 23 — Following received from Associated British

Ports, Southampton, dated today: Passenger ro/ro *Red Falcon* remains at Berth 101, Southampton, not yet back in service.

RIGA SAILOR (Malta)

London, Mar 22 — According to LMIU AIS, bulk *Riga Sailor* was in lat 36 36 53.02N, long 14 41 27.06E, five nautical miles from Vega Terminal, Sicily, at 0555, Mar 21, course 281 deg, speed 11.3 knots.

RIVER PRINCESS

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated today, states: The grounded ore *River Princess*, off Calungute beach, will be removed by this year end. The state government promised this in the Budget session in Goa on Monday. Many governments have tried to remove the vessel which ran aground on the beach in north Goa in June 2000. There was an uproar in the House with many members claiming the government is not serious about removing the ship. The state government has floated fresh tenders for the removal by refloating this vessel and while over thirteen parties showed interest only three have submitted their bids. The government is in the process of appointing a technical consultant to assist in awarding contract. The contract for removing it was earlier given to UK based M/s Crosschem International, but was terminated as the company was unable to remove the vessel, in the stipulated period of 110 days. This time, the government is confident that with assistance from the ministry of shipping, the vessel will be towed away. *River Princess* is owned by Salgaocar Shipping and the grounding has sparked fears of serious ecological damage.

ROZEN

(St. Vincent & Grenadines)

See "Somalia" under "Piracy".

RUNNER 4 (Dominica)

London, Mar 16 — A press report, dated today, states: Environmental officials said up to 40 tons of fuel may have leaked into the sea from general cargo *Runner 4*, which sank off the Estonian coast last week. "An underwater video showed a large crack in the middle part of the vessel, which corroborates the version that the content of one of its fuel tanks had risen to the surface," said Toomas Liidja, senior inspector with the Environmental Inspectorate. The border service established on Mar 12 that there were two oil slicks off the Parispea peninsula on the northern coast that, according to preliminary information, could be fuel oil, a heavy product that is difficult to clean up. The head of the Border Guard Board's pollution response department, Silver Vahtra, said the border guard helicopter charted the polluted area with a lidar system and found two slicks in the area. "Looking with the naked eye, it is heavy fuel," Vahtra said. The border guard said it would treat the oil slicks detected near the

Parispea peninsula and the island of Vaindloo near the area where the freighter sank as two separate cases. On the peninsula two liferafts, one rescue vessel and one rescue buoy were found. The buoy came from the *Runner 4*, according to the border authority. The new spill lies 23 miles from the site where the freighter went down. A drifting oil slick was detected near the site of the sinking of the *Runner 4*. Before the new spill was found the border guard estimated that up to 500 litres of used lubricant from the engine-room had ended up in the sea. On Mar 13 it was announced that the Estonian border guard's multipurpose vessel *EVA-316* would head to the Parispea peninsula to start cleaning up the slick. A pollution response expert from Finland was scheduled to take part, Vahtra said. He said it is not clear whether the hydraulic systems of the pollution fighting equipment could resist the pressure of ice or not. "If the *EVA-316* cannot cope with the task, nothing can," he said. "Besides the *EVA-316*, there are in the Baltic Sea two more vessels equipped with similar pollution response systems."

London, Mar 20 — A press report, dated Mar 19, states: Estonian and Finnish oil spill response vessels are working on cleaning up the oil spill caused by the sinking of general cargo *Runner 4* on Mar 6 near the Estonian coast in the Gulf of Finland. According to The Baltic Times, specialists say that up to 40 tons of oil might have leaked into the sea from the vessel, which was reportedly carrying over 100 tons of heavy fuel oil and 35 tons of light fuel oil. On Mar 13, the Estonian Border Guard sent its multi-purpose vessel *EVA-316* to the site to start the oil cleanup. Around the same time, Finland dispatched the oil spill response vessels *Hylje*, *Halli* and *Seili*. The Finnish Frontier Guard patrol vessel *Merikarku* was also sent to the site to conduct underwater robot examinations of the sunken vessel. According to the Finnish Environment Institute press briefing on this, Estonia does not have adequate equipment for oil spill response in icy conditions, so help was needed. Finland will be paying the cost of the clean-up, as Estonia did not make an official request for help. According to Urmas Raudsepp, the director of Estonia's Institute of Marine Research, the oil spill was only located on Mar 16. The Finnish vessels had, however, arrived at the site the day before. Jouni Pirttijarvi, an inspector at the Finnish Environment Institute, said that conditions in the site were bad, with rain and wind speeds over 17 metres per second. The oil spill is moving into waters too shallow for the three Finnish vessels, so they can no longer do their job. *Hylje* will be heading back to Finland today, and the other two vessels could follow within a few days. According to the Estonian paper Postimees, the oil spill is now one kilometre from the Estonian capital of Tallinn.

SANTA REGINA (New Zealand)

London, Mar 16 — A press report, dated Mar 17 New Zealand time, states: The Bluebridge ferry operator is disputing safety findings from a report into a fatal collision between its passenger ro/ro *Santa Regina* and yacht *Timeless*. Maritime New Zealand said yesterday that the collision came after the yacht's skipper broke rules and crossed into the ferry's path moments before impact. It also called for the master of the *Santa Regina* to be censured because of "poor bridge practice." Bluebridge operator Strait Shipping said the collision was a tragedy but it disagreed with parts of the report and would raise these concerns directly with MNZ. "We will say ... that we do not agree with the master being censured," a company spokeswoman said. The *Santa Regina* master has already disputed some parts of the report with MNZ.

SC BALTIC (DIS)

London, Mar 22 — General cargo *SC Baltic* arrived Klaipeda Mar 19.

SHINSEI MARU NO.3 (Japan)

See *Zim Asia*.

SIMA PRIDE (Singapore)

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated Mar 20, states: Police have launched an investigation into the alleged involvement of c.c. *Sima Pride* in a collision late last month that sank a local vessel and killed eight people. *Sima Pride* allegedly crashed into a boat driven by Duong Lam Ky, 32, about six nautical miles off Vung Tau Cape, Ba Ria-Vung Tau province, during the night of Feb 27. The collision destroyed the boat, killing eight people on board and injuring eight others. There were no witnesses to the accident, but a police investigation found *Sima Pride* had been at the scene of the accident at that time. The owners of *Sima Pride* have opened a letter of guarantee worth US\$600,000 to prepare for compensation, a source said.

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated Mar 20, states: The Investigation Police in the southern coastal province of Ba Ria, Vung Tau, today announced its decision to prosecute Singapore-nationality c.c. *Sima Pride* commanded by Romanian captain Constantin Bengeanu. At 2100 Feb 27, the vessel crashed into a fishing vessel driven by Duong Lam Ky, 32, making the vessel sink, killing eight people on board and injuring eight others. The collision happened at about six nautical miles off Vung Tau Cape of Ba Ria-Vung Tau province. The Investigation Police also lodged a decision to prosecute captain Constantin Bengeanu, who was accused of "breaching regulations on operating maritime vehicles" as stated by the provincial People's Procuracy.

London, Mar 23 — A press report, dated Mar 22, states: Police in the southern province of Ba Ria-Vungtau have served court orders on the owner

of c.c. *Sima Pride*, which was involved in an accident that resulted in the death of eight people in Vietnam. It was reported that the vessel, under the control of a Romanian master, crashed into the stern of a Vietnamese boat loaded with seafood on Feb 27, killing eight people and injuring eight others. The boat was also damaged. The provincial police will also charge the vessel's master in connection with the accident, according to a proposal by the People's Procuracy. The accident occurred at sea about 14 nautical miles from Vungtau City. It was reported *Sima Pride* fled the scene of the accident and was later spotted moored in Ho Chi Minh City's port area. The vessel's owner has admitted to the violation of Vietnam's law and offered a settlement of US\$600,000 to compensate for the accident.

SKROVAVAERING (Norway)

London, Mar 21 — Following received from Bodo RCC, timed 1045, UTC: Fishing *Skrovavaering* (244 gt, built 1978) grounded in lat 67 25.84N, long 11 49.38E, at 2030, UTC, Mar 20. The five crewmen on board abandoned onto liferafts and were quickly picked up by another fishing vessel.

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Five fishermen managed to evacuate safely into lifeboats after their vessel, fishing *Skrovavaering*, grounded off the island of Rost in Nordland yesterday evening. The *Skrovavaering* sank quickly after the grounding, according to rescue authorities. The grounding occurred between the Skomvaer lighthouse and Rost, which is located south of the tip of the Lofoten archipelago. The five fishermen were later picked up by vessel *Gunn Anita*, not long after they launched the lifeboats. The first grounding alarm came in at 2133 hrs. By 2300 hrs, all five men were on land at Rost.

SOMERS ISLES (Netherlands)

London, Mar 16 — A press report, dated today, states: General cargo *Somers Isles* (2365 gt, built 2001) smashed into a sea wall at the Fairmont Hamilton Hotel yesterday morning when its engines failed, possibly landing its shipping agent with a bill for \$100,000. However, around 90 minutes after sustaining an electronic blackout the *Somers Isles* left Bermuda on its way to Fernandina Beach, Florida. It took twenty minutes for a tug to reach the disabled vessel as the *Somers Isles* was being escorted by a line tender. At 0840 hrs Marine and Ports lineboat *Princeton* arrived at the scene and tried to keep the *Somers Isles* away from the wall but had to move away because the wind was so intense. At 0910 hrs ferry *Georgia* tried to pull the *Somers Isles* away from shore but did not have enough power. Twenty minutes after the vessel touched ground, tug *Edward M. Stowe* arrived at 0927 hrs and started to slowly pull the *Somers Isles* to safety. By 0940 hrs it was guided to Salt Kettle where it

was successfully anchored and divers from shipping agent Meyer Shipping went below to see if the propeller was damaged. Joe Simas of Meyer Shipping said the vessel — full of empty containers — left the dock at Hamilton and experienced a system "blackout." "All the power was gone. It was dead in the water," he said. "There was a glitch but they found the glitch and the power came back on automatically. The bill (for the damage to the hotel) will be sent to us, then we will hand it over to overseas owners." The master of the *Somers Isles* wanted to leave Bermuda as soon as he found out the propeller was not damaged, Mr Simas said, because the collision had delayed the vessel's arrival in Florida. Fairmont Hamilton General Manager Ian Powell said there was no estimate yet as divers had to see if there was any underwater damage to the sea wall. The hotel's chief engineer Shafiq Rahman said the bill could run to \$100,000. "It was an almost 100-foot long area, with electrics and lights," Mr. Rahman said. "A structural engineer still has to check but it could cost \$100,000." A Harbour Radio spokesman was in contact with the master of the *Somers Isles* as he left Hamilton Harbour. "He told us he was having engine difficulties," he said. "Because the *Somers Isles* had no manoeuvrability due to the breakdown." All vessels were warned to stay away from the area, he said.

SORMOVSKIY 48 (Russia)

London, Mar 16 — General cargo *Sormovskiy 48* sailed from Flushing at 1905 hrs, Mar 7, bound for Kaliningrad, where it arrived on Mar 13.

SOSNOGORSK (Russia)

London, Mar 19 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: General cargo *Sosnogorsk* (3415 gt, built 1981) crashed into the stern of vehicle *Olivia* (6461 gt, built 1982) when entering the new locks of the Kiel Canal in Brunsbittel on Mar 18. *Sosnogorsk* was slightly damaged. *Olivia* seemed to have sustained no damage. In spite of this, master insisted on an investigation of the incident for insurance reasons. This was done while the ships remained berthed in the lock. (Note — *Sosnogorsk* sailed Bremen Mar 17 for St. Petersburg and according to LMIU AIS was in lat 54 42 8.53N, long 13 25 54.98E at 1027, Mar 19. *Olivia* sailed Zeebrugge Mar 17 for Gdynia and according to LMIU AIS was in lat 54 26 9.42N, long 12 12 21.6E, at 0650, Mar 19.)

London, Mar 23 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: General cargo *Sosnogorsk* found to be overloaded when entering the new locks in Brunsbittel evening of Mar 22. It had to leave the lock stern first and subsequently berthed at the railway pilings. At 0930, Mar 23, it berthed at the South Quay in Brunsbittel for unloading.

London, Mar 22 — Vehicle *Olivia* arrived Gdynia Mar 20 and sailed same day for Zeebrugge, and according to LMIU AIS was in lat 54 35 46.2N, long 11 0 46.68E at 0236, UTC, today.

SPEYBANK (Isle of Man)

London, Mar 21 — Ro/ro/c.c. *Speybank* sailed Singapore Mar 5 and subsequently passed Port Said Mar 17, bound for Antwerp, where ETA Apr 3.

SPICA (Cyprus)

Zeebrugge, Mar 19 — Chemical/oil carrier *Spica* arrived Ghent Mar 19 from Saint John(CAN). — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

London, Mar 23 — Chemical/oil carrier *Spica* sailed Ghent Mar 21 for Rotterdam, where arrived Mar 22.

STAR OSHIMANA (Singapore)

Zeebrugge, Mar 18 — Part c.c. *Star Oshimana* sailed Antwerp Mar 17 and arrived Zeebrugge the same day. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

STELLA RIGEL (Netherlands)

Rouen, Mar 20 — Asphalt tanker *Stella Rigel* arrived Rouen Mar 17 from Gothenburg and sailed Mar 19 for Fredericia. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

SUPERFERRY 12 (Philippines)

Manila, Mar 20 — A Special Board of Marine Inquiry, convened to investigate the fire that broke out on passenger ro/ro *Superferry 12*, has concluded that the cause of the fire was not an act of sabotage or terrorism. In its recently released findings, the board said that the source of the fire was a lighted cigarette butt thrown into a trash can in cabin 206 by passenger, Minardo Dagno. Mr. Dagno told police that he did not know that the cigarette butt was still alight when he threw it into the trash can. Mr. Dagno is now in the custody of police and is facing charges of "destructive arson". The board is made up of representatives from the Philippine Coast Guard, Bureau of Fire Protection, Maritime Police and Aboitiz Transport System, Inc., owner of *Superferry 12*. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

SUPERFERRY 9 (Philippines)

Manila, Mar 17 — Ro/ro *Superferry 9* is now en route to Keppel Batangas Shipyard in Bauan, Batangas province, Aboitiz Transport System, Inc., owners of the vessel, said today. The vessel left Bredco Port in Bacolod City in central Philippines under tow and is expected to arrive at Keppel Batangas shipyard in southern Luzon island on Sunday (Mar 19) morning. An Aboitiz spokesperson said that the vessel had a "loose rudder". It would be taken out of operation to undergo high and dry repairs at the Keppel shipyard. The ship sustained steering problems while on its way from Manila to Bacolod. It was forced to anchor off Balbagon island on Mar 13 to await a vessel to tow it to port.

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

Superferry 9 arrived in Bacolod city on Mar 14. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, Mar 20 — Ro/ro *Superferry 9*, towed by a Malayan Towage and Salvage tug, reached Keppel Batangas Shipyard in Bauan, Batangas province on Sunday morning (Mar 19). The vessel is now undergoing emergency drydocking for the repair of its loose rudder, Aboitiz Transport System, Inc. spokesperson John Rojo said today. The vessel encountered steering problems on Mar 13 while on its way to Bacolod city in central Philippines from Manila. The vessel was stranded for several hours before being towed to Bacolod city to unload passengers and cargo. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

SUPPORTER (Faroe Islands)

London, Mar 23 — Information received from Sandnes, dated today, states: At 0015, local time today, standby safety vessel *Supporter* (466 gt, built 1964), bound Stavanger, grounded on Tungenes, north of Stavanger. No injuries to the crew of seven but five of them picked up from a lifeboat by a pilot vessel at 0100 hrs. The vessel took water but there was no danger of sinking. Tug *Haabull* assisted and the vessel was refloated at 0300 hrs. *Supporter* then proceeded to Stavanger for inspections, arriving at 0415, local time.

SYMS ZHUIJANG (Cyprus)

London, Mar 20 — C.c. *SYMS Zhuijang* arrived Hong Kong Mar 18 from Xiamen and sailed Mar 19 for Shanghai.

TERN ALPHA

London, Mar 16 — Oil workers were expected to return to platform *Tern Alpha* in the North Sea late today after being evacuated when a fire broke out, said a Royal Dutch Shell Plc spokeswoman. Shell, which operates the platform, evacuated about 130 workers from the platform and temporarily shut in 25,200 barrels per day of North Sea crude following the fire. A spokeswoman said there was no timeframe for resumption of the shut-in crude as Shell was still investigating the cause of the electrical fire, extinguished early today. Helicopters were scrambled to the platform, 265 miles off north-east Scotland, after a report of a fire in a generator, a Maritime and Coastguard Agency spokesman said.

London, Mar 17 — A press report, dated today, states: Nearly 130 workers had to be airlifted to safety after a blaze broke out on platform *Tern Alpha* after an electrical fire broke out on the North Sea platform yesterday morning. An international rescue operation was launched to evacuate staff from the Shell installation, 105 miles north-east of Shetland. It took fire crews four hours to control the blaze, caused by an electrical fault in the platform's gas

process area. A fleet of four helicopters, one each from Norway, RAF Lossiemouth, the Coastguard in Shetland and a BP chopper, ferried 128 workers to three other Shell platforms. Rescue chiefs described the massive airlift as a "text book" operation. Fifty-six essential staff stayed on board while fire crews tackled the blaze. Shell said the incident was confined to a relatively small area and no one was hurt. The evacuated workers later returned to the platform.

THAMES HIGHWAY (Bahamas)

See *Corsar*.

TINIAN EXPRESS (Panama)

Honolulu, Mar 17 — Ferry *Tinian Express* has not been repaired and is still moored in Tinian harbour. — Lloyd's Agents.

TOWER BRIDGE (Singapore)

London, Mar 20 — Following received from Australia RCC, timed 0004, UTC: C.c. *Tower Bridge* (34487 gt, built 1985), outbound from Fremantle, reported a fire in No 2 generator in lat 18 06S, long 108 47E, at 1857, UTC, Mar 19. The vessel deployed carbon dioxide in the engine-room and is currently stopped, waiting for the engine-room to cool down.

London, Mar 20 — Following received from Australia RCC, timed 0639, UTC: C.c. *Tower Bridge*: The fire is reported to be extinguished. The vessel is still stationary, and the crew are waiting to re-enter the engine-room.

London, Mar 20 — Following received from Australia MRCC, timed 1200, UTC: C.c. *Tower Bridge* is still stationary in the same position, assessing the situation.

London, Mar 21 — Understand that c.c. *Tower Bridge* is now underway. No tug assistance required.

TRACER (Netherlands)

London, Mar 16 — General cargo *Tracer* arrived at Fos on Mar 15.

TWIN STAR (Panama)

Lima, Mar 20 — Both bulk/c.c. *Pintail* and general cargo *Alice* are still under arrest, following collision with bulk *Twin Star* and at present, there is no date for their release. The situation is complicated even further, as the Port Harbour Master has not completed their investigations as yet and as they are partly responsible for the incidents, they will not resolve the case with themselves partly to blame. — Lloyd's Agents.

VINGA SAFIR (Sweden)

See "Sarpsborg, Sweden" under "Pollution."

VITA (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Mar 15 — General cargo *Vita* arrived at Seaham on Mar 11.

Gothenburg, Mar 18 — Master of general cargo *Vita* sentenced to jail for "heavy drunkenness at sea." This

week the matter came up in local court and the master claimed the blood tests had been affected by the fact that he was taken medicine because of heart problems and that the medicine contains 55% alcohol. But the court did not believe masters innocence and also refer to a statement where a pilot who came onboard after the grounding confirmed "somebody tampered with the joystick for steering the vessel." The alcohol in his medicine should also be out at the time, if affective at all, and agree to sentence the master to four months in prison for just the tiny small amount over 1.00 per mille(1.02) but tests taken 6 hours after the grounding so in reality level considerable higher at the time. As having been arrested since the incident approximately two months ago, two more to go. — Westax Marine Services AB.

XIN HAI 7 (Tuvalu)

See *Korea Gas*.

YUAN DONG 101 (China)

See *Eastern Dragon*.

YUNG CHANG (Taiwan)

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

ZEUS (Netherlands)

London, Mar 22 — General cargo *Zeus* sailed Flushing Mar 16 and arrived Rotterdam Mar 17.

ZIM ASIA (Israel)

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated Mar 20, states: An Israeli shipping company today denied in court that c.c. *Zim Asia* fled after a fatal collision with fishing *Shinsei Maru No.3* off Hokkaido last September, but said it intends to seek a settlement with the next of kin who are suing the firm. In the suit's first oral proceedings before the Kushiro District Court, the defense team of Zim Integrated Shipping Services Ltd said the crewmen on board *Zim Asia* had been "unaware of the collision" and therefore denied it was a hit-and-run. The defence also argued in court that the plaintiffs' claim that negligence had solely occurred on the part of *Zim Asia* "lacked objectivity." However, at a news conference, the company's representative expressed a willingness to settle, saying, "As the trial is likely to be prolonged, we would like to seek a settlement soon once all the evidence is presented." The relatives of the seven crewmen killed when *Shinsei Maru No.3* capsized are seeking a combined yen 900 million. The vessels collided off Nemuro in the early hours of Sep 28. Only one crewman on *Shinsei Maru No.3* survived the collision. The plaintiffs claim *Shinsei Maru No.3* had safely cleared the bow of *Zim Asia*, but the two vessels collided because the container vessel suddenly altered course to starboard to avoid another vessel. They said *Zim Asia* left the scene without attempting to

rescue the fishermen or alert authorities. The surviving crewman, Kaname Fujisato, and the owner of *Shinsei Maru No.3* joined 24 relatives of the dead in filing the suit. The Japan Coast Guard believes *Shinsei Maru No.3* also bore a responsibility to prevent the collision and has turned over to prosecutors their case of professional negligence against the vessel's boatswain, who was among the dead. Israeli prosecutors have indicted two sailors who were on watch at the time, and an accident report compiled by the Israeli transport ministry has pointed out flaws in Zim's operational regulations.

Piracy



SOMALIA

London, Mar 17 — A press report, dated today, states: An international piracy watchdog today warned of fresh attacks off Somalia after heavily armed pirates fired on UN food aid general cargo *Rozen* (2250 gt, built 1976). "About five pirates armed with machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades tried to hijack the UN-chartered ship," Noel Choong, head of the Piracy Reporting Centre of the London-based International Maritime Bureau, said. He said the attack took place off the Somalian coast on Monday (Mar 13) after the vessel had discharged its cargo. The vessel, which was on its way to Kenya, transports food rations for the World Food Programme (WFP) to drought victims in Somalia.

London, Mar 19 — A press report, dated Mar 18, states: Two U.S. Navy ships exchanged gunfire with suspected pirates today off the coast of Somalia, one suspect was killed and five others were wounded, the navy said. The early morning gunbattle ensued after sailors spotted 30-ft fishing boat towing smaller skiffs and prepared for a routine boarding, said Lt. Cmdr. Charlie Brown, spokesman for the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet. Passengers on the fishing boat then began shooting, and U.S. naval gunners returned fire with mounted machine guns. Three suspects were seriously wounded and being treated on one of the Navy ships, Brown said. No U.S. sailors were injured, the Navy said. The Navy said the incident involving the *USS Cape St. George* and *USS Gonzalez* occurred at about 0540, local time, approximately 25 nautical miles off the Somali coast in international waters. On Mar 15, the United Nations Security Council encouraged naval forces operating off Somalia to take action against suspected piracy.

London, Mar 19 — A press report, dated today, states: Thirteen suspected pirates involved in clashes with the US Navy off the Somali coast

yesterday have been captured, a spokesman for the men says. Saleban Aadan Barqad said that his men were protecting fishing stocks from foreign vessels when they were attacked by the Americans. The group has demanded that the United States release the men. The US Navy yesterday reported an exchange of fire between two of its vessels and the suspected pirates. One person was killed and five wounded in the incident, which happened early yesterday as the vessels were conducting maritime security operations, reports say. No US sailors were injured in the incident. According to the US Navy, it is holding 12 suspects, but unconfirmed reports quote the men's spokesman as saying 13 men are in custody.

Port State Control



CYPRUS

Limassol, Mar 21 — Passenger *Olympia* is still under detention. There is no information yet for its release. — Lloyd's Agents.

GERMANY

London, Mar 17 — Reported that bulk *Titan* (24843 gt, built 1983), which arrived at Hamburg at 0936 hrs, Mar 14, is currently under port state control detention.

TITAN

(St. Vincent & Grenadines)

See "Germany" under "Port State Control".

UNITED KINGDOM

London, Mar 16 — Following received from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, dated today: General cargo *Saruna* was released from detention by the MCA Mar 14 for a single ballast voyage to a nominated repair yard in Romania. It attempted to leave Falmouth yesterday afternoon, being towed by two Falmouth Harbour Commission tugs to the harbour limits. However, while under tow, the vessel's engines experienced another failure, believed to be related to the engine cooling water system. The Falmouth pilots contacted Coastguard Falmouth MRCC who in turn contacted an MCA Surveyor. A decision was made by the MCA to detain the *Saruna* again as an unsafe vessel due to the unreliability of its engines. The MCA have informed the Russian Maritime Register of the current situation and have requested that they attend the vessel at the earliest opportunity. The *Saruna* has been towed back to the Crossroads Buoy in Falmouth Roads where it currently remains under detention.

Seizures & Arrests



ANNIE SIERRA (Cyprus)

London, Mar 20 — A report in the Mar 17 issue of "Newsfront", states: Bulk *Annie Sierra* (11506 gt, built 1980) was arrested and then released in Vietnam in a timber cargo row. *Annie Sierra* was arrested by Singapore-based timber company MG Forests Pte, after a cargo of logs on the vessel, which was supposed to have been delivered in India last month, ended up in Vietnam. A Vietnamese court lifted the arrest order after the cargo, which was loaded in Guyana, was discharged.

CAPTIANOUS TAH (North Korea)

Alexandria, Mar 22 — General cargo *Captianous Tah* is still under arrest at Alexandria. — Lloyd's Agents.

DAHOMY EXPRESS (Bolivia)

Miami, Mar 17 — General cargo *Dahomey Express*: Understand the government is still going through the confiscation procedure, which may be completed in 30-60 days. The vessel will then probably go up for auction or it could be used as an artificial reef. — Lloyd's Agents.

DEMRE (Turkey)

La Spezia, Mar 21 — General cargo *Demre* was freed from arrest Mar 14 and sailed 1820, same day, for Skikda. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

ELEKTRON (Russia)

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated Mar 21, states: The Russian Prosecutor General's Office has brought charges against Valery Yarantsev, skipper of fishing *Elektron*, which escaped from Norwegian coastguards as it was fishing off Spitsbergen last November. The case was open on the strength of the incident between the *Elektron* crew and Norwegian coastguards, who arrested the *Elektron* for violation of fishing rules in the Norwegian economic zone. As the ship was going to the port of Tromsø, Yarantsev sharply changed its course taking it toward Murmansk. At that time two Norwegian inspectors were on board, who did not wish to leave the trawler. The Norwegian warships gave chase to the *Elektron*, but several days later, the skipper successfully brought his ship to Russian territorial waters, where the inspectors transferred to a Norwegian warship.

EMIR (Turkey)

Taranto, Mar 22 — General cargo *Emir*, which had been put under court seizure in Taranto, local harbour master has been notified Mar 21 by Procura Antimafia of Catanzaro, conducting the case, an order to redeliver the vessel to its owner. Said

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

order had been issued on Mar 16. Data so far available to local Harbour Master showed LUTE Shipping as manager and owner of said vessel. Harbour-master, unable to get in touch with said company, is trying to get hold of consular authorities to officially get info about owners, if still any in existence, to whom decision is to be notified and who is also supposed to get official delivery of vessel. Should this result be impossible, further decision would need to be taken, possibly scrapping of the vessel by Italian Authorities order. — Lloyd's Agents.

JOHN CHEEK (Falkland Islands)

Buenos Aires, Mar 22 — Our Sub-agents at Comodoro Rivadavia report fishing *John Cheek* remains under arrest at that port. — Lloyd's Agents.

LADY (Liberia)

London, Mar 21 — Product tanker *Lady* was released Mar 5 and sailed Rotterdam Mar 6. Vessel subsequently arrived Hamburg Mar 7 and sailed Mar 12 for Argentina.

MASTER ENDEAVOR (Panama)

Martinique, Mar 20 — General cargo *Master Endeavor* (2580 gt, built 1979) arrived Fort de France Mar 18 from Senegal waters under escort from French Navy and is now under arrest. Vessel is loaded with 650 tons of marble and approximately two tons of cocaine has already been found on board. Search still under way for more suspected drugs. — Lloyd's Agents.

OPON (Russia)

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Norway's coastguards arrested trawler *Opon* (2458 gt, built 1983) for violating fishing rules, Norwegian police reported today. Yesterday, the vessel was conveyed to the polar port of Tromso, where police began investigation into the incident.

PONGSU (North Korea)

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated today, states: General cargo *Pongsu*, used to import 150kg of heroin in Australia, was towed out of Sydney Harbour today before being scuttled later this week. The vessel has been berthed in Sydney since it was seized three years ago after a four-day chase by Australian soldiers, federal police and customs officers. The Australian Federal Police (AFP) today confirmed it was moving the vessel out of Sydney Harbour in preparation for its disposal. The AFP said the Royal Australian Navy had provided the tugs to tow *Pongsu* from its mooring at White Bay and out through Sydney Heads. The vessel will be sunk in an Australian Defence Force exercise about 140km off the New South Wales south coast later this week. An air and sea exclusion zone of 22km, or 12 nautical miles, will apply around the vessel once it reaches its final destination, the AFP said.

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Authorities have played down concerns that waters off the NSW coast could be polluted by the scuttling of general cargo *Pongsu*. The vessel is tipped to be bombed by an F-111 jet fighter on Thursday (Mar 23) during a defence force exercise to be held 140km off the NSW south coast. The exercise was scheduled to take place today but was cancelled because of bad weather. The vessel was towed out of Sydney Harbour yesterday with the help of the navy after the Australian Federal Police received permission from the Department of Environment and Heritage to sink the vessel. But the dumping at sea of the vessel has raised environmental concerns, with marine salvage specialist Brett Devine saying the vessel still housed contaminants such as hydrocarbons, oils and greases when he boarded the vessel last week. "A lot of the panelling had been ripped off the walls exposing all the insulation," Mr Devine said. "I also observed spare pistons caked in grease and hydrocarbons. "Nobody had removed any wiring, machinery and equipment, which would all have oil and grease on them. All of that will come out of the ship if sunk at sea." An AFP spokeswoman said the concerns were unfounded. She said the environmental impact of sinking the *Pongsu* had been addressed before the Sea Dumping Permit was granted by the Department of Environment and Heritage. The AFP and ADF refused to comment on the exact location of the military exercise. An air and sea exclusion zone of 22 kilometres will be maintained around the vessel during the operation.

London, Mar 23 — A press report, dated today, states: Federal Attorney-General Philip Ruddock says the sinking of the North Korean general cargo *Pongsu*, shows there is a high price to pay for shipping drugs into Australia. An Air Force F-111 today bombed the vessel, sending it to the bottom of the ocean, 140 kilometres off the south coast of New South Wales. Mr Ruddock says this sends a clear message to people involved in transporting drugs. "That there are potentially very significant costs not only in terms of sentences that people might be committed to, but also the forfeiture of the proceeds of any crime and the forfeiture and destruction of vessels that are used to transport such goods to Australia," he said. Australian Federal Police (AFP) Commissioner Mick Keelty also says the sinking of the *Pongsu* sends a strong message to criminals who may try to smuggle illegal drugs into Australia. Commissioner Keelty says Australian authorities wanted to show that international drug smuggling is taken seriously. Mr Ruddock says the sinking of the vessel will have minimal impact on the environment. Salvage workers had expressed concern that there was a serious pollution risk, but Mr Ruddock says the vessel was comprehensively

prepared by the Federal Police before being sunk. Mr Ruddock says a considerable amount of money was spent to ensure that all fuel products had been removed. "That anything that might conceivably contaminate the ocean, deal with fish or crustaceans in some adverse way, were removed and there were appropriate consents sought before the destruction could proceed," he said.

PREVEZE (Turkey)

Genoa, Mar 21 — La Spezia Sub-Agents report that general cargo *Preveze*, renamed *Ege* Panamanian flag, IMO 7129441 Call sign 3EFM8, sailed La Spezia at 1605, Mar 20, for Marina di Carrara in ballast, with new name. — Lloyd's Agents.

QUEEN CONSTANTINA (Cyprus)

Limassol, Mar 16 — Passenger *Queen Constantina* has been renamed *Forest*, Tuvalu flag. The vessel's new owners are Export Trade Corporation. — Lloyd's Agents.

RUSTAVI (Georgia)

St.Petersburg, Mar 23 — Fish carrier *Rustavi* (722 gt, built 1970) is currently under arrest at Murmansk, where arrived Feb 10. — Lloyd's Agents.

SAFMARINE PAKISTAN (Cyprus)

Kochi, Mar 23 — C.c. *Safmarine Pakistan* was released from the custody of MMD at Kochi and sailed out on Mar 22 for Colombo. — Lloyd's Agents.

TALAVERA (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

Venice, Mar 20 — While the criminal arrest of general cargo *Talavera* has been recently lifted, the vessel remains under arrest in relation to a claim by her crew. Understand that the auction has been postponed until around September. — Lloyd's Agents.



UMM AL-GHAZNAN AREA, IRAN

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated Mar 20, states: A section of the Ahvaz-Abadan pipeline caught fire late yesterday, in the vicinity of Umm al-Ghaznan village. The head of the Public Relations Department at Karun Oil and Gas Exploitation Company, Gholam-Abbas Shahriari, said today that the company's technicians and workers fought the blaze last night and into this morning. Shahriari said the leaked oil had been completely put out. He said the pipeline was expected to be repaired and overhauled by this afternoon and resume operations as of tomorrow.

Pollution



PRUDHOE BAY, ALASKA, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated Mar 21, states: Clean-up operations are continuing at Prudhoe Bay, nearly three weeks after the area's largest oil spill. BP officials say the active phase is now over, and they have collected more than 63,000 gallons of oil. They are currently in the long-term clean-up phase, meaning the number of workers on site has been cut in half. Officials estimated a little more than 200,000 gallons were spilled. Frigid temperatures continue to hamper their efforts, but crews have been able to work. Meanwhile, a fact-finding investigation has been launched involving BP, state and federal officials.

SARPSBORG, SWEDEN

Fredrikstad, Mar 20 — Product tanker *Vinga Safir* left Sarpsborg 1415, Mar 2. The clean-up operation somewhat disturbed due ice/snow in the river. May be a little less oil than the 11m3 reported to have leaked out. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

Weather & Navigation



BULGARIA

London, Mar 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Floods hit south-west Bulgaria on Mar 14 for the second time since autumn 2005, after heavy rains caused dams and rivers to overflow. Several municipalities declared states of emergency after areas of the towns of Elin Pelin, Ihtiman, Kostenets and Saedinie were flooded. In Saedinie, buildings and land, grain storage facilities and the local railway station were under water. Most of the bridges in these municipalities were damaged and farmland inundated. Railway traffic between Sofia and Bulgaria's second-largest city of Plovdiv, where more than 400 homes were flooded, was restored after a day-long suspension. On Mar 15, the state of emergency was suspended in several municipalities, including Gorna Malina, Saedinie and the districts of Sofia and Plovdiv.

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: The state of emergency introduced in several villages in Bulgaria, after recent floods has been removed, civil defence authorities said. Regions affected by the intense rainfall have been coming back to normal. The draining,

cleaning of the streets and the riverbeds is still going on. Dikes are being strengthened in the face of a possible new wave of floods to come with the spring melt of the snow. Normal electricity and water supplies, as well as telephone lines have been restored. All sea, river and air ports, and railway stations operate as usual, officials said. The water level in the upper part of the Danube River in its Bulgarian stretch has been continuously decreasing.

CYCLONE "LARRY"

London, Mar 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Thousands of residents of Australia's northern Queensland state have been ordered to leave low-lying areas before Cyclone "Larry", the worst storm in more than 20 years, strikes the country's north-eastern coast today. Mandatory evacuations began yesterday in the coastal regions south of the city of Cairns, the Sydney Morning Herald reported, citing city and state government officials. The category-five cyclone, with maximum wind gusts up to 175 mph is about 60 kilometers east of Innisfail, and may cross the coast as early as 0700, local time, Australia's Bureau of Meteorology said. "Destructive winds are already occurring along the exposed coast between Ingham and Port Douglas," the bureau said. "Coastal residents between Cairns and Cardwell are specifically warned of the dangerous storm tide as the cyclone crosses the coast." "Larry" will be the strongest cyclone to strike Australia since Cyclone "Tracy" destroyed much of Darwin in 1974.

Sydney, Mar 20 — Port authorities said it was too early to tell if there had been any damage to ports along the coast of north and far north Queensland, as cyclone "Larry" forced the closure of ports as far south as Abbot Point. The storm was downgraded to a category four storm this morning after delivering winds of up to 290 kph across the northern Queensland coast in the last 24 hours. The port of Cairns, likely to be the hardest hit, has closed and the office left without power. The port of Mourilyan had also closed. Cairns harbour-master Alan Boath said an assessment on the two ports would be completed early this afternoon. "The wind is coming from an unusual direction — a west to north-westerly direction which has surprised some here," he said. "We're waiting until it all dies down enough to go and have a look." The ports at Cape Flattery and Cooktown are open after being on "yellow alert" until this morning, while ports to the south of Cairns are now closed. Abbot Point, Lucinda and Townsville have all closed. Townsville harbour-master John Preston said this morning that winds were still around 40 knots. Townsville stopped vessels from entering the port on Saturday night (Mar 18) and evacuated the facility yesterday. Mr Preston said two vessels that were in port had been sent back out to sea

until the storm passed. He said that two US Navy destroyers and an aircraft carrier that were in port after training exercises had left. "They saw the radar readings and decided to leave," he said. Lucinda would not have had any vessel activity until April when sugar exports recommenced. Mr Preston said Abbot Point had gone into lockdown yesterday, but no timeframe would be set on when it would re-open. "It takes about six hours from lockdown to being back up to fully operational," he said. Mr Preston said that while he hoped the ports would re-open tomorrow morning, that would depend on the weather. — "Lloyd's List Daily Commercial News."

London, Mar 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Police say more than half of the homes in Innisfail were destroyed when cyclone "Larry" struck far north Queensland this morning. Many are homeless and thousands have been left without power or water. Frank Pagano from the Counter-Disaster and Rescue Service, says back-up crews are still trying to reach Innisfail with fallen trees blocking the road in both directions. But he says local emergency workers say the town has been devastated. More than 120,000 homes are without electricity in the far north. Ergon Energy's Gaylene Whenmouth says it could take several days to restore supplies. Cairns police Acting Inspector Mike Keating says its a "horrendous sight" with houses reduced to rubble. Opposition Leader Lawrence Springborg says sugar cane crops and the tropical fruit industry have been devastated.

London, Mar 20 — A press report, dated today, states: A large proportion of Australia's banana industry has all but been wiped out by Cyclone "Larry" which hit far north Queensland with farmers saying it will take years to recover. The north Queensland region is reporting losses of 90 per cent or more. Industry group Growcom says farmers have reported hundreds-of-millions of dollars' damage to their banana crops. Canegrowers say it will be several days before they can fully assess the crop damage caused by cyclone "Larry". The north Queensland region produces a quarter of the nation's annual sugar crop.

London, Mar 20 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today, states: Tropical cyclone "Larry" near lat 18.0S, long 144.0E at 0600, UTC, today. Movement for the past six hours 255 degrees at 14 knots. Maximum sustained winds 75 knots, gusts 90 knots. Forecast position lat 18.5S, long 141.7E at 1800, UTC, today. Maximum sustained winds 40 knots, gusts 50 knots.

London, Mar 20 — A press report, dated Australia Mar 21, states: The cyclone threat in far north Queensland has diminished, with Cyclone "Larry" downgraded to a tropical low. But the weather bureau says the threat of strong winds has not passed and residents within the

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

path of the low can expect gusts of up to 100 kilometres an hour. Geoff Callaghan, from the Tropical Cyclone Warning Centre, says normal precautions should be taken as the front moves south-west toward the border of the Northern Territory. Mr Callaghan said at 0245, AEST, the low was in a fairly remote part of Queensland. Hundreds of residents in far north Queensland remain homeless and thousands are without power and water after Cyclone "Larry" devastated the region. The cyclone has caused few injuries but more than half of the homes in Innisfail have been destroyed. Cairns police acting Inspector Mike Keating says it is a horrendous sight, with houses reduced to rubble. He says residents on the Atherton Tablelands are also suffering. "They are without power and that means they don't have water or sewage," he said. Cyclone "Larry," crossed the coast as a category 5 cyclone yesterday morning. Many tourists were caught off guard by the cyclone. The cyclone forced the closure of 156 state schools yesterday. The state's Education Minister, Rod Welford, says most will reopen today. "Schools in the Atherton, Cairns, Cardwell, Croydon, Eacham, Etheridge, Herberton, Johnstone, Mareeba and Yarrabah will still be closed." The Federal Government says people who have been made homeless by Cyclone "Larry" will be eligible for an ex gratia \$1,000 payment through Centrelink.

Innisfail, Mar 21 — Communities along Australia's cyclone-devastated tropical far north-east coast began to pick up the pieces today as Queensland state Premier Peter Beattie said the recovery would be "long and slow". Speaking from the sugar-growing town of Innisfail, which took the full force of cyclone "Larry"'s winds of up to 290 kph when it crossed the coast south of Cairns yesterday morning, Beattie said it would take time to restore basic services. However, he praised emergency services and local communities and said food, clean water, power generators and tarpaulins would be delivered to affected areas — where roofs were ripped off homes, trees uprooted and crops flattened by the cyclone — today. "This is going to be a long, slow recovery," he said, adding that the damage bill would run into tens of millions of dollars. The category five storm left a trail of destruction along 300 km of coast, but there were no reports of deaths, with authorities saying 30 people had suffered minor injuries. Up to 250,000 people live in the area devastated by cyclone "Larry", which is also the centre of Australia's banana industry and accounts for 25% of Australia's sugar cane production. Banana grower Brian McElhinney, who has a farm at Innisfail, said the cyclone had destroyed his entire crop. "Even if we do try and pick up the pieces on the farm and go back into bananas, we're still looking at nine months before

there's any income," McElhinney said. Australia is the third-largest exporter of raw sugar in the world and in some areas the cane crop has been destroyed. Around 90% of banana production was also believed to have been wiped out in the Tully area near Innisfail, the centre of Australian banana production, the Australian Banana Growers' Council has said. — Reuters.

Sydney, Mar 21 — The extent of any cyclone damage to the port of Mourilyan will not be known until the end of the week, but port facilities on the far north and north Queensland coast have been largely spared from destruction. Category five cyclone "Larry" forced the precautionary closure of ports as far south as Abbot Point, and produced winds up to 290 kph, destroying buildings, power supplies and crops in Innisfail and its surroundings yesterday morning. Queensland premier Peter Beattie today described the town and region as "a mess" that would take "a long time to clean up", as others estimated the damage up to as much as A\$1 billion. Cairns harbour-master Alan Boath said the port of Mourilyan, would probably be the port hardest hit. "I don't believe there has been any major structural damage in Mourilyan," Mr Boath said. "There was a vessel due on Friday (Mar 24) but it has been turned away. The roads are still blocked, so we will have to wait until the end of the week for an assessment." The port of Cairns reopened at 1800 last night, after losing power and being evacuated over the weekend. Mr Boath said Cairns had experienced worse storms than cyclone "Larry", but only because it had hit further south, over Innisfail. The ports of Townsville and Abbot Point are now fully operational after being closed over the weekend. Townsville harbour-master John Preston said there had been no damage to any vessels or infrastructure in the port. The ports were experiencing only minor delays, with two vessels that had evacuated Townsville over the weekend returning today. Both vessels would be finished in port today, while Abbot Point would welcome its first vessel this afternoon. Ferry services had recommenced. — "Lloyd's List Daily Commercial News."

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Queensland Premier Peter Beattie has declared a state of emergency in Innisfail, so state and federal rescue funding can be accessed. Cyclone "Larry" destroyed hundreds of houses and buildings as it moved across far north Queensland yesterday. Mr Beattie held talks with local emergency services personnel, the Army and police this morning. He says everything that can be done is being done but the clean-up will take months. He says he intends to talk Mr Howard about a rescue package not just for the people who have lost property but the region's devastated farmers. Housing Minister Robert

Schwarten is also due in Innisfail today to inspect the damage and Emergency Services Minister Pat Purcell is overseeing the distribution of food and water from the council chambers. The worst-hit areas have been Babinda, where 80 per cent of homes are affected and Hudson, and Innisfail where about one in three buildings need repairs. About 30 people have suffered minor injuries. Essential services have also been hit hard, with 80,000 homes still without electricity and about 30,000 without a landline. As well as damage to the towns, surrounding farms have been devastated with many cane farmers and banana growers left without a crop. Queensland's tropical fruit growers fear produce could be imported as a result of the cyclone. Many have had their crops destroyed, including bananas, avocados and paw paws.

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Troops began delivering aid today to an estimated 7,000 people who lost their homes to the cyclone that battered Australia's northeastern coast. No one was killed when Category 5 Cyclone "Larry" came ashore near Innisfail early yesterday, and only minor injuries were reported. But the storm flooded streets, tore roofs off homes and flattened sugar and banana plantations. About 170 troops were helping to deliver aid, while cleanup and special search and rescue crews were also heading to the town. Churches and community groups were setting up temporary accommodations. Among supplies flowing in were nearly 10,500 gallons of water and 6,000 in-flight meals provided by Qantas. Troops also set up a water purification unit, and health authorities warned residents to boil their water. Innisfail's main street was littered with rubble from badly damaged buildings and the corrugated metal used for roofing in the region. The storm wiped out about 10 percent of Australia's sugar crop, and would likely cost the industry \$144 million in losses, industry officials estimated today. Banana farmers were hit just as hard. The Australian Banana Growers Council estimated revenue losses of \$253 million and 4,000 jobs gone this season. Meanwhile, weather forecasters warned that another cyclone, named "Wati", was moving toward the Queensland coast south of where "Larry" struck. But the storm was currently much weaker than "Larry", and may yet change direction.

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Victims of cyclone "Larry" have been promised substantial aid, but Queensland Premier Peter Beattie has appealed for patience as torrential rain frustrates efforts to restore essential services across the state's north. Emergency crews said today they were doing their best to repair damage to power and water supplies at Innisfail, which bore the brunt of

the cyclone's fury, but continuing bad weather was hampering clean-up efforts. Prime Minister John Howard has acknowledged that assistance is needed fast to get people back on their feet, but he warned the Commonwealth would not carry the full burden and he stopped short of endorsing imports of bananas to fill the domestic shortfall caused by destruction of almost the entire crop. He said many of those worst hit would need assistance with day to day living because their livelihoods had been destroyed. Business would need help to clean up and restock. "There are all sorts of ways in which government can help," Mr Howard said. Mr Beattie said he understood the frustration over the time taken to resume essential services, but appealed for patience as emergency crews worked under enormous pressure. "We've got water into the community, we've got food into the community, we're fighting to restore all the services that are necessary," he said. "When you get a category five cyclone which belts the hell out of the community, you're not going to restore services in 30 seconds. That is going to take days and weeks." The cyclone wiped out almost all of Australia's banana crop and caused severe damage to homes and businesses when it crossed the Queensland coast at Innisfail on Monday (Mar 20). Extra emergency crews, including up to 200 defence personnel, have been rushed to the region to help in one of Australia's biggest aid efforts. Inspector Bob Waters of Innisfail police said authorities were doing their best to help residents affected by the cyclone, but poor weather was causing problems. "We're now in the recovery stage but we're being hampered by heavy rain," he said. "Fifty per cent of homes in the area have sustained some damage and about 20-30% have sustained major structural damage." He said it was hard to predict when essential services, including power and sewerage systems, would be fully restored. Early reports have put the damages bill as high as \$1 billion for homes, businesses, crops and essential infrastructure destroyed by the storm. Growers Council chief executive Tony Heidrich said even with financial aid, it could take a year before farmers were back on their feet. "We're talking at least somewhere between nine and 12 months before the next crop is in and is marketed," he said. Sugar cane farmers will also ask for assistance but are still assessing whether some crops can be harvested. "A lot will now depend on the type of weather we have and if the crop can recover it will," Wayne Thomas, from Innisfail Canegrowers said. "There's some that's been snapped, so it's going to make it difficult for it to regrow. It is a mixed bag at the moment." Meanwhile the Commonwealth Bank has raised its cyclone relief donation to \$1 million. CEO Ralph Norris said the bank would pledge \$950,000 in addition to the \$50,000 already donated to Queensland Premier Peter

Beattie's cyclone "Larry" relief appeal. Mr Norris said urgent assistance was required. The Commonwealth Bank also activated its emergency assistance package for affected customers, and was helping the relief appeal with branch collections.

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Cyclone "Larry" is emerging as one of Australia's most costly natural disasters, with a damage bill expected to exceed \$1.5 billion. However, fears a second destructive storm could strike north Queensland diminished yesterday after Cyclone "Wati" was downgraded to a category two that was likely to remain off the coast, bringing only heavy rain. Building industry and government sources estimated the cost of repairing roads, bridges, community centres, railways, power facilities and other infrastructure at between \$400 million and \$600million. Insurance claims for home and building repairs are likely to exceed \$300 million. The damage bill for sugar and banana farmers was estimated at \$720 million. Environmental damage was also extensive. Coral communities on the Great Barrier Reef are expected to take years to recover and extensive tracts of rainforest in the Mission Beach area have been razed.

London, Mar 23 — A press report, dated Mar 22, states: Preliminary reports of claims following the passage of cyclone "Larry" through northern Australia have put insured losses at around A\$90 million. According to reports around 4,000 claims have so far been received. While claims adjusters have been able to reach a number of stricken areas, and most power and phone services have been restored, there are still a number of the more remote areas in northern Queensland that remain inaccessible. Authorities said it might take some time before the full extent of the damage is known. In addition to homeowners' claims for structural damage to roofs, walls and windows, there have been a number of commercial claims as well as for damages and losses relevant to boats and private and commercial vehicles.

HAWAII, UNITED STATES

Honolulu, Mar 17 — The Kaloko Reservoir dam on the island of Kauai, Hawaii, burst shortly before 0730, Mar 14, sending about 400 million gallons of water, trees and debris down Wailapa Stream. The flash-flood swamped a cluster of homes, leaving two persons dead and as many as seven others missing. Rescuers are continuing their search to locate victims of the catastrophe. Heavy rains and thunderstorms continue to affect the main Hawaiian Islands and the threat to other dams being compromised is a major problem. About a week ago the windward side of Oahu experienced flooding due to heavy rain and run-off. — Lloyd's Agents.

MOZAMBIQUE

London, Mar 14 — A press report, dated today, states: Repairs to the railway between Malawi and the northern Mozambican port of Nacala, damaged in a storm last Thursday (Mar 8) night, will take at least a month to complete, according to a report in today's issue of the Maputo daily "Noticias." Torrential rains on Thursday did not only sweep away ballast from under the tracks - they also opened an enormous crater at kilometre 421, between the stations of Malema and Nataleia, west of Nampula city. For 15 metres the line now dangles in mid-air, with a drop of six metres to the bottom of the crater. Sources in the Northern Development Corridor, the consortium that manages the Nacala line, told the paper that repairing such major damage will take at least 30 days, possibly longer if rains continue. There was a second cut in the line at kilometre 443, but here the damage was fairly minor, and CDN technical teams were able to repair it at the weekend. CDN also hopes to erect an "alternative structure" to allow goods trains to and from Malawi to use the line, despite the crater. This would involve installing a number of concrete pillars under the tracks on the damaged portion of the line, which could support the weight of a goods train. Work on these pillars will start today, and CDN was optimistic they could be in place within four days.

ROMANIA

Bucharest, Mar 15 — Midia port was reopened at 1030, Mar 14, and Mangalia was reopened at 1500 same day. — Lloyd's Agents.

Bucharest, Mar 16 — Sulina Channel was re-opened at 0600, today. — Lloyd's Agents.

RUSSIA

London, Mar 20 — A press report, dated Mar 19, states: A blizzard paralysed traffic on Sakhalin Island today. Airports and ferry lines were not operating, and flights to Vladivostok, Khabarovsk and Moscow were delayed. Four ferrys, carrying 100 passengers and 26 railroad flat cars, were keeping to the shore in the Khabarovsk territory. The 45-kilometer road between Novosyolovo, Tomari and Ilyinsky on the western coast of Sakhalin was covered with snow, as road machinery was unable to clean up in the blizzard. The weather was forecast to get worse tomorrow.

TROPICAL CYCLONE "FLOYD"

London, Mar 23 — Following received from the Meteorological Office: Tropical cyclone "Floyd" located near lat 13.5S, long 109.8E, at 0600, UTC, today. Movement past six hours 250 degrees at six knots, position accurate to within 60 nautical miles, position based on centre located by satellite. Maximum sustained winds 65 knots, gusts 80 knots. Radius of 50-knot winds: 20 nautical

miles. Radius of 34-knot winds: 80 nautical miles. Forecast position for 0600, UTC, Mar 24, near lat 15.6S, long 108.5E. Maximum sustained winds 60 knots with gusts to 75 knots. Radius of 50-knot winds: 15 nautical miles. Radius of 34-knot winds: 75 nautical miles. Tropical cyclone "Floyd", located approximately 570 nautical miles north-northwest of Learmonth, Australia, has tracked west-southwestward at six knots over the past six hours. Maximum significant wave height at 0600, today, is 29 feet.

TROPICAL CYCLONE "WATI"

London, Mar 20 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical cyclone "Wati" near lat 17.6S, long 158.8 E at 0600, UTC, today. Movement for the past six hours 255 degrees at 14 knots. Position accurate to within 60 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds 55 knots, gusts 70 knots. Forecast position lat 18.2S, long 156.2E at 1800, UTC, today. Maximum sustained winds 55 knots, gusts 70 knots. Forecast position lat 18.8S, long 154.4E at 0600, UTC, Mar 21. Maximum sustained winds 60 knots, gusts 75 knots.

London, Mar 21 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical cyclone "Wati" near lat 17.9S, long 154.8 E at 0600, UTC, today. Movement for the past six hours 240 degrees at SIX knots. Position accurate to within 40 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds 65 knots, gusts 80 knots. Forecast position lat 18.2S, long 153.7E at 1800, UTC, today. Maximum sustained winds 70 knots, gusts 85 knots.

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Tropical Cyclone "Wati" is hovering off Queensland and is forecast to intensify but weather experts can't say whether it will cross the coast. There had been fears "Wati" could follow "Larry's" destructive path and bring a second wave of devastation to flattened parts of far north Queensland. Tropical Cyclone Warning Centre forecaster Tony Wedd said "Wati", a category three cyclone sitting 600 kilometres north-east of Mackay in central Queensland, could intensify into a category four over the next 24 hours. The cyclone was "almost stationary over the Coral Sea" at 1400, the bureau of meteorology reported. "Wati" was 400 kilometres in diameter with wind gusts of up to 190kmh near its centre, Mr Wedd said. "It will be fairly slow moving and remain off the coast for the next few days, it's hard to predict its movements after that," he said. "Over the past few hours it's become a lot slower, in fact it's become stationary because mid-level winds that were steering it towards the coast are weakening due to the approach of an upper trough." Mr Wedd said forecasters were no longer confident of earlier predictions that "Wati" would move south. "Wati" would probably bring gale-force winds and large

waves along the coast over the next 24 hours. "The combination of the cyclone being where it is and a high pressure system in the Tasman Sea means there will be fairly large waves on exposed beaches and gale force winds of 34 to 40 knots," Mr Wedd said.

London, Mar 23 — Following received from the Meteorological Office: Tropical cyclone "Wati" near lat 19.0S, long 155.0E at 0600, UTC, today. Movement past six hours: 130 degrees at six knots, position accurate to within 60 nautical miles, position based on centre located by satellite. Maximum sustained winds 65 knots, gusts to 80 knots. Radius of 50-knot winds: 25 nautical miles. Radius of 34-knot winds: 85 nautical miles north semicircle, 100 nautical miles southeast quadrant, 90 nautical miles southwest quadrant. Forecast position for 0600, UTC, Mar 24, near lat 22.9S, long 158.1E with maximum sustained winds of 45 knots and gusts to 55 knots, becoming extratropical. Tropical cyclone "Wati", located approximately 515 nautical miles north of Brisbane, Australia, has tracked southeastward at six knots over the past six hours. Maximum significant wave height at 0600, UTC, today, is 29 feet.

TROPICAL STORM "KAJIKI"

Manila, Mar 20 — Repairs to *Napocor Tugboat No. 1* have been completed at Keppel Batangas Shipyard in Bauan town, Batangas province, the state-owned National Power Corp.(Napocor) reported today. Napocor spokesperson Dennis Gana said that emptying of its fuel tanks had already been completed. The vessel will remain moored at the shipyard until the state-run Government Service and Insurance System (GSIS), which provided hull insurance for the barge, pays the shipyard. Cost of repairs is estimated at Pesos10.8 million (US\$212,000 dollars). The adjuster has completed his report which is now being evaluated by the GSIS. *Napocor Tugboat No. 1* was damaged when it ran aground off Semirara island on Dec 18 in rough seas while towing barge *Napocor Power Barge No.106*. The accident damaged the vessel's hull, steering mechanisms, propellers and engines. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

TYPHOON "HAITANG"

Taipei, Mar 20 — General cargo *Yung Chang* is still berthed at Pier No 11, Kaohsiung, for repairs. Understand from the vessel's agent that the vessel will be renamed *Don Fong*. — Lloyd's Agents.

UNITED STATES

London, Mar 20 — A press report, dated today, states: The damage caused to private property during a recent violent storm that generated a pair of tornadoes could top \$100 million, according to figures from an informal report collected from insurance companies. Gov. Rod Blagojevich has declared a state

disaster in seven Illinois counties that were ravaged by a severe storm system on March 12. The most severe damage occurred in Springfield, where two tornadoes swept through the city and were followed by severe thunderstorms. No deaths were reported but the storm left a five-mile path of destruction in Springfield that damaged about 1,000 homes and caused massive power outages, officials said. The first tornado was about half a mile wide and stayed on the ground for about six minutes, the National Weather Service said. The second followed almost immediately, reaching 300 yards wide and staying on the ground about five minutes. President Bush is expected to decide this week whether he'll declare the city, parts of Sangamon County and elsewhere in central Illinois federal disaster areas.

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated today, states: A powerful storm dumped more than a foot of snow in the Plains, closing schools and roads. Hundreds of schools were closed in Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado and South Dakota, and at least five deaths were blamed on the storm. Spring officially began at 1326, EST. Twenty-five inches of snow was reported in central Nebraska, parts of South Dakota had up to 18 inches, northeast Colorado had at least a foot, northwest Kansas had up to 10 inches and parts of the Oklahoma Panhandle got half a foot. Several stretches of Interstate 80 were closed in Nebraska, the State Patrol said. Parts of Interstate 70 were closed in western Kansas, and in Colorado more than 150 miles of the highway were shut down. In South Dakota, a stretch of about 200 miles of I-90 was reopened Monday. The highway had been closed from Rapid City to Chamberlain because of the heavy snow and tractor-trailers that had gotten stuck. Also yesterday, at least two tornadoes touched down in rural Oklahoma as a wave of thunderstorms moved across the state. Heavy rain soaked parts of the South over the weekend. Up to 8 inches of rain was reported in northern Texas, causing flooding around the Dallas area. Waters subsided yesterday, and the storms may have eased chronic drought.

Earthquakes



ALGERIA

London, Mar 20 — An earthquake measuring 5.8 hit Algeria today killing at least four people and injuring 36, Algerian radio reported. The radio said the earthquake hit parts of the province of Bejaia, 300 km east of the capital Algiers. The radio said four people had been killed, but also quoted one eyewitness as saying

seven people had died. Four buildings were also destroyed in the village of Laalam, it said. — Reuters.

Algiers, Mar 21 — At least four people were killed and 68 people were injured when an earthquake measuring 5.8 hit north-eastern Algeria yesterday evening, a police spokesman said. "So far we registered four deaths and 68 injured who have been directed to Souk El Tenine hospital in Bejaia Province. Some 30 houses collapsed in and around the village of Laalam," Colonel Abderahmane Ayoub said. — Reuters.

INDONESIA

London, Mar 20 — A press report, dated today, states: A moderate earthquake with a magnitude of 5.7 hit Indonesia's tsunami-devastated Aceh Province today, but there were no immediate reports of casualties or damage, a geological official said. The official at a station of the Meteorological and Geophysics Agency in the North Sumatra provincial capital of Medan said that the 1124 hrs quake was centred about 25 kilometres south-west of the town of Takengon in Central Aceh Regency. The focus was 33 km underground.

PAKISTAN

London, Mar 20 — A report, dated today, states: A magnitude 5.5 earthquake occurred in Pakistan in lat 34.87N, long 73.79E, depth 10 km, at 1740, UTC, today.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

London, Mar 20 — A report, dated today, states: A magnitude 5.7 earthquake in the New Britain region, Papua New Guinea, in lat 05.86S, long 151.16E, depth 41 km at 1418, UTC, today.

VANUATU REGION

London, Mar 19 — A report, dated today, states: A magnitude 5.8 earthquake has occurred in lat 13.57S, long 172.41E, Vanuatu region, depth 58 km, at 0436, UTC, today.



Volcanic Activity

KERMADEC ISLANDS, NEW ZEALAND

London, Mar 17 — A spectacular volcanic eruption rocked a tiny Pacific island today, triggering a dramatic 2000km helicopter rescue flight that saved five researchers but failed to find their missing colleague who had to be left behind. The chopper - modified to make a prolonged flight across the ocean - was carrying the five New Zealand Department of Conservation workers from Raoul Island to Auckland tonight. The return journey is 10 hours and 2000km-long. The rescuers were unable to search for the missing man, who failed to return from an

excursion when one of the volcano's craters erupted this morning, spewing steam, ash and boulders in the air. The volcano blew its top at 0821 hrs while the man was away from the rest of the group monitoring water temperature in a crater lake. A moderate earthquake heralded the 40-second eruption. Two workers later tried to find their colleague but were forced to retreat to a safer area because of the volcano's fury. Fallen trees and ash blocked a track the man had taken, said departmental area manager Rolien Elliot. The three women and two men took shelter at the island's hostel until the helicopter arrived around 1800 hrs and left an hour later after refuelling. Helicopter pilot John Funnell said the blast had considerably altered the island's landscape. "There's been about five hectares of native bush cleared and a lot of mud and evidence of boulders and rocks that have been thrown out of the crater itself," Funnell told Television New Zealand.

London, Mar 23 — A press report, dated today, states: Scientists who flew over Raoul Island on Tuesday (Mar 21) say the hydrothermal system under the island is showing signs of over-pressuring, and further eruptions cannot be ruled out. "From our aerial observations, it is clear that the heat, gas and water that are discharging into Green Lake are making this part of the volcano's hydrothermal system unstable," said GNS Science vulcanologist Bruce Christenson. Several new steam vents had opened in and around Green Lake during the eruption and some old ones had reactivated. Many of these have since been drowned as Green Lake has risen more than seven metres since last Friday's eruption. Dr Christenson was one of two vulcanologists from GNS Science who joined DoC and air force personnel on a RNZAF Orion reconnaissance flight over the island on Tuesday. "One explanation for the increased hydrothermal activity is that it is being driven by the intrusion of magma at depth." Heightened activity is not confined to the lake. At Denham Bay, on the western side of the island, there is evidence of hot fluids seeping into the sea along the 2.5-km-long beach. The seepage was causing a milky discolouring of the seawater. This observation indicates that hydrothermal fluids under parts of the island are now rising to shallower levels in the volcano than in the recent past. "Everything we saw during the aerial surveillance suggests that last Friday's eruption was hydrothermal in nature, originating from a reasonably shallow source beneath Green Lake. Whether this is pre-cursory to magmatic events to come is not clear at this time, but with Green Lake continuing to rise and multiple steam vents remaining active, the probability of further hydrothermal eruptions is high," Dr Christenson said. Seismic activity under the island has declined steadily during the past week. The

seismometer on the island is currently recording between 20 and 30 earthquakes a day, which is significantly above the normal background level for Raoul Island. Dr Christenson said the Green Lake crater should not be entered while the present level of activity continued. The volcanic alert level remains at 2.

MOUNT BULUSAN, PHILIPPINES

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated Mar 21, states: A Philippine volcano erupted late today, spewing ash 1.5 km into the sky, the government's volcano monitoring agency said. No one was reported hurt when the 1,550-metre Mount Bulusan erupted at 2258 hrs (1458, UTC), the Philippine Institute of Vulcanology and Seismology said. The volcano, located in Sorsogon province, 390 km south-east of Manila, had been rumbling in recent days. "This recent ash explosion is more or less typical of Bulusan's activity during its restive period," the vulcanology agency said. More eruptions were expected "in view of the volcano's recent reactivation" following volcanic quakes on Saturday (Mar 18). Light ash-falls were reported in several villages north, west and south-west of the volcano. The agency warned people to stay away from areas within four km of the crater.



Political & Civil Unrest

AFGHANISTAN

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Afghan security forces attacked a group of suspected Taliban rebels after they crossed the border from neighbouring Pakistan, killing at least 15 of them, an army commander said today. Four insurgents fled back across the border after the two-hour gunbattle late yesterday near the border town of Spin Boldak in Kandahar province, said Abdul Razak, the frontier security commander. The fighting was the deadliest in weeks in Afghanistan.

BRAZIL

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Eight people have been killed in Brazil during a gunfight between suspected drugs traffickers and policemen in a Rio de Janeiro shanty town. The shooting started during a fight between rival gangs for control of the northern Imbarie slum, officials said. It occurred after the Brazilian army ended a massive deployment in the city. The latest shootout erupted when a gang from the Santa Lucia shanty town tried to invade the nearby Imbarie slum. Police officers, who arrived responding to a call from frightened residents, were caught in cross-fire. The fatal victims were all inhabitants of the Imbarie shanty

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

town, one resident was also reported injured. The army occupied slums in Rio two weeks ago in an operation that lasted nine days and involved 1,500 troops equipped with helicopters and armoured vehicles. The move was aimed at recovering weapons stolen from a military base. It led to daily shootouts with drug gangs and left several people injured. Human rights groups have criticised military tactics used in Rio de Janeiro. They say security forces should switch tactics towards community policing to try to reduce the high levels of violence in the city.

CHAD

N'djamena, Mar 21 — Government troops in Chad have launched a military offensive against rebels in the east as President Idriss Deby seeks to reassert his control over the country ahead of a presidential election in May. Government sources in N'Djamena said today the Chadian army had since yesterday attacked at least one rebel command post in the mountains of Hadjer Marfain, south of Adre, near the eastern border with Sudan. "We've gone on the offensive since yesterday morning and we've dislodged the rebels from the mountains of Hadjer Marfain where they had installed a command post," one of the government sources said. The source gave no casualty report but said the Chadian army had destroyed several rebel vehicles. A leader of the Chadian SCUD rebel group confirmed an attack against one of his bases but said his fighters had repulsed the government assault, inflicting heavy casualties. "They attacked from two sides, from the east and the west but we are controlling our position," SCUD rebel leader Yaya Dillo Djerou said. Deby, who has faced increasing attacks and incursions on Chad's eastern border by groups of Chadian rebels and army deserters in recent months, was directing the offensive in the east of the country, along with his Defence Minister. The army push against the rebels came one week after Chad's government announced it had foiled a coup plot against Deby, whose 16-year rule has been weakened by a wave of high-level military desertions. Chad's government said yesterday it had arrested 100 military officers and soldiers it said were implicated in a failed assassination plot last week against Deby. SCUD said the announced plot was an invention by the government to cover up another embarrassing spate of high-level military desertions. — Reuters.

N'djamena, Mar 22 — Chad's government said today its troops had destroyed an eastern rebel base in an operation aimed at heading off a rebel offensive ahead of elections in May in the landlocked central African country. However, a rebel leader said his fighters were still holding the position close to the eastern border with Sudan and had killed dozens of government troops, including senior officers. The conflicting reports

followed an offensive launched by President Idriss Deby's government yesterday designed to inflict an early strike against the rebels to stop them disrupting preparations for a May 3 presidential election. "Loyalist forces have totally destroyed the rebel base at Hadjer Marfain," Information Minister Hourmadji Moussa Doumgor said, adding government troops had captured several senior rebel officers, destroyed a dozen vehicles and seized others. "The area has been cleared out and there is no more fighting there," another official, who asked not to be identified, said. However, the SCUD rebel group targeted by the army offensive said it was still occupying its Hadjer Marfain base after heavy clashes in which it said its fighters killed more than 200 government troops, including senior officers. — Reuters.

ECUADOR

London, Mar 17 — A press report, dated Mar 16, states: Ecuador's indigenous groups have vowed to keep up protests against a proposed free trade deal with the US, which have now entered a fourth day. They are blocking roads across the Andean highlands, where extra police and soldiers have been deployed. Protesters rejected a government offer of a committee to investigate their concerns, calling it a smoke screen. President Alfredo Palacio says the protests are designed to create chaos and bring down his government. Humberto Cholango, Indian leader and organiser told Reuters news agency today the protests will continue "until the government says it will quit this trade deal".

Quito, Mar 20 — Ecuadorean troops tightened security on highways around Quito today as Indian leaders threatened to renew protests against free-trade talks this week with the United States. Protesters set up roadblocks in three provinces and Quito police briefly fired tear gas to disperse dozens of Indians, some armed with spears. But most highways were clear and Quito was calm with businesses open as usual. Ecuadorean and U.S. officials will meet in Washington on Thursday (Mar 23) for the trade talks. Ecuador's Andean neighbours, Colombia and Peru, already have signed deals. Indian protesters are demanding that the government abandon the talks, contending that a trade pact will damage their livelihoods and way of life. The protests, which have cost Ecuador millions of dollars in lost commerce, were the latest challenge to President Alfredo Palacio. The government appointed Felipe Vega as interior minister today after his predecessor resigned last week. Vega was the deputy minister of interior and has been involved in the negotiations with Indian protesters. Indian leaders said they would maintain protests in several central provinces until the government calls a referendum on the trade pact, but they had not decided whether to take

their fight to Quito. In San Ignacio, a tiny village in the Andes mountains 55 miles south of Quito, leaders from 30 Indian communities gathered over the weekend to decide strategy, but it was unclear how much support Indian communities could mobilize for new protests after demonstrations fizzled last week. The government and local economists say any trade deal will not affect the commerce of crops produced in the Central region where most of the Indians live. — Reuters.

Quito, Mar 21 — Ecuador declared a state of emergency in five central provinces today to try to control renewed protests by thousands of Indians demanding the government quit US free-trade talks this week. Interior Minister Felipe Vega announced the measure after Indian peasants intensified blockades on key roads in at least eight highland regions in protests that have cost Ecuador millions in lost commerce since they began last week. "The president took this decision after exhausting all other options for dialogue," Vega said. The state of emergency forbids public gatherings and marches and sets curfews. Troops earlier this week reinforced security along major highways leading into the capital. The government declared emergency in the highland provinces of Cotopaxi, Canar, Chimborazo, Imbabura and parts of Pichincha, where Quito is located. — Reuters.

FRANCE

London, Mar 18 — A press report, dated Mar 17, states: Protests have turned violent in France as at least 250,000 people rallied against a controversial new labour law. The worst violence was in Paris, where riot police fired rubber bullets and tear gas, and was reported in some of the other 80 cities holding rallies. Protesters object to new two-year job contracts for under-26s which employers can break off without explanation. President Jacques Chirac has appealed for talks, but says the new law is important to fight unemployment. The march in Paris, which police said was attended by 30,000 but which organisers put at 120,000-strong, was mainly peaceful. However, a group of about 300 masked protesters threw missiles at police, who responded with tear gas and rubber bullets. A number of cars were set on fire and protesters at the Sorbonne University pelted police with stones and bottles. Clashes went on into the evening and the interior ministry said there had been about 150 arrests in Paris, along with at least 50 more elsewhere. Student leaders cited an opinion poll showing 68% support for the protests, while union bosses called for further street protests on Saturday (Mar 18). Students fear the First Employment Contract (CPE), which passed into law last week, will erode job stability in a country where more than 20% of 18- to 25-year-olds are unemployed - more than twice the national average. Mr Chirac has called for dialogue

between ministers and labour leaders, but union officials say they will not enter into talks until the CPE is suspended. The government of Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin proposed the law to help youths in the French suburbs who took to the streets last year, many unhappy with the lack of employment opportunities.

London, Mar 19 — A press report, dated today, states: French riot police have used tear gas and water cannon after protests against a new labour law turned violent. More than 160 people were arrested after clashes erupted in eastern Paris following a day of largely peaceful demonstrations across France. Vehicles were set on fire and stores were damaged as masked youths clashed with police. Twenty-four people, including seven police officers, were injured in the violence, which lasted about six hours. A tense calm had returned to the streets of the French capital by this morning. The violence broke out at the eastern Place de la Nation as police attempted to disperse demonstrators following a mainly peaceful march through the capital involving students, workers, pensioners and families. Demonstrators hurled stones and bottles at officers, who eventually drove them back, charging the crowd and using tear gas grenades. Several cars were set on fire and nearby shop windows smashed. Students removed some of the barriers erected by police to block access to the university, and threw a fire bomb at a riot police van, but a fire was quickly extinguished. Police repelled the students with water cannon. Clashes also erupted in other cities, including Marseilles, where demonstrators tried to set fire to the entrance to the town hall. One officer was injured and six youths were arrested, police said. Unions said 1.5 million demonstrators took part in more than 150 rallies across the country against the government's First Employment Contract (CPE).

London, Mar 19 — A press report, dated today, states: French trade union leaders are threatening to call a general strike unless the government withdraws a new youth employment law by tomorrow. More than 160 people were arrested yesterday after violence erupted in Paris following a day of largely peaceful demonstrations across France. Police used tear gas and water cannon to battle masked youths who smashed shop windows and set vehicles alight. Trades unions say the law will allow employers to exploit young people. However, the government says it will cut youth unemployment by making the labour market more flexible. Protest organisers have given Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin until tomorrow night to withdraw the legislation, at which point union leaders will meet to decide what to do next. "Of course it is an ultimatum. The government and the president have effectively 48 hours to decide," Rene Valadon from the Workers' Force (FO) union said. Bernard Thibault, head of the

powerful General Labour Confederation (CGT), said that "if nothing moves we will propose preparing a day of general work stoppages in the coming days. Conditions are such that it should be a success". Government spokesman Jean-Francois Cope said last night that the government wanted dialogue, but gave no indication that it was prepared to withdraw the law.

INDIA

Ahmedabad, Mar 17 — Indian police shot dead four suspected Islamist militants in the western state of Gujarat today and said the men were planning to attack religious sites in the communally sensitive region. The shootout in Gujarat, the scene of bloody Hindu-Muslim violence four years ago, came a little over a week after suspected Muslim militants set off two bombs in the holy Hindu city of Varanasi, killing 15 people and wounding dozens. Police were conducting routine searches in Gujarat's main city of Ahmedabad after midnight when they were shot at from a house and returned fire, state police chief A.K. Bhargava said. "Two of them are Pakistanis and the other two Kashmiris," he said. Another police officer said the men were from the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen militant group fighting Indian rule in disputed Kashmir. The identities of the men were established through some leaflets, telephone diaries and mobile phones found in the house, senior police officer P.P. Pande said. Four pistols and some explosive material was also found. "They had planned to bomb religious places and also train other terrorist cells," he added. — Reuters.

INDONESIA

Jakarta, Mar 16 — Three policemen and a soldier in Indonesia's remote Papua province died today in clashes with protesters demanding the closure of a giant mine run by US firm Freeport-McMoran Cooper & Gold Inc, police said. Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono said he was sending officials to the scene and his ministers would investigate issues raised in controversy over the mine. Papuan police said students from the province's main university in the capital of Jayapura, about 500 km north-east of the mine, pelted policemen with stones to stop them from opening a roadblock to the city's airport. "Three policemen have died along with a soldier from the airbase. Forty people are now being interrogated," Papua police chief Tommy Jacobus told Indonesia's Metro TV. Papua police spokesman Kartono Wangsadisstra earlier said police tried to break up the protest by firing teargas and rubber bullets. In Jakarta, deputy national police spokesman Anton Bahrul Alam said around 19 other police officers had to be taken to hospital due to injuries. Local media reports indicated some protesters may also have been killed.

Local television footage showed chaotic scenes of give-and-take between charging protesters and police, many of the latter carrying staves and plastic shields. At one point gun-wielding anti-riot police broke into the university's compound to chase the rally leaders, while protesters showered the police with rocks. Other footage appeared to show protesters kicking and beating people on the ground, while in other clips men in who appear to be plainclothes police are firing pistols aimed toward the protesters. Jayapura, on the north-eastern shore of Papua, is located 3,500 km from Jakarta at Indonesia's extreme eastern border. President Yudhoyono said he would send officials to Papua to check on the situation. He added that he would assign ministers to take a look at social grievances related to the mine and act on their findings. Yesterday, one person was shot by an arrow hours after anti-Freeport protesters tried to storm a five-star hotel in Timika, the nearest town to Freeport's Grasberg mine. There have been sporadic protests against the mine in recent weeks, both in Papua and Jakarta. A road blockade by mostly illegal miners shut down operations for four days last month. Illegal miners often enter mining areas in Indonesia, a sprawling archipelago that is the world's fourth most populous country with huge deposits of such metals as copper, gold and tin. None of this week's protests have affected mining activities. Protest issues vary from illegal miners asking access to the mine area to demands like the Jayapura demonstrators for closure of the lucrative mine, believed to have the world's third-largest copper reserves and one of the biggest gold deposits. The Freeport operation has been a frequent source of controversy over its impact on the environment, the share of revenue going to Papuans and the legality of payments to Indonesian security forces who help guard the site. — Reuters.

Jakarta, Mar 21 — Indonesian police have identified more people suspected of involvement in violence in remote Papua province during last week's protest against a US-run mine, the police chief said today. Three policeman and a soldier were killed in the clashes in the provincial capital Jayapura between police and protesters demanding closure of the giant mine run by Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Inc. Dozens of people have been detained. "Up until now there are 14 suspects ... they include the instigators on the scene," police chief General Sutanto said. About 200 extra police have been sent for patrolling in Jayapura on the north-eastern shore of Papua, about 3,500 km east of Jakarta, Sutanto said. Operations at the mine in Grasberg, south-west of Jayapura, believed to hold the world's third-largest copper reserves and one of the biggest gold deposits, were not affected by the latest protests. — Reuters.

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

Jakarta, Mar 22 — The toll of police killed in last week's clash in Indonesia's Papua between security officials and protesters has risen to four, a police spokesman said today, bringing total known deaths from the incident to five. The fifth death was of a soldier. All were involved in efforts to break up a protest on Mar 16 that was blocking a road in Jayapura, the Papua provincial capital. The protesters were demanding closure of the Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Inc Grasberg mine, located about 500 km south-west of Jayapura. The fourth policeman died this morning of head injuries, Papua police spokesman Kartono Wangsadisastro said. — Reuters.

London, Mar 23 — A press report, dated today, states: Indonesia's Papua province remained tense yesterday, with hundreds of students reportedly hiding in the jungle to evade a police manhunt as the death toll from riots over a US-run mine rose to six. Students staged a rally last week that degenerated into bloodshed on the outskirts of Jayapura, the Papuan capital. They were demanding the closure of a huge mine operated by a local unit of US company Freeport-McMoRan. About 1,200 students have since fled their dormitories at the state-run Cendrawasih University, where the demonstration was held, and were in hiding, Aloy Renwarin, from rights group Elsham-Papua, said. "The 1,200 students ran and are still hiding in the forests," he said. The university remained closed and the streets were still tense. Decky Avide, chairman of the university's student body, told The Jakarta Post the students were "in fear of another security sweep by Mobile Brigade members". The Mobile Brigade, better known as Brimob, has developed a reputation for brutality in dealing with separatist conflicts in places such as Papua and Aceh. The state-run Antara news service reported that security had been reinforced at several locations in Jayapura, including the governor's office, provincial parliament and several main streets. Activists accuse Freeport of polluting the environment and of tacitly condoning human rights abuses by the Indonesian military assuring the Timika gold and copper mine's security. They also complain that Papua has not received its fair share of profits from the mine, something which has helped to fuel the decades-old separatist insurgency against Jakarta's rule in the region. A police spokesman said another Brimob member had died of his injuries in hospital yesterday, bringing the total to five. Protesters bludgeoned to death three Brimob police and an air force officer during the melee. Police have charged two suspects with the murder of the security officers and were hunting for 24 others. Police said they were readying a further 200 troops to send to Papua as reinforcements. Meanwhile, Papua's parliamentary tribal council began discussing Freeport yesterday in

response to the demands to close the mine, and intend to send its report to Papua's parliament tomorrow.

IRAN

London, Mar 17 — A press report, today, states: Rebels posing as security forces have killed 21 people on a highway in southeastern Iran, Iran's national police chief said today. Gen. Esmail Ahmadi Moghaddam accused U.S. and British intelligence services of encouraging Iranian rebels to attack people, the official Iranian news agency reported. Rebels posing as policemen and soldiers stopped people and killed them on a road in Sistan-Baluchestan province, which borders Pakistan and Afghanistan, the agency quoted Moghaddam as saying.

IRAQ

London, Mar 16 — A press report, dated today, states: The US military says it has launched its biggest air offensive in Iraq since the 2003 invasion, targeting insurgents near the central city of Samarra. More than 50 aircraft and 1,500 Iraqi and US troops have been deployed in the operation, a military statement said. A bomb attack on the al-Askari shrine in Samarra, 100 km north of Baghdad, last month sparked widespread sectarian violence. The US military said the assault, dubbed "Operation Swarmer," was intended to "clear a suspected insurgent operating area" north-east of Samarra. Iraqi interim Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari said the attack had been necessary to prevent insurgents forming a new stronghold in the area, such as had been seen in the town of Falluja. The offensive is expected to last several days "as a thorough search of the objective area is conducted." Near the end of the first day, the joint US and Iraqi force said it had captured a number of weapons caches, containing shells, explosives and military uniforms. A US military spokesman said the operation was focused on Iraq's Salahuddin Province. "We are trying to achieve denying the insurgency and the terrorists their weapons, and capturing and killing as many of them as we can," he said. A senior Iraqi Army officer said the offensive was "targeting bases of militants loyal to Zarqawi," the leader of the militant group al-Qaeda in Iraq. There are no reports of casualties or details of any insurgent resistance so far.

London, Mar 20 — A press report, dated Mar 19, states: Nearly 1,500 US and Iraqi soldiers today sought to root out insurgents from farming villages north of Baghdad, and at least 35 people died in insurgent and sectarian violence nationwide. Iraqi politicians still had not formed a government more than three months after landmark elections for the country's first permanent post-invasion parliament, but they announced an agreement on naming a Security Council to deal with key matters while negotiations proceed. With the

war starting its fourth year, the 133,000 American troops on the ground inside Iraq was nearly a third more than took part in the campaign to oust Saddam Hussein that began in the early hours of Mar 20, 2003. At least 2,314 US military personnel have died in the war, which is estimated to have cost \$200-250 billion so far. President Bush says about 30,000 Iraqis have been killed, while others put the toll far higher. Many politicians both inside and outside Iraq said the continuing violence could only be described as a civil war. "It is unfortunate that we are in civil war. We are losing each day as an average 50-60 people throughout the country, if not more," former interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi told the BBC. "If this is not civil war, then God knows what civil war is." In a sign of political progress, Iraq's top politicians emerged from the fourth in a series of US-brokered all-party meetings on forming a new government and reported they had established an advisory, 19-member Security Council. The council, to be headed by President Jalal Talabani, was established as an interim measure as politicians struggle to agree on the makeup of a new government following the Dec 15 parliamentary elections. As politicians met in Baghdad, Iraqi police said eight civilians, including a child, were killed during clashes between US troops and gunmen in Duluyiah, 45 miles north of Baghdad. The town is in Iraq's Sunni Arab heartland where the Iraqi army and US forces opened a major airborne campaign last week to hunt insurgents. The American military called it the largest "air assault" operation since the invasion. Evidence of nightly sectarian violence among Sunnis and Shiites showed up at two Baghdad sewage treatment plants today. Police said they found 14 bodies, bound hand and foot and shot execution style. Such discoveries are being made almost daily since a bombing at a Shiite shrine in Samarra. Assaultants in south-western Baghdad gunned down a man as he was leaving a Shiite mosque, police said. A Baghdad policeman driving on a rural road in Latifiyah, about 20 miles south of the capital, was killed by gunmen, police said. Four men riding in the car were wounded. Elsewhere, two civilians were killed and 10 wounded when gunmen attacked US troops stationed at the governor's office in Ramadi, 70 miles west of Baghdad. Gunmen killed four guards at archaeological sites in the northern city of Mosul. A fifth policeman and a bystander were wounded. A roadside bomb exploded on a police patrol in Baqouba, 35 miles north-east of Baghdad, killing one officer and injuring 10 others, the Iraqi military said. Near the southern city of Basra, two officials of the Iraqi Islamic Party were gunned down by four assassins. In the northern region of Kirkuk, two

Iraqi soldiers were found stabbed to death two days after they were reported kidnapped, US authorities said.

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated Mar 20, states: At least 39 people were killed by insurgents and sectarian gangs, police reported today, continuing the wave of violence that has left nearly 1,000 Iraqis dead since the bombing last month of a Shiite Muslim shrine. As the Iraq war entered its fourth year, police found the bodies of at least 15 more people, including that of a 13-year-old girl, dumped in and near Baghdad. The discoveries marked the latest in a string of execution-style killings that have become an almost daily event as Sunni and Shiite extremists settle scores. Sectarian killings have swept across Iraq since the Feb 22 bombing of a Shiite Muslim shrine in Samarra. Among those killed in scattered violence today were 10 policemen, who are prime targets for insurgents, most of them Sunni militants, trying to break the will of the mainly Shiite police force. As night fell today, a bomb struck a coffee shop in northern Baghdad, killing at least three civilians and injuring 23 others. The bomb was left in a plastic bag inside the shop in a market area of the Azamiyah neighbourhood, police Maj Falah al-Mohammadawi said. At about the same time, gunmen killed two oil engineers leaving work at the Beiji refinery north of Baghdad. An electrical engineer and technician were gunned down at the nearby power station, Beiji police Lt Khalaf Ayed Al-Janabi said. Separately, the owner of a small grocery in downtown Baghdad was shot and killed. In south-east Baghdad, also towards evening, a roadside bomb blew apart a minibus, killing four pilgrims returning from the holy city of Karbala, where millions of Shiite faithful gathered to mark the 40th and final day of the annual mourning period for Imam Hussein, grandson of the Prophet Muhammad. Five pilgrims on their way to Karbala were wounded in a drive-by shooting earlier in the day, police said. Authorities in Baghdad closed the international airport until tomorrow, citing the need to protect the Karbala commemoration, apparently from any attackers who might try to fly into the country. Jordanian authorities closed their border with Iraq until further notice to "prevent those without valid travel documents from entering the country," said Maj Bashir al-Da'ajah, spokesman of Jordan's Public Security Department. - Roadside bombs — one just a few hundred yards from an Interior Ministry lockup in central Baghdad and one in a farming area near the so-called Triangle of Death south of Baghdad — killed at least seven police officials. A prisoner was also killed in the Interior Ministry bombing. A policeman in a joint US-Iraqi patrol was killed in Baghdad during fighting with insurgents, police said. A car bomb targeting a police checkpoint exploded in

Baqouba, 35 miles north-east of Baghdad, killing one policeman, authorities said. In the northern city of Mosul, gunmen killed a policeman and an oil ministry official, police said.

Baghdad, Mar 21 — Guerrillas attacked the police headquarters and courthouse in the Iraqi town of Miqdadiya today, killing at least 16 people and releasing prisoners, police and medical staff said. Police said the attackers, equipped with rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and assault rifles, set fire to the police station and badly damaged it. Investigations were being hampered, police said, because the gunmen seized radio equipment, rendering the rest of the police network insecure and unusable but it appeared 14 policemen were killed at the police headquarters in the town north of Baghdad. Another two bodies were found at the courthouse after guards at the building came under attack. One of the dead was a civilian, a hospital official said. A further seven people were wounded. In addition to the 16 killed in Miqdadiya, two policemen despatched to assist from the nearby city of Baquba were killed by a roadside bomb, said a police source. Later, in a separate incident another such bomb killed two policemen and wounded one in Baquba. — Reuters.

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated Mar 21, states: About 100 masked gunmen stormed a prison near the Iranian border today, cutting phone wires, freeing all the inmates and killing 20 policemen. At least 10 attackers were killed in the dawn assault on the Muqadiyah lockup on the eastern fringe of the Sunni Triangle, police said. The raid showed the mostly Sunni militants can still assemble a large force, capable of operating in the region virtually at will, even though US and Iraqi military officials said last year that the area was no longer an insurgent stronghold. The insurgency's strength, spiraling sectarian violence and the stalemate over forming a government in Iraq have led politicians and foreign policy experts to say Iraq is on the brink or perhaps in the midst of civil war. In all, 33 prisoners were freed, including 18 insurgents who were detained on Sunday (Mar 19) during raids by security forces in the nearby villages of Sansal and Arab, police said. It was the capture of those insurgents that apparently prompted today's attack. The 15 other inmates were a mix of suspected insurgents and common criminals. In an Internet posting tonight, the military wing of the Mujaheddin Shura Council, a militant Sunni Muslim insurgent group, purportedly claimed it carried out the operation. The cutting of the telephone lines made it impossible for jailers or security men, who apparently did not have cell phones, to call other police for backup. Residents of the town informed authorities of the situation after hearing the firing. In other violence

today, a roadside bomb killed one policeman and wounded three in Baqouba, 35 miles north-east of Baghdad, authorities said. A US soldier with the 4th Infantry Division was killed by small-arms fire today while patrolling western Baghdad, the US military reported. At least 2,315 members of the US military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003. Also in the capital, gunmen killed an employee of the mayor's office while he was driving in the Dora neighbourhood of south Baghdad. Police reported discovering eight more blindfolded corpses in west Baghdad, some of them under a highway and showing signs of torture, officials said. In Suwera, 50 miles south of Baghdad, four more corpses were found on the bank of the Tigris River. The execution-style killings have become an almost daily occurrence in a wave of sectarian violence that has left more than 1,000 Iraqis dead since the bombing last month of a Shiite shrine.

Baghdad, Mar 22 — Rebels blasted an Iraqi police station with grenade and mortar fire before dawn today, killing four policemen in Madaen, south of Baghdad, police said. They said they had detained about 70 suspects in raids in the town after the assault, which occurred a day after at least 22 people were killed and 30 prisoners released in a similar attack on a police post north-east of the capital. Among the detainees was a Syrian found with leaflets by the leader of al Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, police said. Police in Baghdad also came under attack today. Two were killed when gunmen fired on their patrol in a western area. A separate roadside bombing wounded two police commandos. Police also found three bodies with gunshot wounds to the head in southern Baghdad. — Reuters.

Baghdad, Mar 22 — Gunmen wounded dozens of Shi'ite pilgrims and killed two in Baghdad today, raking their vehicles with machine-gun fire in the latest outbreak of sectarian violence that is threatening Iraq with civil war. The pilgrims were driving home a day after celebrating the major Arbain festival in Kerbala, south of the capital. Police said 22 pilgrims were wounded and one was killed in an attack on an open truck in western Baghdad. In a second incident in the same area, one Shi'ite was killed and 18 were wounded when their bus was hit by machinegun fire. A police patrol rushing to the scene of one attack was ambushed by gunmen who fired a rocket-propelled grenade, killing two policemen and wounding four, police said. Police also reported the discovery of six more bodies on the streets of Baghdad, all apparent victims of the communal bloodshed between majority Shi'ites and once-dominant Sunnis which some Iraqi officials fear could expand into open warfare. Rebels blasted a police station with grenade and mortar fire before dawn, killing four policemen in Madaen, southeast of Baghdad, in the

second such attack in two days. Police said they had detained about 70 suspects in raids in the town afterwards. The violence again underlined the need for Iraq's leaders to break a deadlock over a government of national unity, widely seen as the best hope for stabilizing the country. Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei yesterday approved rare talks with Washington on Iraq, where Shi'ite Islamists with links to Tehran lead the interim government. Three months after a parliamentary election, Iraqi factions remain deadlocked over how a national unity government should function and whether it should be led by interim Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari, nominated by the main Shi'ite alliance. Iraqi political sources said they expected the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, Zalmay Khalilzad, to meet Iran's representatives as early as this week in Baghdad. — Reuters.

Baghdad, Mar 23 — US-led forces freed three Christian peace activists held hostage in Iraq today in an operation mounted two weeks after the kidnappers tortured and killed their American colleague. Canadians Jim Loney, 41, and Harmeet Sooden, 32, and 74-year-old British Norman Kember from Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) were snatched in Baghdad in November. The tortured body of American Tom Fox was found dumped in the capital two weeks ago. A CPT spokesman said in Canada that the captors were not present when the rescue took place. It appeared likely British special forces would have been involved as they have been in previous kidnappings. In London, British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said only: "It was an operation led by the Multinational Force which involved British forces. It follows weeks and weeks of very careful work by military coalition personal in Iraq and many civilians as well," he said. A British military spokesman in Baghdad, Wing Commander Tony Radcliffe, said there had been no casualties in the operation. News of the release came amid further insurgent violence in Iraq. At least 15 people were killed, most of them policemen, when a suicide car bomber blew himself up outside the major crimes unit headquarters in Baghdad. Another car exploded at a market in the southwest of the city, close to a Shi'ite mosque. Yarmouk Hospital officials said seven people were killed and 10 wounded. Police said the car bomb had targeted a police patrol driving through the market. At least one of the dead was a policeman as were four of the wounded. Kember, Sooden and Loney were in "good shape" in the British embassy compound in Baghdad, embassy spokeswoman Lisa Glover said. Straw said Sooden and Loney had needed hospital treatment. — Reuters.

ISRAEL

Gaza, Mar 20 — Six Palestinians were wounded in separate gun battles

today, which included a clash between militants and members of the security forces outside a government ministry over jobs and late salaries, witnesses said. Two people were wounded in the fighting outside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Gaza City, and three along the main north-south Gaza highway, the witnesses said. Such incidents have become increasingly common in the Gaza Strip since Israel pulled out last September and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas failed to deliver on promises of employment for militants who had fought Israeli forces. Overnight, security forces exchanged fire with gunmen who took over a power relay station in Gaza. One person was wounded. Armed men also tried to take control of a military hospital in the territory to demand late salaries. Police dispersed them without injuries. In the fighting on the main north-south Gaza highway, a militant was critically wounded and two policemen were hurt, the witnesses said. The cash-strapped Palestinian Authority has had problems paying some of its 140,000 employees and could face difficulties getting foreign aid once a government led by Hamas, the militant group that won a January 25 election, is sworn in. — Reuters.

Gaza, Mar 21 — Israel reopened the main goods crossing into the Gaza Strip today under foreign pressure, letting truckloads of flour, rice and cooking oil pass after Palestinian officials and aid groups warned of food shortages. The U.N. aid agency which provides food to more than half of Gaza's 1.4 million Palestinians said the reopening of the Karni crossing was welcome news but that the terminal was still operating only at 10 percent of capacity. "We have shortages of all the essential commodities and ... 10 percent of capacity is not going to meet the need," said John Ging, director of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). The Karni crossing has frequently been closed by Israel since early January despite an agreement brokered by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to boost the flow of goods into and out of Gaza after Israel's withdrawal last year. Israeli defense officials said the closures were in response to security threats, but many Palestinians called them punishment for electing the Islamic militant group Hamas in January's parliamentary poll. The Karni crossing was reopened yesterday, but for less than an hour. Only six trucks made it through and Palestinian officials complained that Israel let in shipments of Coca-Cola instead of flour urgently needed by poorer Gazans. Karni was reopened again at around 1100 hrs, today and a Palestinian security officer said cargo trucks containing flour, rice and cooking oil passed through. Israel's Defense Ministry declined to say how long today's opening would last. — Reuters.

NEPAL

Kathmandu, Mar 16 — A blockade ordered by Maoist rebels kept most vehicles off roads across Nepal for a third straight day today, disrupting food and other supplies and hitting businesses hard, industry officials and residents said. "Industries are on the verge of being closed due to the blockade," said Bijay Sarawagi, chief of the Birgunj unit of the Federation of the Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry. Birgunj is a major business centre in the southern plains. "We can't send our products to the market and bring raw material from outside because transport vehicles are not running," Sarawagi said. "If this situation continues we'll have no alternative but to close down factories." Trucks carrying goods from India, which supplies the bulk of essential supplies to the landlocked nation, were backed up at border crossings because drivers were scared to defy the Maoists. "I saw nearly 50 Nepal-bound trucks loaded with goods waiting on the Indian side of the border," journalist Kulmani Gwyanti said from the western town of Bhairahawa, a major trading point along the border with India. — Reuters.

London, Mar 19 — A press report, dated today, states: Highways remained deserted and some towns reported shortages of perishable goods, as a Maoist-dictated strike hobbled Nepal for a fifth day. The rebels ordered all vehicles to be kept off roads in and out of the capital, district headquarters and other towns in a bid to oust King Gyanendra, who sacked the government and seized direct control a year ago. By lunchtime yesterday, only around 100 vehicles, had left the Kathmandu valley, said a police officer. In Janakpur, a town 390km east of Kathmandu, locals are facing shortages of fresh vegetables and milk. In Palpa, a Maoist stronghold in west Nepal, thousands of people wanting to travel have been stranded for days. Meanwhile, main political parties piled fresh pressure on Maoist rebels to end the indefinite road blockade. Maoists also plan to follow it up with a general strike from Apr 3 to press King Gyanendra to end his rule. Nepal's seven main political parties, who have a loose alliance with the guerillas against the king, have urged the Maoists to call off the blockade saying it was hurting ordinary people. The parties also fear that the royalist government could use the blockade as an excuse to crack down on a peaceful anti-king rally they plan on Apr 8.

London, Mar 19 — A press report, dated today, states: Maoists have called off their blockade of the district and zonal headquarters with effect from tomorrow. They have also called off the general strike that was supposed to begin from Apr 3 for an indefinite period. Maoists had imposed the blockade on district and zonal headquarters from Mar 14. In a press statement jointly released by

the Maoist chairman Puspa Kamal Dahal aka Prachanda and senior party leader Baburam Bhattarai, the blockade and the general strike were called off keeping in view of developing and intensifying the joint movement for democracy in line with the 12-point understanding reached with the seven-party alliance. Expressing commitment to the 12-point understanding and extending support to the Apr 6-9 general strike called by the seven-party alliance, the Maoist leaders have appealed to all to participate in the strike.

London, Mar 19 — A press report, dated Mar 18, states: Maoists, last night, set ablaze the Baidehi-based ticket counter and two wooden bridges along Janakpur-Jayanagar railway service. The ticket counter and bridges, situated 12 km far from Janakpurdhara, were completely destroyed in the fire disrupting the only train service in Nepal, said Bhola Nath Sharma, general manager of railway service. The railway has to bear daily loss of Rs 60,000 to disruption of the service, Sharma said. A team of technicians from the railway office had left for the spot to assess the loss by the blasts but failed to reach there, Sharma informed. The train service will resume as usual soon after repairing the damaged bridges, Sharma said.

Kathmandu, Mar 20 - At least 13 Nepali soldiers were killed in a clash with Maoist rebels in the east of the country today, a day after the guerrillas ended a crippling road blockade, an army officer said. He said one Maoist rebel was also killed in the fighting in Kavre district, 80 km east of Kathmandu, when the guerrillas attacked soldiers who were on their way to fix water supply lines disrupted by the Maoists. — Reuters.

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Communist rebels attacked an army patrol and a police post and booby-trapped a blocked highway, in escalating violence that claimed as many as 28 lives. Early yesterday, Maoist rebels ambushed an army patrol in central Nepal, triggering a shootout that killed at least 13 soldiers and an insurgent near an army camp, the Defence Ministry said. The soldiers were investigating suspicions that rebels had blocked the camp's water supply when the guerrillas set off an explosion and then fired on the soldiers. Separately, two civilians were killed by booby-trapped explosives as they cleared a highway of stones and sacks placed by the rebels to block traffic in the area, about 300 miles southeast of Kathmandu. Today, rebels attacked the police station at Birtamod, about 310 miles southeast of Kathmandu, after arriving there in a bus, said Bhola Siwakoti, the chief government official in the area. At least nine policemen and three rebels were killed in the attack and the fighting that followed, Siwakoti and the local police chief said. The army said it was in control of the town. In the capital

yesterday, about 1,000 pro-democracy activists demanded Gyanendra free political detainees and give up powers he seized last year.

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated today, states: The latest violence in Nepal killed at least 23 communist rebels and 10 police today, officials said. Government soldiers retrieved the bodies of at least 20 Maoist rebels after an operation near Dharechown village, about 50 miles north-west of Katmandu, according to the Royal Nepalese Army headquarters. Hours earlier, rebel gun and bomb attacks on police posts in two southeastern towns left at least 10 policemen and three rebels dead, and 22 other people wounded. In the first incident, rebels came in buses and trucks and killed nine policemen at a police station in Birtamod, about 300 miles south-east of Katmandu, said Bhola Siwakoti, the chief government official in the area. The rebels also bombed several government offices in the town, on the busy east-west highway that runs the length of the Himalayan nation. There were no casualties in the office buildings, which were not yet open for the day. Most of the nine policemen were killed by gunfire in the initial attack, Siwakoti said. An ensuing battle killed at least three rebels, local police chief Keshari Ghimire said. Soldiers later took control of the town and searched surrounding areas for the attackers. In a separate, almost simultaneous attack, one policeman was killed when rebels attacked another police post in Dharan, just north of Birtamod. The rebels arrived on motorcycles and began firing at the policemen, government official Mohan Pokhrel said. The rebels have intensified attacks on government troops since withdrawing from a unilateral ceasefire earlier this year. The violence has continued despite a decision by the rebels on Sunday to end a six-day highway blockade that had crippled life across the country. The rebels also canceled plans for an indefinite general strike starting April 3, but said they would support an Apr 6-9 general strike called by an alliance of seven major political parties which has been trying to restore democracy in Nepal. The guerrillas and the alliance agreed on Sunday to step up pressure on King Gyanendra, who dissolved the government and seized total control of the country in February last year. The king said he took the steps to halt corruption and quell the communist insurgency.

NIGERIA

Port Harcourt, Mar 18 — Unidentified attackers blew up an oil pipeline in Nigeria's southern delta, further hitting oil supplies from the leading OPEC nation, authorities said today. The blast on the Tebidaba-Brass pipeline near Brass Terminal, both operated by Italian oil company Agip, was the latest in a series of attacks on oil installations in the eighth biggest oil-exporting country,

which had already reduced supplies by almost a quarter. Agip, a unit of ENI, confirmed an "act of sabotage" on the pipeline and said an unspecified quantity of production had been lost. One oil industry source said production of 67,000 barrels per day had been cut. In a statement issued by ENI headquarters in Italy, the company said: "The situation is under control and operations have commenced to define the extent of the pipeline damage and contain any associated pollution." Militants demanding greater autonomy for Nigeria's poor oil heartland have carried out several attacks and kidnapped oil workers in the past three months. A police spokesman in the region said no one was kidnapped or killed in the latest attack. Militants are holding three foreign oil workers hostage. Royal Dutch Shell has cut its output by 455,000 bpd and other companies have shut another 100,000 bpd since Feb 18. The latest explosion brought the total impact of the attacks to 622,000 bpd, 26% of Nigeria's 2.4 million-bpd capacity. — Reuters.

Lagos, Mar 22 — Six members of a Nigerian separatist group were killed in a clash with police in south-eastern Anambra state after they tried to stop people from being counted in a census, police said today. Members of the Movement for the Actualisation of a Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) attacked a police station in the town of Nnewi yesterday, the first day of the census in Africa's most populous country, police said. "Six MASSOB members were killed. They attacked a police station and tried to burn it," Anambra state Police Commissioner Moses Anegbode said from the state capital Awka. He said five vehicles were torched during the clash and 15 MASSOB activists arrested. Yesterday, initial eyewitness reports from Nnewi had said two people were killed. Five people were killed in south-western Ondo state at the weekend (Mar 18-19) in fighting linked to the census between two ethnic groups over ownership of a village. — Reuters.

PAKISTAN

London, Mar 20 — Suspected Islamic militants set off three bombs yesterday, one of which exploded near a police van and killed seven people in northwestern Pakistan, officials said. The two other bombs damaged walls of a police station and a government building. A powerful roadside bomb blew up the police vehicle while it was on patrol in Dera Ismail Khan, a city in northwestern Pakistan about 180 miles south-west of the capital, Islamabad, local police official Dar Ali Khattak said. Three policemen, three paramilitary police and a passer-by were killed in the explosion on a road in the city's Kotli Imam neighborhood, Khattak said. Four other bystanders — two women and two men — were injured, he said. About four hours later, a bomb exploded near the scene of the first one, cracking a wall at a

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

nearby government building but injuring no one, another police official, Khuda Dad Mahsud, said. At about 8 p.m., a third bomb went off outside a police station in the heart of Dera Ismail Khan, damaging its main wall but causing no casualties, Khattak said. No one claimed responsibility for the explosions, but Khattak blamed Islamic militants from a neighboring tribal region. Dera Ismail Khan is near the South Waziristan tribal region where Islamic militants are believed to be hiding. The fighters have been blamed for attacks on security forces.

Karachi, Mar 21 — Pakistan state owned gas distribution firm-Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) said this morning that gas supply to a few localities in Sariab area in Quetta city of Balochistan province of Pakistan was suspended after a local distribution gas pipeline was blown up on the Quetta-Mastung road late yesterday night. Police said the explosive was planted under the pipeline near Sheikh Zayed Hospital, some 20km from Quetta. A spokesman of gas utility said that local engineering team has already started repairing work and it will be restored soon. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

PHILIPPINES

Manila, Mar 21 — Philippine communist guerrillas have stepped up attacks outside Manila, ransacking a police station and burning a commuter bus this week, police officials said today. Arturo Lomibao, the national police chief, said the country was on increased alert for more rebel raids ahead of the founding anniversary of the Maoist-led New People's Army (NPA) on Mar 29. "They would always try to surprise lightly-defended stations to collect more guns," he said, adding the rebels were stepping up offensives to collect "war taxes" and steal more weapons to make up for their losses in gun battles. — Reuters.

Kuala Lumpur, Mar 22 — Informal peace talks between the Philippine government and Muslim rebels have ended in Malaysia without settling issues of territory, or jurisdiction of Muslim land, a source close to the talks said today. The talks resumed this week after discussions aimed at ending nearly 40 years of conflict were delayed following the recent discovery of an alleged coup plot in Manila. However, the source said the negotiators from the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) had been unable to reach agreement. "They've got to tie up some loose ends," the source said. "There's some problem on the issue of territory." The talks could resume early in April, when both sides will try again to break the deadlock and fix a date for the signing of an agreement on ancestral domain, a key part of the peace process, the source said. In the Philippines, a spokesman for the MILF earlier said its representatives had met the government yesterday to thrash out

specifics of territory and governance for a Muslim homeland on the southern island of Mindanao. — Reuters.

SENEGAL

Dakar, Mar 16 — Senegalese separatist rebels shelled a rival faction in a volatile border area and two government soldiers from Guinea Bissau who became involved in the fighting were killed, witnesses said today. A low-level separatist rebellion in Senegal's southern Casamance region has splintered into rival factions in recent years, with hardline commander Salif Sadio rejecting moves by some comrades in the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) to negotiate with the central government. Rival MFDC fighters attacked Sadio's positions near Kassarol on the porous border with Guinea Bissau on Tuesday night (Mar 14) and yesterday, security sources in Casamance said. "People are fleeing the fighting," said a resident of Ziguinchor, around 50 km away. A witness in Guinea Bissau said in the capital Bissau that a unit from the country's national army became involved in the fighting in support of the attackers and two soldiers were killed. "I saw two bodies (of soldiers) being sent back to Bissau," the witness said. It was not immediately clear how the Guinea Bissau army unit became involved in fighting. Local tribal loyalties in the area are often more influential than modern national borders originally imposed by European colonists and armed dissidents have frequently moved between the two countries. Guinea Bissau's Prime Minister Aristides Gomes said this week that army units on the border were on a state of alert to prevent MFDC incursions over the frontier from Senegal. Gomes said some people, whom he did not name, had accused his government of wanting to capture Sadio and hand him over to Senegalese authorities but he said this was not true. The MFDC took up arms against Senegal's central government in 1982, accusing it of neglecting Casamance, which is separated from the rest of the former French colony by tiny, wedge-shaped Gambia, previously a British colony. The rebellion has simmered since, reaching its peak in the 1990s. Hundreds of people have been killed and scores maimed by landmines that litter the countryside. — Reuters.

SOMALIA

Nairobi, Mar 22 — Heavy fighting between rival militia groups broke out today in the Somali capital of Mogadishu, killing at least 12 people and wounding 70 others, local hospital sources said. "Our estimate is that the death toll is between 12 and 20," a doctor said. "We also have more than 70 injured people in different hospitals in the city." The latest clashes pit militia loyal to Bashir Raghe, against those led by his former mentor, Abukar Umar Adani. The conflict flared up when armed militia,

reportedly loyal to Adani, attacked the positions of Raghe's militiamen. "Adani's militia attacked a checkpoint manned by Raghe's militia at Galgalato area (north Mogadishu) at 0600 hrs (0300, UTC)," said Hassan Ade, a local resident. Adani is a wealthy businessman who controls the El-Ma'an beach area, which has served as Mogadishu's port since the closure in 1995 of the city's main port. He is reportedly close to the Islamic courts. Raghe is a member of a newly created Alliance for Peace and the Fight Against International Terrorism, which comprises several Mogadishu-based faction leaders. Other members include Muhammad Qanyare Afrah, Muse Sudi Yalahow, Omar Finnish and Abdirashid Shire Ilqeyte. Adani and Raghe both belong to the Warsangeli sub-clan of the Abgal, and the fighting is said to be a struggle between the two to gain supremacy within the sub-clan. Hussein Gutale, a spokesman for the alliance, said: "The position of one of our members (Raghe) was attacked by those who harbour militants and we had to respond." He said that agreement between the alliance members stipulated that "if one is attacked, the rest must come to his defense". Abdullahi Shirwa, a member of Civil Society in Action, an umbrella organisation made up of over 12 groups in Mogadishu, said "what started out as a fight between two cousins had become a more dangerous conflict involving Islamic courts and the new alliance". Ade said the fighting was a continuation of battles that erupted in early February between Islamic court militia and those loyal to the new coalition. More than 35 people were killed and thousands displaced. "The two sides have been confronting each other for the last four to six weeks, and it was no surprise that they started again," he said. — Reuters.

SPAIN

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Basque separatist group ETA plans to declare a permanent ceasefire from Friday (Mar 24), a report in the Basque newspaper Gara said today. Gara is the group's usual vehicle for statements. The announcement was first made on Basque television. A ceasefire would be the first step in a long-awaited peace process with ETA. "ETA has decided to declare a ceasefire which will come into effect on Friday and will be permanent," Gara said in a special edition posted on its Web site. Gara quoted a message from ETA saying its aim was "to move the democratic process forward in Euskal Herria (the Basque Country)." It added it aimed to build a new framework in which the rights of Basques as a people would be recognized.

SRI LANKA

Colombo, Mar 21 — Sri Lanka today extended a state of emergency first imposed after the assassination of its

foreign minister six months ago but said violence had fallen sharply since talks with Tamil Tiger rebels in February. Introduced after Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar was gunned down by a suspected Tiger assassin last year, the state of emergency gives the police and army wide powers. It was extended first for a November presidential election and then again every month as violence rose. — Reuters. (See issue of Mar 9.)

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: The Sri Lankan Navy today seized a fishing trawler operated by suspected Tamil Tigers and detained five crew members off the island's troubled northern waters even as troops and rebels exchanged fire in the Jaffna peninsula but there were no casualties. The fishing boat, which was within a restricted zone, was detained along with five people aboard, the military said. A subsequent search led to the discovery of 20 dynamite sticks, it said, adding the fishing crew were being questioned. The incident came as troops came under attack at Manalkadu in the Jaffna peninsula and retaliated. They later recovered an automatic assault rifle, the military said. The Sri Lankan Navy has repeatedly accused the Tigers of taking the cover of fishermen to attack security forces. The Tigers yesterday charged the navy with attacking villages in the island's north-east. The navy said they had fired only in self defence after being attacked by the Tigers.

SUDAN

Khartoum, Mar 16 — Two gunmen attacked a compound of the UN refugee agency UNHCR in southern Sudan, killing a local guard and wounding an Iraqi logistics officer and another guard, the agency said today. In the attack last night, the Iraqi staff member was shot in the abdomen while the second guard was shot in the leg, UNHCR said in a statement. One of the gunmen was killed while the other was in detention in Yei. — Reuters.



IRAQ

See under "Political & Civil Unrest."



AIRLINE STAFF, JAPAN

London, Mar 23 — A press report, dated today, states: A group of pilot labour unions at subsidiaries of All

Nippon Airways began a 24-hour strike today, forcing cancellations of 13% of the airline group's domestic flights and affecting 7,600 passengers, an airline official said. The strike will not affect any international flights, All Nippon Airways Co. spokesman Masato Ogawa said. A group of pilot labour unions at rival Japan Airlines Corp., which had separately threatened the 24-hour strike, averted the walkout, the company said in a statement. Today's walkout involved four pilot labor unions at ANA's subsidiaries. The unions were demanding an average 9.6% increase in monthly pay per pilot, said ANA spokeswoman Mariko Matsuoka. The company has refused any pay hikes, citing higher fuel costs and competition. The unions said in a statement that they were also dissatisfied with the management's stance over training, promotion and other conditions. ANA's own flights were not affected by the walkout, and all the group's flights will be back to normal tomorrow, ANA officials said. The four unions are All Nippon Crew's Association composed of 407 pilots, Air Nippon Network Pilot Union made up of 43 pilots, Air Next Crew's Association with 14 pilots and Air Central Pilots' Union composed of 37 pilots.

ARGENTINA

London, Mar 20 — A press report, dated today, states: A British naval vessel is trapped in dock in Argentina after strike action by local workers prevented essential repairs being carried out. *HMS Endurance*, successor to the vessel which played a key role in the Falklands war, was forced to seek assistance from the Argentinian dockyard at Puerto Belgrano after damaging its rudder while conducting survey work in Antarctica. But civilian workers at the port have now gone on strike and are picketing the dockyard, bringing repair work to a halt. Some of the vessel's crew were on board when the strike started, while others were staying in hotel accommodation in the city. It is understood that those outside the port are now unable to rejoin their vessel. Yesterday the Ministry of Defence confirmed that *Endurance* was unable to leave port. A spokesman said the strike started on Saturday (Mar 18) and had prevented any further work taking place on the stricken ice-patrol vessel. "It can't leave at the moment," the spokesman said. "We are looking at our options, but at the moment we won't be working on it." The strike is believed to have been called over local grievances and has nothing to do with the presence of the British vessel in the port.

AUSTRALIA

London, Mar 20 — A press report, dated Australia mar 21, states: Sydney ferry commuters are being advised to seek other means of transport today as a strike cripples the fleet. Sydney Ferries staff began a

48-hour strike at 0500, AEDT, today over negotiations on an enterprise bargaining agreement. The corporation has sought an urgent hearing in the Australian Industrial Relations Commission and the case is expected to be heard today. A Sydney Ferries spokesman said today the strike would severely disrupt services today and tomorrow, and passengers should allow for extra time to get to their destinations. "Services are not commencing as planned," he said. "It appears the industrial action is under way. We regret this action and we're working hard to get services back to normal, but passengers should allow extra travelling time this morning." Buses were replacing ferries between Manly and Circular Quay.

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated today, states: The Maritime Officers' Union says they expect Sydney's ferry services to resume in time for this afternoon's peak. Sydney Ferry workers staged a snap strike this morning over a pay dispute. However, the Industrial Relations Commission has ordered them to return to work. The union's Michael Flemming says ferry masters and engineers should be back on the job shortly.

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: The State Government has been accused of failing to alert ferry commuters to the possibility of yesterday's strike, despite union claims that Sydney Ferries' management was told of plans for industrial action last week. Thousands of commuters were forced to take buses or cars to work after the strike left the city's fleet of ferries out of action. The Opposition's transport spokesman, Barry O'Farrell, said commuters should have been alerted on Monday night (Mar 20), but were instead left to arrive at wharves yesterday morning to discover that all services had been cancelled. "It reinforces the fact this Government doesn't care whether public transport commuters get to work on time or not," he said. An estimated 38,000 passengers had to find alternative transport when ferry masters and engineers walked off the job at 0500, leaving every one of Sydney's 31 ferries sitting in the docks. Special bus services ran between Manly and Circular Quay, but people travelling from other destinations had to find their own transport. The strike was prompted by an impasse in negotiations for an enterprise bargaining agreement. Sydney Ferries took the matter to the Industrial Relations Commission. At lunchtime yesterday members of the Australian Maritime Officers Union were ordered back to work immediately. They had planned to strike for 48 hours. The commission heard there was some confusion over when Sydney Ferries was first told of planned strike action. The union's secretary, Michael Fleming, produced evidence that ferry management was informed by fax late last week. A spokesman for Sydney Ferries said he could not comment on

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

this claim, but it was his understanding that notice of the planned strike was received about 1700 on Monday. The first public notice was issued at 1845, too late to inform many commuters. The Minister for Transport, John Watkins, said it was still unclear on Monday night whether industrial action would proceed. "It is irresponsible and inconsiderate behaviour to subject people wanting to get to work to such a late notice" he said. Most ferries returned to service in time for the afternoon peak hour. The union has not ruled out further industrial action.

GERMANY

London, Mar 20 — A press report, dated today, states: A public sector strike in south west Germany has entered its seventh week after unions and authorities failed to find agreement in arbitration. The dispute in the state of Baden-Wuerttemberg centres on plans to raise the working week from 38.5 hours to 40, together with a cut in bonuses. Services union Verdi said it would continue with the strikes, but also look at introducing other strategies. Rubbish collectors, hospital staff and teachers have all joined the walkouts. While Germany's cash-strapped state authorities say the changes are vital, Verdi argues that lengthening hours would destroy jobs. The ongoing strikes in Baden-Wuerttemberg have been mirrored by similar walkouts by Verdi members across Germany in the country's biggest public sector stoppage for 14 years. While municipal workers in the city of Hamburg and the state of Lower Saxony have managed to reach agreement with management, the stand-off continues in Baden-Wuerttemberg. Thousands of workers have so far taken part in the industrial action. In a separate dispute, thousands of doctors at public hospitals have also stepped up strike action for improved working conditions and a 30% rise in basic pay.

GREECE

London, Mar 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Greek private and public sector unions launched a 24-hour strike yesterday to protest against government economic reforms, shutting down most of the country and crippling transport. Thousands of workers took to the streets as unions staged rallies in several cities and accused the government, half-way through its four-year term, of penalising workers unfairly with a series of unpopular reforms. The reforms aim to liberalise labour markets and cut Greece's budget deficit in an effort to ward off European Union sanctions. The Greek capital saw huge traffic jams during morning rush hour as most of Athens' public transport was on strike, forcing citizens to take their cars. Trains and the subway were also out of service and state carrier Olympic Airlines scrapped dozens of flights, leaving only one flight per destination for the

day. The strike also hit government offices, public utilities, banks, hospitals, ports and schools. "There are no passenger ferries leaving until this afternoon," a merchant marine ministry official said. "There is currently no connection with the islands." A big rally in Athens staged by private sector umbrella union GSEE and its public sector counterpart ADEDY is scheduled for later on Wednesday. Combined, the two umbrella unions boast 2.5mn members, or 60% of Greece's workforce. The reforms have hit the government's opinion poll ratings and led to rising discontent in the workforce.

INDIA

London, Mar 16 — All movements at Cochin port have been halted today by a lightning strike in protest at the suspension of some port administration staff.

Kochi, Mar 17 — A section of Cochin Port Employees resorted to an indefinite strike from Mar 16 and the operations of vessels are partially paralysed. Movement of bulk cargo is completely paralysed for the time being. However container operations at Cochin port is unaffected. The port management has sought the assistance of the Indian Navy and Coast Guard.— Lloyd's Agents.

London, Mar 17 — A press report, dated today, states: Kochi Port authorities sought the Navy's help for outward movement of two container cargo vessels from the port as the strike by a section of employees entered the second day today. Port Chairman N Ramachandran told reporters that alternate arrangements were being made to ensure that port activities were not affected due to the strike. Port operations were continuing and had not been hit today due to the strike, he said, adding inward and outward movement of vessels were going on. The Cochin Port Staff Association is on strike since yesterday protesting suspension of five employees. They were suspended for allegedly indulging in union activities during office hours. CPSA said it had launched the lightning strike against the "denial" of trade union rights at the port. They alleged that the port authorities were not respecting trade union laws. Last night, the Navy helped in disembarking passengers from the two vessels which had arrived from Lakshadweep.

Kochi, Mar 18 — A section of Kochi Port Employees went on indefinite strike from Mar 16, partially paralysing vessel operations. The movement of bulk cargo is completely halted at present, however container operations are unaffected. The port management has sought the assistance of the Indian Navy and Coast Guard in maintaining vessel operations.— Lloyd's Agents.

London, Mar 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Cochin Port employees today "unconditionally" called off their two-day-old strike,

even as the port management agreed to revoke the suspension of five employees. Earlier, conciliatory talks were held between the port management and representatives of the Cochin Port Staff Association, the striking union, in the presence of the Regional Labour Commissioner. In a press release, the port said the union regretted its conduct and offered to call-off the strike "unconditionally." The days of the strike would be treated as "dies non," the port management said. All operations in the port were carried out smoothly today with the help of navy personnel and non-striking workers.

INDONESIA

London, Mar 20 — A press report, dated today, states: A snap strike by transport vehicle owners and operators upset over a new tax crippled activities at ports in four Indonesian cities today, a transport executive and reports said. Murphy Hutagalung, who chairs the Indonesian Association of Land Transport Operators, said some 20,000 vehicles in the capital Jakarta, Medan in North Sumatra, Semarang in Central Java and Surabaya in East Java, were affected. Smarting from rising petrol prices, the strikers were demanding that a value-added tax first slapped on land transport in 2003 be revoked. They claim that the tax breaches an earlier law that exempts them from it. In Jakarta, drivers gathered at the main gate of Jakarta's Tanjung Priok port and prevented vehicles from entering the port area, ElShinta radio reported. Transport minister Hatta Rajasa visited the port and called on the strikers to allow drivers who chose to continue working enter or leave. Meanwhile ports in Semarang and Surabaya, were also at a standstill, the Kompas online reported. ElShinta reported that in Medan, some 40 drivers protested at the North Sumatra provincial parliament.

London, Mar 22 — Transport companies in Indonesia yesterday called off strikes affecting four ports after the government agreed to review a two-year-old 10% tax on transport services. Murphy Hutagalung, chairman of the transport association Organda, said: "The government has finally agreed to meet our demand. All our members servicing the four ports have now returned to work." Finance minister Sri Mulyani confirmed that changes would be made but gave no indication when the tax could be lifted. She said: "We will revise the decree. Licensed public transport firms will be excluded from paying value-added tax."

ITALY

Savona, Mar 17 — Advised new trade union strike of tugs service in Savona and Vado Ligure from 0100, Mar 19, to 2359, Mar 31, with following services granted: Monday to Saturday: From 0600 to 1200 hrs four tugs, from 1200 to 1400 three tugs, from 1400 to 1700 hrs four tugs, from

1700 to 2200 hrs two tugs and from 2200 to 0600 hrs one tug. On Sundays: from 0001 to 0800 hrs one tug, from 0800 to 1000 hrs two tugs, from 1000 to 1400 hrs one tug, from 1400 to 2200 hrs two tugs and from 2200 to 0600 hrs one tug. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

SRI LANKA

London, Mar 17 — A press report, dated Mar 16, states: Thousands of civil servants demanding higher salaries marched in the Sri Lankan capital today, part of a daylong nationwide strike that paralyzed the government. Health workers, teachers, postal employees and transportation workers took part, accusing senior government officials of giving themselves large raises while neglecting junior posts. "We are demanding that the government provide a reasonable salary increase to all employees," postal union spokesman Nawaratne Bandara told reporters in Colombo. Bandara said about 60 percent of the 800,000 government employees across Sri Lanka walked out today to protest the unequal pay scale.



ANTITRUST VIOLATION, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated Mar 20, states: Toyota has paid \$35 million to settle allegations that it colluded with other major automakers to keep grey-market vehicles from being exported from Canada to the United States. The lawsuit continues against six other automakers — General Motors, Ford Motor Co, DaimlerChrysler AG, BMW (US) Holding Corp, American Honda Motor Co Inc and Nissan North America Inc. Under the Toyota settlement, agreed to in late February, Toyota Motor Sales USA Inc admits no wrongdoing in the class-action lawsuit. The suit, filed in 2003 on behalf of a group of consumers, alleges automakers violated the Sherman Antitrust Act by keeping US customers from taking advantage of lower vehicle prices in Canada. The suit seeks unspecified billions of dollars in damages for US consumers who bought a vehicle of any brand after Jan 1, 2001. By restricting Canadian imports, automakers fixed US market retail prices at an unfairly high level, the suit alleges. The suit alleges that automakers colluded to blacklist dealers who imported Canadian-market vehicles for resale. Automakers also agreed to decline consumer warranty claims against those vehicles, the suit alleges. The action mirrors action this decade by the European Union to enforce price uniformity among member countries. The National Automobile Dealers'

Association and Canadian Automobile Dealers' Association are also defendants. Paying a settlement without admitting guilt was a better use of its legal team's time and money than going to court, said Toyota spokesman Xavier Dominicus.

BREACH OF COPYRIGHT, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 20 — A press report, dated Mar 19, states: A judge halted sales of Notorious B.I.G.'s breakthrough 1994 album "Ready to Die" on Friday (Mar 17), after a jury decided the title song used part of an Ohio Players tune without permission. The jury awarded \$4.2 million in punitive and direct damages to the two music companies that own rights to Ohio Players recordings. The sales ban imposed by US District Judge Todd Campbell affects the album and the title song in any form, including Internet downloads and radio play. It was unclear when or how the ban would take effect. The jury decided that Bad Boy Entertainment and executive producer Sean "Diddy" Combs illegally used a part of the Ohio Players' 1992 song "Singing In The Morning." Bridgeport Music and Westbound Records, which owned the song rights, have filed hundreds of lawsuits over "sampling," the practice of lifting parts of old music for new recordings. Most were settled out of court. The companies get most of their income from song royalties by their artists, which include funk legend George Clinton, the Funkadelics and the Ohio Players. The defendants, Bad Boy Entertainment, Bad Boy LLC, Justin Combs Publishing and Universal Records, plan to appeal.

CLASS-ACTION SHAREHOLDER LAWSUITS, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 18 — A press report, dated Mar 17, states: Ottawa's Nortel Networks said today its insurers have agreed to pay \$228.5 million towards a settlement of a shareholder class action lawsuit. Nortel has also agreed to certain corporate governance enhancements, including the codification of its current governance practices. As previously announced, under the terms of the proposed global settlement contemplated by the agreement in principle, the company would make a payment of US\$575 million in cash, issue 628,667,750 of its common shares, and contribute one-half of any recovery in the existing litigation by Nortel against the plaintiffs. The cash amount is to bear interest commencing Mar 23 at a prescribed rate and is to be held in escrow on Jun 1, pending satisfactory completion of all conditions to the proposed settlement. Shares of Nortel were down 3 cents at \$2.91 in morning trading on the New York Stock Exchange. The company and the lead plaintiffs are continuing discussions towards a definitive settlement agreement, although

Nortel is quick to point out such an agreement may never be reached.

INDUSTRIAL ILLNESS, JAPAN

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated today, states: A Fukuoka mining company and an affiliate yesterday agreed to pay a combined yen 3.01 billion to 264 plaintiffs — anthracosis sufferers and relatives of workers at the firms' colliery who died of black lung disease. The agreement by Mitsui Matsushima Co and affiliate Matsushima Coal Mining Co, both based in the city of Fukuoka, settled lawsuits involving the Mitsui Matsushima group as a defendant — two suits filed with the Fukuoka District Court and one at the Fukuoka High Court. In the Fukuoka High Court case, the two companies, in a district court ruling last December, were ordered to pay yen 940 million in damages to the next of kin of six workers and 56 surviving black-lung disease victims. With the latest out-of-court settlements, the plaintiffs will be awarded multimillion yen damages ranging up to yen 25 million each. In the city of Nagasaki, where many of the 264 plaintiffs live, officials representing both sides signed a joint declaration to mark the end of their dispute. In the declaration, the companies pledged to do their utmost to prevent further labour-related illnesses. "We take seriously the fact that workers contracted black-lung disease at a coal mine we operated," the two firms said in a statement. The deceased and survivors worked at Matsushima Coal Mining's Ikeshima colliery and affiliated coal mines on Ikeshima Island in Nagasaki Prefecture between around 1950 and 2001. The Ikeshima colliery, an undersea coal mine that began operations in 1959, was shut down in November, 2001. Output there reached some 1.5 million tons annually during peak years.

PERSONAL INJURIES, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: A Cook County jury has awarded 17 million dollars to a woman whose husband was convicted of running her over repeatedly with his car. Roseanne Drescher suffered collapsed lungs, a fractured pelvis and other broken bones and injuries in the 2001 incident. She sued her ex-husband, Glen Drescher, who was sentenced to 14 years in prison in 2004 for attempted murder and aggravated battery, but the man's attorney says Roseanne Drescher likely won't collect on the full amount of the 17 million-dollar awarded by the jury Monday (Mar 20). Attorney Lloyd Williams says his client doesn't have that kind of money. Williams says it's uncertain whether Glen Drescher will appeal the jury's verdict.

PROFESSIONAL NEGLIGENCE, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 23 — A press report, dated Mar 22, states: Bank of America Corp has been found guilty of

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

professional negligence by a jury in Cumberland County, Maine, which awarded \$7.5 million in damages to a wealthy couple who were clients of the bank, according to attorneys for the plaintiffs. The jury found that the bank's failure to provide the financial advice and investment protection it promised at the time of Darrell Mayeux's retirement caused the loss of his \$27 million in savings, according to attorneys at the firm of Preti Flaherty. Bank of America said in a statement that it was reviewing its right of appeal and continues to maintain that it acted appropriately in its dealings with Mayeux.

ROAD ACCIDENT, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated Mar 20, states: A Montgomery, Alabama, jury late Friday (Mar 17) awarded a Coosa County man \$1.5 million after finding that a plumbing company employee's poor driving led to the man's hospitalisation following an accident. The Jimmy Day Plumbing and Heating truck driver pulled in front of Brian Smith's motorcycle on Apr 18, 2003, in Coosa County, forcing Smith to fall from his bike, the jury ruled. He suffered a dislocated knee and wrist, and doctors inserted a steel rod in his right leg to reconnect the bones, according to his attorneys, Frank Hawthorne and Randy Myers. The \$1.5 million award was for compensatory damages, so it is doubtful an appellate court would reverse or cut the award, Hawthorne said. The Montgomery-based plumbing company argued that Smith was speeding, Hawthorne said. He said Smith would need additional surgery.

ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 17 — A press report, dated Mar 16, states: A federal court jury awarded \$7 million to a former Furman soccer player who was injured in an interstate crash in 2002, finding Mitsubishi Motors responsible for his injuries. Chefik Simo was among four Furman freshman returning to campus in Gray Griffin's Mitsubishi Montero Sport that crashed on Interstate 85 in Spartanburg County on October 11, 2002. The accident killed Griffin, a rising Paladins star, and injured Simo and the two other players, Josh Villalobos and Sean Murray. Simo, 21, of Dallas, was the most seriously hurt of the three. He needed surgery to repair his fractured pelvis and also had a stomach puncture, a fractured shoulder blade, and a separated shoulder among his injuries. According to the verdict form, the U.S. District Court jury found the "vehicle had a design defect which caused it to be unreasonably dangerous and that this defect was a proximate cause" of Simo getting hurt. Simo's attorney, Frank Branson, said the jury found the vehicle defective in its stability and that the automaker was negligent in not

properly testing it. Mitsubishi Motors was disappointed and disagreed with the decision, according to a statement released by company spokesman Dan Irvin. There were several factors involved in the accident, the company said. Mitsubishi contending that Griffin, the driver who died, "fell asleep at the wheel, then came to, making a series of extreme steering manoeuvres to avoid rear-ending a tractor trailer," according to the statement. Despite the vehicle overturning in the accident, it "protected the plaintiff very well and he made a good recovery from his injuries," the company said. Mitsubishi said it will review the decision and possibly appeal.

UNFAIR DISMISSAL, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 17 — A press report, dated Mar 16, states: A Sonoma County civil jury has awarded \$6.5 million to a former county employee who claimed he lost his job because his panic disorder prohibited him from face-to-face contact with his clients. The six men and six women on the jury deliberated five days after a five-week trial before finding in favor of 52-year-old George Alberigi, a Medi-Cal eligibility case worker with the county's Human Services Department, on Tuesday (Mar 14). Alberigi started work with the county in 1980 and despite his fear of crowds and face-to-face contact with people, he was able to do his job because his contact with clients was by telephone, his attorney Stephen Murphy said. Alberigi asked for a promotion in 2001 but was informed he would have to meet clients in person, Murphy said. Alberigi was offered other positions at his current pay rate but he wanted to remain an eligibility case worker and the other positions also entailed some face-to-face contact, Murphy said. Alberigi then filed for disability in 2004, Murphy said. He filed the suit in 2003. Sonoma County can either appeal the verdict or within 10 days request a new trial. The jury awarded \$1.5 million for lost wages and \$5 million for pain and suffering. It is believed to be the largest award by a civil jury in the county's history.

UNLAWFUL KILLING, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated today, states: A jury awarded \$106 million yesterday to the family of a man who was murdered by his wife, a former toxicologist convicted of poisoning him and staging the crime scene to look like a suicide. Most of the sum, \$100 million, came in punitive damages against Kristen Rossum, 29, who is serving a life term for murdering Greg de Villers with an overdose of the painkiller fentanyl that investigators believe she stole from her job with the county. The family had sought \$50 million in punitive damages. The jury doubled the amount, fearing Rossum could make as much as \$60 million on a book or movie deal, foreman Lyle

Koonts said. De Villers, 26, was found dead in the couple's apartment in 2000 with red rose petals spread over him and a wedding photo nearby. Prosecutors said Rossum staged the scene, choosing rose petals to mimic scenes in the film "American Beauty." Prosecutors said Rossum killed her husband because he had threatened to reveal that she was having an affair with her boss and that she had relapsed into a methamphetamine addiction. She was sentenced in 2002. Rossum's mother said her family has had frequent offers to sell the rights to the story. The jury also awarded actual damages of \$6 million, for which Rossum was found 75 percent liable and the county 25 percent liable. The family had sought \$10 million. A juror said the panel believed the county was remiss in not doing background or drug checks on Rossum. Attorney Deborah McCarthy said she would strongly urge the county to appeal. The lawsuit was filed on behalf of de Villers' parents, Yves de Villers and Marie de Villers, who has died since her son was killed. Her share will be divided between her two surviving sons. "I think justice is done," Yves de Villers said.

Railway Accidents



GREENVILLE AREA, VIRGINIA, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Five empty rail cars derailed early yesterday afternoon, halting the progress of a northbound Norfolk Southern freight train and blocking traffic on Greenville School Road near Va. 608. Police reported no injuries or adjacent property damage along Pine Run. Norfolk Southern spokesman Robin Chapman said the cause of the wreck was under investigation. The mishap, which occurred at 1315, splintered stretches of wooden ties and littered the area with couplings and coiled suspension springs. The forward-most of the derailed gondola, or open freight cars had been stripped of its wheel trucks and lay flat on the track. Crews uncoupled the damaged gondola cars and mobilized rail-mounted cranes to clear the track late yesterday afternoon, Chapman said. Chapman said that the length of the 99-car train, including its three locomotives, exceeded one mile.

HARDEN, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated today, states: A preliminary report has confirmed that a broken axle caused a Melbourne to Sydney passenger train to derail last month near Harden in south-western New South Wales. No one on the Sydney-bound train was hurt when the XPT derailed on approach to Harden

Railway station on Feb 9. The derailment led to the entire XPT fleet being withdrawn from service until checks on the wheels of all the engine cars. A preliminary report from the Australian Transport Safety Bureau says further examination found eight axles had surface defects of varying size in the same position. The ATSB report says the axles are to undergo further examination and the inquiry is continuing.

PINGTUNG COUNTY, TAIWAN

London, Mar 18 — A press report, dated today, states: One woman has been killed and two men injured when a passenger train derailed in southern Taiwan. More than 200 passengers were on board the late night train from eastern Taitung to the southern city of Kaohsiung when it derailed in Pingtung county. A 24-year-old woman from Vietnam died in hospital of head trauma while one male victim has been critically injured and the other has suffered minor injuries. Police investigating the incident have found bolts and nuts used to attach sleepers onto the rails had been removed from a 100-metre section of track, possibly the result of theft or sabotage.

PINTUNG COUNTY, TAIWAN

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated Mar 18, states: A train from Taitung to Kaosiung derailed Friday (Mar 17) night, killing one person and injuring two others, according to reports reaching here from Taipei Saturday morning. The reports said a female passenger, who was rushed to a hospital for emergency treatment, died early Saturday morning and the two wounded people, one is in serious condition, are the driver and the his assistant of the train. A total of 242 passengers were on the No.96 Train when the accident happened at the section in Pintung County at about 2150, local time. Fortunately, most of the passengers, who were on the back part of carriages, suffered scare and were not injured. Five carriages of the train slipped down 10 meters from the slope and ran into an orchard nearby. Preliminary investigation showed the derailment was caused by deliberate sabotage of the tracks. The train left Taitung at 2008, local time, and was expected to arrive in Kaosiung at about 2312 hrs. The local railway administration has been repairing the part of the sabotaged railroad, which has been closed after the accident. The operation of about 10 trains from Taitung to Kaosiung will be suspended by noon Saturday, the local railway administration said. The cause of the accident is still under investigation.

RATCHABURI, THAILAND

Bangkok, Mar 22 — Six people — a Malaysian woman and five Thai men — were killed today when a truck crashed through the gates of a level crossing and derailed a train, the State Railway of Thailand (SRT) said today. The 12-car Butterworth-

Bangkok express went off the rails in Ratchaburi, 100 km west of Bangkok, after the truck crashed through the closed gates, an SRT official said. Two of the carriages had passed the crossing when the truck, laden with grain, hit. "The truck hit the train's third car," the official said. Five people, including the Malaysian woman, were killed immediately and another died in hospital, an SRT official said. The woman and two of the Thais were in the train, while the three other Thais were in the truck. — Reuters.



COLLAPSE OF TUNNEL, MOSCOW METRO, RUSSIA

London, Mar 19 — A press report, dated today, states: A section of tunnel has collapsed on the Moscow metro, causing a fire to break out on a train, Russian emergency services have reported. There have been no reports about casualties in the incident, which happened in the north of the city. It occurred on a section of subway between Sokol and Voikovskaya stations in north-west Moscow, an Emergency Ministry spokesman said. Viktor Beltsov, the spokesman, added that passengers were being evacuated. The collapse occurred at 1437, local time, he said. Emergency services have been sent to the scene, and services have been suspended on the affected line.

FUNCHAL (Madeira)

See "Outbreak Of Virus On Madeira Flag Vessel" under "Miscellaneous".

OUTBREAK OF "BIRD FLU"

London, Mar 18 — A press report, dated today, states: A 30-year-old woman who died this week was Egypt's first human victim of bird flu, state television has said. Reports said the woman, who maintained a domestic bird farm despite a ban on the practice, died of a fever at Cairo's main hospital yesterday. Samples have been sent to the UK for further tests. Egypt last month ordered the slaughter of all poultry kept in homes, as part of efforts to stop the spread of the H5N1 strain of the bird flu virus.

London, Mar 18 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Israeli officials have confirmed that thousands of turkeys and chickens found dead in the south of the country had the H5N1 strain of the bird flu virus. Tests were ordered after the dead poultry were discovered on two farms in Ein Hashlosha and Holit, next to the Gaza Strip in the western Negev desert. Several people have been admitted to hospital with flu-like symptoms. A quarantine has been imposed around the area and thousands of birds are expected to be culled over coming days. On Thursday

(Mar 16), Israeli Agriculture Minister Zeev Boim said the authorities were prepared to contain the virus' spread if an outbreak was confirmed. Speaking to reporters a day after the dead poultry were found, the director of veterinary services at the agriculture ministry confirmed the H5N1 strain had been detected. Moshe Haimovitch said around 11,000 birds had died at the two farms in Israel's first outbreak of the virus. Haimovitch said officials were preparing to kill a further 300,000 birds inside the 7km quarantine zone around the two communities over the coming days. Up to five people who came into contact with the infected birds at Kibbutz Ein Hashlosha and Kibbutz Holit have been admitted to a hospital in the southern city of Beersheva with flu-like symptoms. A kibbutz between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv has also been sealed off after more birds were found dead.

Cairo, Mar 19 — A 30-year-old Egyptian woman has died of bird flu, becoming the country's first human victim of the virus, the Health Ministry said yesterday. It said the woman from Qaloubiyah province, about 40 km north of Cairo, where the highly pathogenic H5N1 strain has been detected in poultry, was taken ill on Wednesday (Mar 15). "The doctors took samples for analysis at the Ministry of Health laboratories. They confirmed she was infected with bird flu. She died on Friday morning," a ministry statement said, adding the woman had been given Tamiflu, a drug used to treat suspected cases of bird flu. Israel said yesterday that four poultry workers suspected of having bird flu had tested negative for the virus, after the country detected its first cases of H5N1 in birds on Friday. Bird flu has spread across Europe, Africa and parts of Asia and killed at least 98 people world-wide since 2003. The World Health Organisation confirmed that Egypt had reported its first human case of bird flu. Dr Hassan al-Bushra, WHO's regional adviser for communicable diseases surveillance, said the H5N1 bird flu virus had been found in a blood sample taken from the woman, and that other samples were being tested for further confirmation. Egypt reported its first cases of bird flu in poultry flocks last month. Media and state reports say H5N1 has now been detected in at least 17 of Egypt's 26 governorates and the city of Luxor. Egyptian farmers say the poultry market — worth about Egyptian pounds 17 billion (£1.7 billion) and supporting up to three million people — has been devastated. Israeli workers culled thousands of turkeys and chickens but authorities said further tests were needed to confirm whether an outbreak on two farms was of the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu. The Health Ministry said four people who had been suspected of having bird flu had tested negative. Israeli officials said poultry in the infected areas and their surroundings would be culled and the carcasses

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

buried in underground pits. Israel was also testing dead fowl found in the West Bank and Gaza on behalf of the Palestinian Authority. Serbia on Friday said three children and a teenager from a bird flu-affected area were in hospital after developing fever and flu-like symptoms. Three women who died in Azerbaijan are also thought to be bird flu victims, but the WHO is awaiting the results of further tests before confirming the cause of death. Bird flu has shaken poultry markets around the world as consumers have lost their appetites for chicken, with some countries reporting a drop in sales of up to 70%. The EU banned poultry imports from Israel, the EU's executive Commission said. — Reuters.

Jerusalem, Mar 20 — Israel said tests showed the avian flu virus that infected poultry in the south of the country is the lethal H5N1 strain. Israel began culling flocks of turkeys and chickens in infected coops over the weekend after thousands of birds died at three farms. Officials said on Friday (Mar 17) the avian flu had killed them but they were awaiting the results of laboratory tests to determine its strain. The Agriculture Ministry, in a posting on its Web site late yesterday, said the tests showed that H5N1 had reached Israel. It said further culling would be carried out at farms within a 3-km radius of the infected coops, the Agriculture Ministry said. "The situation is under control," the ministry said in its update on the Internet, urging Israelis to continue to eat "properly cooked" poultry and eggs. Agriculture Ministry officials said workers were killing turkey and chickens in the infected areas by poisoning their drinking water and burying their carcasses in pits. — Reuters.

Kuala Lumpur, Mar 20 — Malaysia reported a new case of the H5N1 strain of bird flu among dead chickens today in the northern state of Penang, the country's third outbreak in a month. No human cases have so far been reported in Malaysia, which last week reported two cases of bird flu in the central state of Perak, where authorities killed more than 42,000 birds to contain the disease. In the latest case, six dead chickens were found in Seberang Prai, on the mainland side of a bridge that links the resort island of Penang, which is one of Malaysia's top tourist attractions. Mustapa Abdul Jalil, acting chief of veterinary services, said the authorities would start killing suspect birds within a one-km radius of the site later today. "There are an estimated 200 birds in the affected area," he told Reuters. — Reuters.

Mumbai, Mar 20 — A massive clean-up operation was under way in a bird flu-hit district of western India today, with health workers spraying disinfectant in homes, backyards and streets, officials said. Jalgaon is the second district of Maharashtra state to have reported the H5N1 bird flu virus in poultry after the first cases

surfaced in Navapur town, 200 km away. More than 90,000 birds have been culled in Jalgaon. Thousands of people were under surveillance, scores had been tested and at least three people with fever, including a doctor, were under observation. Their reports were expected by mid-week. So far, India has reported no human infections. "The culling is over and we are now cleaning up the place," Bijay Kumar, the state's animal husbandry commissioner, said. "This will take two days. In a week's time we can hopefully say we have contained the spread of bird flu in Maharashtra." Indian authorities earlier said they had contained the virus after culling hundreds of thousands of chickens in Navapur town. However, within days, the virus surfaced in Jalgaon. State health director T.P. Doke said the medical surveillance zone, which earlier covered about 65,000 people around Jalgaon, was expanded yesterday evening to include another 30,000 people. Random blood samples were being collected in four villages spread over 1,100 square km in the district. — Reuters.

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated today, states: The world's human death toll from bird flu has reached 103 since late 2003, the World Health Organization has said. The latest deaths from the H5N1 strain occurred in Azerbaijan, where five have died since February, the WHO reported. US scientists have confirmed the H5N1 virus has evolved into two genetically distinct strains, potentially increasing the risk to humans. The team from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also said this could complicate the search for an effective vaccine. Four of those who died in Azerbaijan since February came from the Salyan region in the south-east of the country, while the fifth victim was in the Tarter region in the west, the WHO said. Two other people from Azerbaijan have tested positive for bird flu during tests carried out at a British laboratory, the WHO said. Prior to 2005 every known human case of bird flu had been caused by a particular subtype of the H5N1 virus, which infected people in Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand, but the latest analysis identified a genetically distinct variant which appears to have emerged last year, infecting people in Indonesia. In other developments: Egypt reported a fourth suspected case of bird flu in humans and Pakistan reported the country's first two cases of the H5N1 strain at two chicken farms.

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Initial tests on dead chickens suggest the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu has spread to the Gaza Strip, Israeli and Palestinian officials have said. The tests were conducted after some 200 chickens died in the southern town of Rafah, on the border with Egypt. Israel has been culling hundreds of thousands of birds after an H5N1 outbreak was confirmed on farms next

to the Gaza Strip last week. Egypt yesterday reported its fourth suspected case of bird flu in humans. The tests were carried out after the chickens were found dead in a coop in Rafah, Israeli Agricultural Ministry's spokeswoman Dafna Yarisca said. The tests had only confirmed the presence of the H5 part of the strain, but Ms Yarisca said "it was highly likely" that the birds had died from H5N1. Israel conducts all tests on behalf of the Palestinian Authority (PA), which does not have the technology. The PA declared a state of emergency yesterday in an attempt to curb the spread of the disease. Palestinian and Israeli officials were expected to meet later today to discuss further measures. Israel has culled some 400,000 infected turkeys and chickens since the H5N1 was found in two farms in Ein Hashlosa and Holit last week.

OUTBREAK OF VIRUS ON MADEIRA FLAG VESSEL

London, Mar 17 — A press report, dated today, states: The Western Australian Health Department has sent a team of specialists to Esperance to investigate claims passengers on board passenger *Funchal* (9563 gt, built 1961) have developed a respiratory illness. The UK-based vessel is on a return leg to Perth before leaving for England next week. The Department says it has been tracking it for about a month since reports first surfaced that passengers who disembarked in Hobart and Adelaide had influenza A. The director of Communicable Disease Control Paul Van Buynder says the disease is highly contagious and the team will remain on board the vessel for the next three days to monitor the situation. "The Health Department will be looking at passengers that have been sick or are still sick and we'll be investigating what the cause of that is," he said. "So we'll be taking a lot of samples to send to pathology, when we identify the causative virus we'll then make decisions as to what needs to be done from there." (Note — *Funchal* according to LMIU AIS in lat 34 58 22.69S, long 138 9 33.13E at 100, Mar 14.)

OUTBREAK OF VIRUS ON MADEIRA FLAG VESSEL (FUNCHAL)

London, Mar 18 — A press report, dated today, states: A medical team has boarded passenger *Funchal* in a remote Western Australia town to deal with a flu outbreak which has been hospitalising elderly passengers. The seven-member WA department of health team boarded the *Funchal* at Esperance, 731km south-east of Perth, the department's director of Communicable Disease Control Paul Van Buynder said. "The team will remain on board until the ship reaches Perth on Monday (Mar 20) to conduct a full investigation," Dr Van Buynder said. The team plans to halt a respiratory infection, which is being passed from person to person, and

would quarantine crew members if necessary, he said. In Adelaide, 15 people were ill after the ship docked, two of them were admitted to hospital but while one had flu the other had a secondary complication, he said. Dr Van Buynder said there was no suggestion of there being a problem with the ship. But two pathology experts, two public health doctors, two public health communicable disease nurses and an environmental health officer would test the passengers, crew and vessel, because of community concern.

London, Mar 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Passenger *Funchal* arrived in Perth today after being cleared as the source of a contagious flu that was hospitalising elderly passengers. A seven-member WA Department of Health team boarded the vessel Friday (Mar 17) at Esperance, 731km south-east of Perth, to investigate reports of a third outbreak of flu. Tests of passengers during the weekend found six cases of common winter respiratory illnesses, a health department spokeswoman said today. “The presence of two common respiratory illnesses were found,” she said. The infection did not come from the ship but was being passed from person to person, she said. The tests were carried out because of community concern after dozens of elderly people contracted respiratory illnesses aboard the ship before docking in Perth last month, then later in Adelaide, Hobart and Sydney.

Fires & Explosions



CARPET WAREHOUSE, PENGE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Mar 20 — A press report, dated Mar 19, states: Fifty firefighters have been tackling a huge blaze at a flooring warehouse in south-east London. The fire broke out in the building in Green Lane, Penge, early today and engulfed almost all of the single-storey structure. Crews were expected to stay at the site for the rest of the day to damp down the area.

PREMISES, ABERDEEN, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated Mar 21, states: Firefighters have gained control over a massive fire at a hardware store in Aberdeen, at which they have called three alarms. Pictures from SkyTeam 11 showed the blaze erupting shortly after 1400 today at Hodge's Hardware and an attached warehouse building. WBAL-TV reported authorities evacuated the facility and one person has been injured. SkyTeam 11 reported pesticides and chemicals inside the building have helped fuel the fire, of which crews gained control

shortly after 1700 hrs. Authorities have shut down eastbound U.S. Route 40 at the scene as crews tried to gain control over the flames.

PREMISES, BOATS & BRUSH, SOLOMONS, MARYLAND, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 17 — A press report, dated today, states: State fire investigators say a cigarette likely lit debris beneath a raised wooden walkway, starting a fire that caused \$5 million in damages on Solomons Island Wednesday (Mar 15). It took more than 70 firefighters about two hours to control the fire. The State Fire Marshal's office says both Bowen's Inn and the Lighthouse Inn, including several apartments on the second floors, and two boats at a nearby dock were destroyed. No one was injured. There was some damage to the outside of a third building. Embers sparked a small brush fire near the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory and set ablaze an old boat that was stored on land.

REFINERY, AMUAY, VENEZUELA

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Venezuela's Amuay refinery is working to restart its hydrogen unit after being shut by a fire that started early in the day during a routine maintenance round, the refinery said today. The fire left one dead and four people injured but “did not affect the mechanical integrity of the hydrogen plant,” according to a statement from state oil company Petroleos de Venezuela, or PdVSA, which owns the refinery. An Amuay spokesman declined to give more details. The company is working to bring operations back to normal, the statement noted, and added that the problem will not interrupt the refinery's steady supply. Refinery officials have said that Amuay is currently processing around 500,000 barrels a day of crude oil.

SCHOOL, GORSEINON, WALES

London, Mar 18 — A press report, dated today, states: A Swansea secondary school has been virtually destroyed in an early-morning blaze which raged for four hours. The main three-storey block at Penyrheol comprehensive in Gorseinon was gutted in the fire, which broke out at about 0100, UTC, today. Local councillor Darren Price said the community was “in a state of shock” over the blaze, which also left an adjoining leisure centre smoke-damaged. The school, which has 1,000 pupils, will be closed for seven to 10 days. Among the sections destroyed were the science block, business studies, history and languages. They managed to stop it spreading to a theatre and leisure centre, and water from the swimming pool was used to douse the flames. Only the English and maths departments, which are sited in an annexe, were undamaged. An inquiry into the cause is under way. Swansea Council asked parents to make arrangements to look after

their children while the school is shut. Phil Bailey, assistant chief officer for Mid and West Wales Fire Service, said they were called at about 0100, UTC. More than 14 fire crews finally brought it under control at about 0500, UTC. The school had just been refurbished and the swimming pool reopened only last week. The leisure centre will remain shut until further notice.

STORAGE BUILDING, LORETTO AREA, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Hennepin County investigators are trying to determine what caused a fire that destroyed a storage building filled with classic cars and expensive boats. The fire happened Saturday (Mar 18) night at Park Place Storage Condominiums near Loretto. Explosions inside the building slowed efforts to fight the flames. Eight units inside the building were destroyed or heavily damaged.

THEATRE, TOKYO, JAPAN

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: At least five people were injured and 1,400 were evacuated after a fire broke out at a large Tokyo theatre playing to a packed audience, authorities said today. The fire erupted in the basement of the theatre in central Tokyo at around 1830 hrs, 0830 GMT, during a musical performance, according to Tokyo Fire Department official Kosei Takahashi. Four employees who tried to put out the fire suffered minor injuries from smoke inhalation, Takahashi said. An audience member was also taken to the hospital but had no significant injuries, he said. About 1,400 people were evacuated from the theatre as a precaution, according to Takahashi. The fire was extinguished in about 30 minutes after burning a small area in a prop storage space. The cause of the fire was still under investigation, Takahashi said.

TIMBER YARD, GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 17 — A press report, dated Mar 16, states: A nighttime fire at a Gainesville cypress lumber yard caused an estimated \$2 million in damage and left investigators searching for the cause of the large blaze today. Motorists, including two police officers headed to work, and residents reported the fire at Griffis Lumber, 9333 NW 13th St., at about 1230 hrs, yesterday, according to officers and firefighters. The fire destroyed the lumber yard's saw mill, said Gainesville Fire Rescue spokesman Paul Kincaid. Although the fire's cause remains under investigation, it is believed to have been accidental, Kincaid said. The blaze started in the northeast corner of the saw mill building in the area of the electrical circuit breakers. The business was open today. An employee, who did not want to provide his name, said the lumber yard has

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

supplies of lumber and mulch, already processed, that remain for sale. But, he said, some employees were concerned about the impact the fire damage will have on the lumber yard's operations. The saw mill will have to be replaced, firefighters said. The wood construction of the mill and lumber at the site contributed to the size of the fire. The area where the fire occurred was estimated at about 20,000 square feet. The fire is being described as one of the largest firefighters have seen in recent years. Firefighters were able to stop flames from spreading and saved more than \$200,000 in property, Kincaid said. More than 30 firefighters and rescue personnel from both Gainesville and Alachua County were called to the fire. It took more than an hour to bring the blaze under control with firefighters and police remaining at the scene throughout the night.

WAREHOUSE, DUBLIN, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 19 — A press report, dated Mar 18, states: A fire burned today at a large warehouse where old newspapers are stored and recycled. The fire started around 0200 hrs at the four-acre warehouse, said Glenn Allen, a spokesman for state Insurance and Fire Safety Commissioner John Oxendine. No injuries were reported. The warehouse is at a mill owned by Atlanta-based SP Newsprint Co., which says the mill is the largest newspaper recycling mill in North America. Allen says that firefighters expect they'll take up to Wednesday (Mar 22) to put out the fire because compacted newspapers could smolder for days.

WAREHOUSE, LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

London, Mar 18 — A press report, dated today, states: A five-alarm fire consumed a three-storey warehouse near downtown Louisville last night, the Louisville Metro Fire Department said. The fire began just before 1900, ET, with parts of the building having collapsed as the fire burned. Suburban fire departments were called in to assist Louisville Fire & Rescue later in the evening. Louisville Metro Police said they were not evacuating homes in the area, but advising residents to keep windows closed. Police were also blocking streets around the warehouse. About 145 firefighters fought the blaze, along with most of Louisville Fire & Rescue's trucks and equipment. Off-duty firefighters were called in, and volunteer firefighters from suburban departments staffed many of the city's firehouses. Louisville Fire Department Lt. Col. Cynthia Waldon said 15 engines and 10 trucks were on the scene.

London, Mar 20 — A press report, dated Mar 19, states: Investigators will start looking for answers as to what caused a five-alarm fire in a Louisville warehouse. Firefighters say the building didn't have a sprinkler system. Arson investigators were

expected to be on the scene this morning to see if the fire was set intentionally. The size and high level of heat in Friday (Mar 17) night's blaze hadn't been seen in the area for decades. Metro officials had tried to get the building demolished, partly because it didn't have sprinklers. It could be several days before investigators determine a cause.

WILDFIRES, DORSET, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Mar 20 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Up to 170 firefighters tackled a blaze which is raging across 100 hectares of heathland in Dorset. About 100 people have been forced to leave their homes because strong winds are fanning the flames on Canford Heath in Poole, Dorset Fire Service said. A spokeswoman said the fire service had received a total of 250 emergency calls alerting them to the blaze. The cause is currently unknown and about 25 fire engines and 12 Land Rovers were at the scene. Houses in several streets in the area were evacuated as a precaution, a Dorset Police spokesman said. Residents are being cared for at a nearby school and sports centre.

WILDFIRES, UNITED STATES

Houston, Mar 16 — Utility crews from five states were restoring electricity today to hundreds of homes and oil and gas wells in the Texas panhandle near Oklahoma as grass fires that have killed 11 and destroyed over 800,000 acres continued to burn. Southwestern Public Service, a unit of Xcel Energy Inc, said about 70 homes remained without power, down from 520 on Monday (Mar 13). "We have a lot of miles of lines with not a lot of customers," said spokesman Bill Crenshaw. The utility expects to restore service to 145 oil and gas wells by tomorrow, as well as the remaining homes, he added. Roberts and Linscomb counties, where the fire was still burning, produced 859,708 barrels of oil and 78 million cubic feet of natural gas last year, according to the Texas Railroad Commission. That is less than 2% of the state's total oil and gas production. Transmission service on high-voltage lines has been maintained since the fires began on Saturday, the spokesman said. Fires are expected to rage until the weekend when rain is forecast, he said. The area is suffering from a six-month drought. Crews from Xcel utilities in Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas and Oklahoma were working to restore service. Oklahoma Gas & Electric had also sent workers to the area, Crenshaw said. — Reuters.

London, Mar 17 — A press report, dated today, states: After an aerial tour of the charred land that wildfires left across the Texas Panhandle, Gov. Rick Perry said the state needs immediate federal assistance. "The losses to the state have been staggering," Perry said yesterday. Since Sunday (Mar 12), the fires have

consumed 840,000 acres, killed at least 11 people and forced thousands to evacuate their homes. At least 10,000 cattle and horses have died in the blazes. The fires finally began to ease, aided by shifting winds. In Canadian, a 30-hour stand by more than 150 firefighters paid off. The firefighters moved brush, dug trenches and lined up three dozen fire trucks, controlling the blaze to spare the 80-resident town of Lipscomb. Texas Forest Service spokesman Warren Bielenberg said firefighters continued trying to extinguish three major blazes yesterday, including the one that spread to Canadian. A 350,000-acre fire near Interstate 40 was 75% contained, and a fire near Childress that spans about 40,000 acres was 75% contained yesterday afternoon, Bielenberg said. Perry planned to update a request for aid he first filed in December when wildfires first broke out. Statewide, fires have consumed almost 5 million acres and nearly 400 homes during the past three months, Perry said.

London, Mar 17 — A press report, dated today, states: Today, firefighters in the Panhandle are making progress in containing three major wildfires than have burned 840,000 acres so far. They could get some help this weekend with the forecast calling for rain. Yesterday, Gov. Rick Perry surveyed the region most affected by flames. Perry says that he's committed to providing extra resources to fight, contain and extinguish fires. (See issue of Mar 20.)

London, Mar 18 — A press report, dated Mar 17, states: A brush fire consumed 500 acres near Sebring town, Florida, today, forcing the evacuation of an estimated 300 homes. Two hundred firefighters were battling the blaze, according to the Highlands County Emergency Operations Center. No injuries were immediately reported, and no homes were reported burned this afternoon. It was not immediately known what sparked the blaze.

London, Mar 19 — A press report, dated Mar 18, states: A wildfire spread through a section of the Ouachita National Forest and officials say the fire had spread to nearly 8,000 acres. As of this morning, officials with the forestry department said that the eastern line of the wildfire was extended as far east as Norman. Crews hope to have the blaze contained 100% by the end of the day as expected rainfall enters the area. U.S. Forest Service spokeswoman Debbie Ugbade says the fire was started by lightning last Sunday (Mar 12). It had burned about 800 acres by Thursday but then spread rapidly yesterday, perhaps reaching 8,000 acres in a remote part of the forest in Montgomery County. Ugbade says no evacuations were ordered and fewer than a dozen structures were threatened. The fire was in a remote part of the forest west of Black Springs in Montgomery County. Fire crews used backburns and relied on roads to break the spread off the fire.

Helicopters were used to try to stall the spread, and crews from Oklahoma and Washington aided in effort.

London, Mar 19 — A press report, dated today, states: Most of the Panhandle wildfires were finally out yesterday after a long, exhausting week for hundreds of firefighters. The blazes that raced across the drought-stricken High Plains scorched about 960,000 acres, killing 11 people and some 10,000 horses and cattle. Thousands of residents were forced to evacuate their homes after the fires started Mar 12. A 40,000-acre fire near Childress was completely contained by yesterday morning, and the two other major blazes, a 428,000-acre fire in several counties near Interstate 40 and a 480,000-acre fire stretching from Borger to Canadian, were 95% contained and were expected to be completely contained by the end of the day, said Traci Weaver, a Texas Forest Service spokeswoman.



7T-VJQ

London, Mar 19 — A press report, dated Mar 18, states: A Boeing 737 carrying Spaniards returning from a visit to Algerian camps for Western Sahara refugees veered off the runway at Seville airport today, injuring six people, a government spokesman said. The Air Algerie aircraft, carrying 101 passengers and seven crew, had been chartered by Spanish families who host Sahrawi children for holidays in their homes and who had gone to visit the refugee camps near Tindouf. The aircraft ended keeled over on one side and partially left the runway, television pictures showed. Passengers had to leave the aircraft by the emergency chute, according to Spanish television, which also showed ambulances ferrying passengers to local hospitals. A government spokesman in Seville said 45 people were taken to hospital for a checkup but only six were injured. The San Pablo airport was temporarily closed after the incident, he said.

London, Mar 20 — Boeing 737-6D6, 7T-VJQ, operated by Air Algerie, 108 persons on board, landing mishap on runway 09/27, at Sevilla Airport at 1030, Mar 18. The aircraft came to rest leaning to the right with the nose off the ground. Some 45 passengers were injured in the mishap. Damage is substantial.

AIRLINES BANNED FROM LANDING AT EUROPEAN AIRPORTS

London, Mar 23 — A press report, dated Mar 22, states: The European Union today banned 92 airlines, most of them based in Africa, from landing at European airports, declaring them

unsafe by international standards. The ban applies to cargo and passenger carriers from Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Sierra Leone, Swaziland and Liberia judged to have an “inadequate system for regulatory oversight” or insufficient safety standards. It will be enforced by all 25 EU nations, plus Norway and Switzerland. EU Transport Commissioner Jacques Barrot said the EU was barring 50 carriers from Congo alone, 14 from Sierra Leone and seven from Swaziland, virtually ensuring that all airlines operating from those countries were prevented from flying to Europe. He said some aircraft used for flights to Europe and possibly elsewhere were “flying coffins,” adding that safety controls in the listed nations were too weak. The EU moved to set up a single list after several fatal airline crashes in Greece and Italy last year and the fatal crash of Egypt’s Flash Airlines in the Red Sea in June, 2004, which killed 148 people, mostly French tourists. The Egyptian airline was not on the EU list, as it had gone bankrupt, Barrot said. Barrot said the high number of listed Congolese airlines was partly due to years of civil war, after which old military aircraft, many manufactured in the former Soviet Union, were converted for civilian and cargo use. Only one airline from Congo, Hewa Bora Airways, is allowed to use one approved aircraft for its flights to the EU, while another African airline, Air Mauritania, was given a grace period of a couple of months to meet EU safety norms. The flight ban also applies to Ariana Afghan Airlines, North Korea’s Air Koryo and Thailand’s Phuket Airlines. Two airlines each from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were listed as well. Lesser restrictions were placed on Air Bangladesh and Buraq Air from Libya, which will be able to operate flights if they use certain aircraft that have met safety requirements, the European Commission said. “This blacklist will keep dubious airlines out of Europe,” EU Transport Commissioner Jacques Barrot said. “It will also make sure that all airlines operating in Europe’s skies meet the highest safety standards.” The EU list also covers aircraft chartered from companies in non-EU countries. The commission said it would review the list every three months with the EU’s aviation safety agency, either adding new airlines or taking off carriers that meet EU safety standards. Barrot said the EU would also provide aid to African nations in trying to upgrade airline safety standards. He said the EU’s European Aviation Safety Agency would soon have powers to issue certificates to airlines wanting to fly in European skies.

EMERGENCY LANDING, ALBANY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 23 — A press report, dated today, states: A Continental Express flight safely made an

emergency landing yesterday after losing a wheel on its landing gear, officials said. Albany International Airport spokesman Doug Myers said Flight 2314 was travelling from Newark, N.J., to Albany with 37 people on board when the crew discovered the problem around 1820. One of two wheels on the left side landing gear was lost on a runway at Newark. Firefighters stood by when the twin-engine regional jet landed without incident at 1859.

EMERGENCY LANDING, ATHENS, GREECE

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated Mar 20, states: A Gulfstream 4 aircraft carrying Botswana’s President Festus Mogae, his wife and nine top officials has made an emergency landing in Athens, media reports say. The action was taken after a crack appeared in a cockpit window. The aircraft had taken off from Luxor, Egypt, and was heading for London Stansted Airport. None of the 11 passengers and six crew on board the Botswana government plane, were injured in the incident, Greek police said.

EMERGENCY LANDING, FREDERICK MUNICIPAL AIRPORT, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Shortly before 1500 yesterday, pilot Steve Tomlinson of Clarksburg notified Frederick Municipal Airport that landing gear on his Piper Aztec had failed. He requested firefighters be stationed near the runway for the aircraft’s descent. No one was injured in the emergency landing. A hydraulic problem prevented two of three landing components from locking in place. Mr. Tomlinson discovered the problem when he prepared to land at Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport in Virginia. He and two passengers were flying an aerial survey for R.C. & A, Mr. Tomlinson’s employer and owner of the aircraft. After the trio realized the landing gear wasn’t functioning, they decided to abort the landing and return to Frederick Municipal Airport. He made one practice approach over the runway before attempting the landing. Moments before touching the ground, he switched off the fuel and electrical systems to reduce the chances the aircraft would burst into flames should a fuel line rupture. Mr. Tomlinson said the aircraft took out a runway light before veering left and coming to a stop, tilted on its left wing.

EMERGENCY LANDING, HANCOCK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 23 — A press report, dated today, states: A US Airways Express Star Alliance aircraft was forced to make an emergency landing yesterday afternoon at Hancock International Airport after a fire was reported on board. The aircraft was coming from Reagan National Airport

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

in DC. A passenger said a flight attendant was going through pre-landing procedures when they went to check the restroom. The passenger says when the attendant opened the door, smoke was coming out. On board sprinklers put out the fire. The aircraft managed to land safely. No one was injured.

EMERGENCY LANDING, KOLKATA, INDIA

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: An Air Deccan plane made an emergency landing at the airport in Kolkata today after its pilot suspected that there was a problem with its hydraulic system. The aircraft, which had taken off for Port Blair returned to the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport and made an emergency landing at 0930 hrs, airport sources said. The 114 passengers and six crew members on board were all safe, they said. The plane was being inspected.

EMERGENCY LANDING, NEWARK LIBERTY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, NEW JERSEY, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 23 — A press report, dated today, states: A regional Continental Airlines jet with 49 passengers on board landed safely yesterday morning at Newark Liberty International Airport after a smoky condition was reported in the cockpit, officials said. Martin DeLeon, a Continental spokesman, said either visible smoke or the smell of smoke was detected at about 0739 on the approach for landing of the RJ-145 jet that had departed Buffalo, N.Y. "An emergency was declared," DeLeon said. "The plane landed safely. No injuries." DeLeon said the aircraft was checked by maintenance workers and put back into service about four hours later.

EMERGENCY LANDING, SRI LANKA

London, Mar 17 — A press report, dated today, states: A chartered flight carrying about 110 American soldiers made an emergency landing in Sri Lanka after pilots detected smoke in the cockpit, an airport official said today. The aircraft landed last night at Sri Lanka's only international airport, 20 miles from Colombo. The U.S. Embassy confirmed the landing. "The U.S. charter aircraft made a discretionary landing," embassy spokesman Evan Owen said. The aircraft was flying from Hawaii to Male when it was diverted to Sri Lanka because of smoke in the cockpit, said an airport official. He said there were about 110 American soldiers on board. No other details were immediately available.

FLIGHTS GROUNDED, LEONARDO DA VINCI AIRPORT, ROME, ITALY

London, Mar 17 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Italy grounded flights at Rome's busiest airport tonight after a telephone line

problem knocked out the radar at both fields, safety officials said. More than 20 flights were not allowed to take off from Rome's main Leonardo da Vinci airport, and about a half-dozen flights were kept on the ground at the smaller Ciampino airport, officials said. But some flights landed. After more than two hours the line was repaired, telephone officials said, and flights left Leonardo da Vinci. The phone line that went down carried data to a flight control centre at Ciampino which serves both airports, Italy's flight safety agency ENAV said. The control tower at Leonardo da Vinci said the radar went down at 2145 hrs. During the outage, some flights were able to land following visual procedures, tower officials said.

INCIDENT AT NARITA AIRPORT, JAPAN

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: An All Nippon Airways domestic flight aborted its take-off yesterday at Narita airport in Chiba Prefecture after smoke poured into the cabin as the aircraft taxied toward the runway, officials said. None of the 47 passengers and crew was injured in the incident, which took place shortly after 1700 hrs at the airport, according to ANA spokesman Atsushi Asano. However, one of the airport's two runways was shut down for about 30 minutes as a precaution, said airport spokesman Hideto Uechi. The pilot aborted the takeoff and parked the Fokker 50 near the runway after smoke entered the cabin from the rear cargo bay, Asano said. The aircraft, which was headed for Chubu airport in Aichi Prefecture, then returned to the terminal and the passengers disembarked. Most continued on to their destination on board another ANA flight.

INCIDENT, MINNEAPOLIS AIRPORT, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 17 — A press report, dated Mar 16, states: A FedEx cargo aircraft slid off a snowy runway at the Minneapolis airport this morning. No one was hurt. Airport spokesman Patrick Hogan said the aircraft was landing at about 0820 hrs when it slid off the side of the runway. The mishap happened on one of the airport's two main runways, shutting it down while crews worked to move the aircraft. The airport's two other runways were closed briefly this morning for ploughing.

N124X

London, Mar 23 — Extra Flugzeugbau GmbH Extra 300 N124X crashed near Greenfield, California, at 1835, Mar 21. The aircraft was destroyed. The one person on board was killed.

N1257W

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated Mar 21, states: A pilot was killed today when his crop dusting plane crashed in a field near Hondo, Texas, investigators said. The aircraft

went down around 1100 today. The engine stalled while the pilot was making test runs to calibrate the aircraft, investigators said. The FAA continues to investigate the crash, but officials said it could be weeks before a cause is determined.

London, Mar 23 — Weatherly 201B N1257W crashed near Hondo, Texas, at 1640, Mar 21, while on a local flight from Hondo. The aircraft was destroyed. The one person on board was killed.

N13878

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated Mar 21, states: The pilot of Piper Aztec was taken to the hospital after the aircraft crashed just short of a runway at Morristown Airport last night. Police said at 1751 hrs the Piper Aztec flown by Randel Manaka experienced landing gear problems and may have been pushed into the ground by wind. The aircraft crashed 200 feet short of Runway 31, police said. Just before the crash landing, the pilot reported trouble with the aircraft's right landing gear, but did not offer any further details. Jim Peters of the FAA said last night that the aircraft remained in brush near the runway and that officials would not inspect it until this morning. Officially the crash was listed as an "incident," but could be upgraded to an "accident" pending today's inspection, he said. Manaka, the sole occupant of the aircraft, was taken to Morristown Memorial Hospital after complaining of pain in his back and left hip, and a numb feeling in his left thigh. Police said the undercarriage, left wing and right propeller of the aircraft sustained damage. The plane, owned by Northeast Aviation, based at Northeast Philadelphia Airport, was on final approach in its flight from the Philadelphia area, police said. According to the National Weather Service Web site, wind was recorded at 16 miles per hour with gusts up to 22 miles per hour at the airport at 1745 hrs.

London, Mar 23 — Piper PA-23-250 (Aztec) N13878 landed short of the runway at Morristown Airport, New Jersey, at 2257, Mar 20, following a flight from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The one person on board was seriously injured.

N16JR

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated Mar 20, states: Engine failure probably caused an aircraft crash that killed former game show host Peter Tomarken and his wife, a preliminary investigation determined. The report by the National Transportation Safety Board said there was extensive damage to the aircraft's engine, including an eight-by-six-inch hole in the engine's case, the Los Angeles Times reported yesterday. Tomarken was flying his Beechcraft Bonanza A36 (N16JR) on Mar 13 with his wife, Kathleen Tomarken, on behalf of a non-profit organisation that provides free air transportation to needy

medical patients. Shortly after takeoff, Tomarken reported engine failure and was trying to return to Santa Monica Airport when the aircraft crashed into Santa Monica Bay.

N18LL

London, Mar 19 — A press report, dated Mar 18, states: A twin-engine Beech Baron 56TC crashed near a rural home near Winfield, West Virginia, after straying hundreds of miles off course as National Guard fighter crews tried unsuccessfully to contact the pilot. The body of the pilot, the only person on board, was found in the wreckage after the aircraft crashed last night, Todd Gunther, an investigating officer with the National Transportation Safety Board, said today. There was no immediate indication if he died during or before the crash. No one on the ground was injured. The aircraft took off from Glendive, Mont., yesterday evening for a 600-mile flight to St. Paul, Minn., Federal Aviation Administration spokeswoman Holly Baker said today. The pilot's flight plan said he would be flying at 27,000 feet. Air traffic controllers lost contact with the aircraft when it was being transferred from the Salt Lake City regional control center to the Minneapolis Control Center and alerted the National Guard, Gunther said. The pilots of F-16s based in Wisconsin intercepted the aircraft near Madison, Wis, and tracked it to Michigan, where it was picked up by pilots of two F-16s based near Detroit. The military pilots fired flares to attract the pilot's attention, but were not able to make contact. They tracked it until the moment of the crash, officials said. "Our aircraft had the civilian aircraft in sight when it abruptly began to descend," said Staff Sgt. Dan Heaton of Michigan's 127th Air National Guard unit. Frank Chapman, director of Putnam County's emergency services office, said the aircraft missed a house by about 250 feet, crashing in the only clear spot between the house and a wooded hillside. The pilot's brother David Cammack, said in St. Paul that his brother owned the plane and an industrial cleaning chemical company, and was flying home after a business trip.

London, Mar 21 — Beechcraft Baron 56TC N18LL crashed near Charleston, West Virginia, at 0337, Mar 18, while on a flight from Glendive, Montana, to St. Paul, Minnesota. The aircraft was destroyed. The one person on board was killed.

N21RR

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated Mar 20, states: A twin-engine aircraft crashed and burned today in a cluster of theatres near the centre of Branson, Missouri, killing all four people on board. The aircraft narrowly missed restaurants and attractions along the city's main entertainment strip after taking off

from Point Lookout, MO, for Lubbock, Texas, FAA spokesman Tony Molinaro said. The pilot reported some kind of difficulty and tried to return to the airport, Molinaro said. The aircraft crashed into a self-storage complex near a cluster of nightclubs, theatres and music halls. Branson Police Chief Carol McCulough said there was no way to tell if the pilot deliberately avoided those structures. The tail of the plane was the only part of the wreckage that could be seen. Smoke rose from the wreckage of the storage facility, and the building's contents were scattered over the site. The fire was under control by mid-afternoon, but the victims' bodies were still trapped in the wreckage. Skies in the area were overcast, but there were no storms or unusual weather at the time of the crash, the National Weather Service said. The aircraft was flying under instrument flight rules and was registered to a dentist, according to Greg Martin, another FAA spokesman.

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated today, states: A twin-engined aircraft crashed in the heart of Branson yesterday, killing all four people aboard and setting fire to a building near the main drag of tourist nightclubs, theatres and music halls. The Piper Seneca crashed into a self-storage complex, about 200 feet from the busy street. The aircraft, with its fuel tanks filled just before take-off, struck the corner of a building of 32 storage units and quickly caught fire, destroying the building. Police Chief Carol McCulough said there was no way to tell if the pilot deliberately avoided the bustling strip that was packed with midday vehicle traffic. Federal investigators were to comb through the wreckage today for clues. Local authorities said there may be indications of how the pilot acted in his radio communications when he reported mechanical troubles. The Federal Aviation Administration said the aircraft crashed about 1230, about 15 minutes after taking off from Taney County Airport in Point Lookout, Missouri, on a planned flight to Lubbock, Texas. The victims were identified as Paul Johnson, 71, a Lubbock dentist who was believed to be flying the aircraft, his wife, Marcia Johnson, 71, and another Lubbock couple, Betty Roach, 80, and her husband, Bill Roach. At least one storage unit, about 50-by-100 feet, was charred. The entire storage building was blackened, with white and grey smoke rising from the wreckage and the contents spread all over the ground. Skies in the area were overcast, but there were no storms or unusual weather at the time of the crash, the National Weather Service said.

London, Mar 22 — Piper PA-34-200T (Seneca II) N21RR crashed in Branson, Missouri, at 1830, Mar 20, while on a flight from Point Lookout, MO, to Lubbock, Texas. The aircraft was destroyed. The four persons on board were killed.

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated Mar 21, states: Federal aviation investigators today began combing the wreckage of a Piper PA-34-200T (Seneca II) (N21RR) which crashed into a storage building and burst into flames just a few hundred feet from Branson's main strip. The aircraft apparently had mechanical problems before it went down yesterday afternoon, killing all four people on board. Pilot Paul Johnson had radioed that he was trying to return to Taney County Airport, authorities said, but the aircraft crashed about 200 feet from Branson's busy main street. National Transportation Safety Board inspector Tim Sorensen said today that he could not yet speculate about the cause of the crash. Small aircraft like Johnson's do not carry "black box" flight data and cockpit voice recorders, and the aircraft was heavily damaged by fire, he said. Mike Willett, manager of AAA Self Storage Inns, said the aircraft struck the corner of a building containing storage units and quickly caught fire, destroying the building. The Federal Aviation Administration said the aircraft crashed about 15 minutes after it took off with full fuel tanks from Taney County Airport in Point Lookout, MO. In addition to Johnson, the other victims were identified as his wife, Marcia Johnson, Betty Roach and her husband, Bill Roach.

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated Mar 21, states: Investigators in Missouri continue to comb through the wreckage of Piper PA-34-200T (Seneca II) (N21RR) crash that killed four Lubbock residents yesterday. They say it could be a week before the preliminary report is released, and it could be another year before they know for sure what caused the crash. "We'll fully document the aircraft and the engines and after that, there will be a follow-up investigation that goes on," said Ted Sorensen, an Air Safety Investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board. Witnesses on the ground said the aircraft appeared to be having engine trouble. Now, investigators are looking at the aircraft's wreckage to determine if that's true.

N263KA

London, Mar 21 — Kaman K-1200 (K-Max) N263KA crashed near John Day, Oregon, at 1735, Mar 17. The aircraft was destroyed. The one person on board was killed.

N41PT

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated Mar 20, states: The wreckage of a Beechcraft Bonanza was found this afternoon in northwest Arizona. Authorities said both men on board the aircraft were killed. A Civil Air Patrol spokesman said the aircraft left Henderson, Nevada, last night and was headed to Scottsdale, AZ. An air-and-ground search was started this morning but was hampered by low clouds and ground fog. Searchers

from the Mohave County Sheriff's Office concentrated on an area near the town of Wikieup, south-east of Kingman. The wreckage was found in the Aquarius Mountains some 25 miles north-east of Wikieup at about 1630 hrs. Officials from the National Transportation Safety Board and the Federal Aviation Administration will investigate the cause of the crash. The aircraft is registered to a Scottsdale man.

London, Mar 22 — Beechcraft Bonanza F33A N41PT crashed into mountains south-east of Kingman, Arizona, at 2335, Mar 20, while on a flight from Las Vegas, Nevada, to Scottsdale, AZ. The aircraft was destroyed. The two persons on board were killed.

N54RP

London, Mar 21 — A press report, dated Mar 20, states: Search crews today found the wreckage of a Beechcraft 99, owned by Ameriflight Inc. of Burbank, Calif., that crashed on a flight from Helena to Butte, killing its two pilots. The wreckage was discovered south of Butte, said Federal Aviation Administration regional spokesman Allen Kenitzer in Seattle. Kenitzer confirmed that the two pilots were killed in the crash. Ameriflight said in a written statement that a helicopter discovered the wreckage after homing in on an emergency beacon and that ground crews later reached the wreckage and confirmed there were no survivors. Ameriflight identified the two men on board as Carl C. Cotton, 37, of Helena, a training and check pilot for the company, and Kyle R. Kemmet, 23, who had just moved to Montana and was completing training to fly a Beechcraft 99. Ameriflight said the aircraft was on a routine flight to Butte and was carrying only about 10 pounds of freight. The aircraft left the Helena Regional Airport at 1435, Saturday (Mar 18), and was last heard from at 1450 hrs, said Debbie Alke with the state Department of Transportation's Aeronautics Division. Ameriflight and the FAA said the aircraft had been cleared for a routine instrument landing at the Butte airport, but never arrived. The two pilots on board did not issue any distress calls, the company said. Ameriflight said a search aircraft briefly picked up a signal from an emergency beacon late yesterday afternoon south of Butte, but had to turn back because of poor flying conditions before searchers were able to pinpoint its location. A helicopter was able to fly over the area today. Kenitzer said the National Transportation Safety Board would investigate the crash.

London, Mar 22 — Beechcraft C99 Airliner N54RP, operated by Ameriflight Inc, crashed near Butte, Montana, at 2150, Mar 18, while on a flight from Helena, MT, to Butte. Wreckage was located Mar 20. The two persons on board were killed.

Product Recalls



CHRYSLER MOTOR VEHICLES, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated Mar 20, states: Chrysler is recalling nearly 269,000 vehicles from the 2005-2006 model years. The company said it will replace a faulty front windshield wiper motor. The recall involves the Dodge Durango, Dodge Caravan and Grand Caravan, and Chrysler Town and Country. The defect can disable the wiper. Chrysler, a unit of DaimlerChrysler, said it has notified the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration of the voluntary recall. Owners will be notified when parts are available. The company said no accidents or injuries have been reported related to the problem.

ROCKING CHAIRS, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Wal-Mart Stores Inc. is recalling about 643,000 Mainstays love seat and porch rocking chairs because poor construction and over-curvature of the chairs' runners can cause instability, imbalance, fracturing of the wood and tip-over during use, posing a falling hazard to consumers. The Bentonville, Ark., company has received 45 reports of injuries, including a cut in the leg requiring 16 stitches, a shoulder joint tear and one incident in which a pregnant woman began having contractions after the chair in which she was sitting flipped over backward. The recall involves three models of rocking chairs, the Mainstays Love Seat Rocker (model IT-13380) and the Mainstays Porch Rockers (models IT-13379 and IT-13270). The love seats are wooden and white and seat two people. The wooden porch rocker is sold in white and light brown and seats one person. The model number is printed on the rocker's packaging. The rockers were sold at Wal-Mart stores nation-wide and on Wal-Mart's Web site. The love seats were sold from May 2004 through September 2005 for about \$100. The porch rockers were sold from April 2004 through March 2006 for about \$50. Consumers should immediately stop using these rocking chairs and return them to Wal-Mart for a full refund.

TELEVISION SETS, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 17 — A press release, issued by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), dated Mar 16, states: Approximately 11,800 plasma flat panel televisions with ambient lighting feature, were voluntarily recalled by Philips Consumer Electronics North America, of Atlanta, Ga. in co-operation with the CPSC. Arcing by capacitors inside the left and right side of the back cabinets of these TVs can pose a safety risk. Philips has received nine reports of

arcng by the capacitors. The results of such incidents were contained within the TVs due to the use of flame retardant materials resulting only in damage to the TV. There have been no injuries reported. The recall involves only certain 42 and 50 inch, 2005 model Philips branded plasma flat panel televisions with ambient lighting technology, which is an ambient lighting feature that projects a soft light onto the wall behind the TV to enhance the display. Manufactured in both Belgium and Mexico, the sets were sold at consumer electronic stores nationwide from June 2005 through to January 2006 for between \$3,000 and \$5,000.

Port Conditions



INDIA

See under "Labour Disputes."

ITALY

Genoa, Mar 13 — Port situation: Genoa: No vessels awaiting berths. La Spezia: No vessels awaiting berths. Savona: Two vessels waiting for special berths. No vessels waiting for normal berths. — Lloyd's Agents.

PANAMA CANAL

Balboa, Mar 16 — The Panama Canal remains very congested as the number of arrivals continues to be extremely high and at levels that exceed daily capacity. Delays for non-booked vessels are still running about three days and the booking system is at full level of utilisation and under huge demand. At this point there is no clear indication as to when traffic will ease but if the present trend continues, we could be well into April before conditions start to improve. The current backlog is 71 vessels, expected to be 68 Mar 17 and 72 Mar 18. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Mar 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Non-booked vessels wishing to transit the Panama Canal face a wait of four days as heavy arrivals have made it impossible to reduce the current backlog. This is despite the fact that the Canal is operating at full capacity with all resources on line. Current arrival projection figures indicate that the situation is unlikely to improve for the next seven days. The Canal's Marine Traffic Department Manager has reported that during the past four weeks unusually high arrivals have led to a considerable increase in the backlog and waiting time. During this period, the Canal has averaged just over 40 transits per day. However, the waiting time has remained in the three-four day range for non-booked vessels, as arrivals have not diminished.

SYRIA

Lattakia, Mar 18 — The waiting period for Lattakia port is currently 24 hours and for Tartous it is four days. — Lloyd's Agents.

Port Delays

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

Country/Port	Date of report	No. of vessels waiting and/or days delay
Australia		
Abbots Point	20-Mar-2006	Coal: Eight vessels due by 2/4.
Brisbane	20-Mar-2006	Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth; Three vessels due by 31/3; no delays expected.
Dalrymple Bay	20-Mar-2006	Coal: Fifteen vessels arrived; 19 vessels due by 30/3.
Dampier	20-Mar-2006	Iron ore: Parker Point A berth: One vessel loading at berth; 3 vessels arrived; 7 vessels due by 31/3; Parker Point B berth: 2 vessels arrived; 3 vessels due by 26/3; Parker Point C berth: 1 vessel loading at berth; 2 vessels due by 28/3; East Intercourse Island: One vessel loading at berth, 3 arrived; 7 vessels due by 28/3.
Esperance	20-Mar-2006	Iron ore: Three vessels due by 25/3; up to 2 days delay expected. Mar 15: Grain: 6 vessels due by 6/4, 5 to load wheat, 1 other grain; up to 2 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Geraldton	20-Mar-2006	Iron ore: One vessel due 27/3. Mar 15: Grain: 1 vessel waiting to load wheat; 3 vessels due by 28/3, 2 to load wheat, 1 other grain; up to 12 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Gladstone	20-Mar-2006	Coal: R.G. Tanna coal terminal: Three vessels loading at berth; 15 vessels arrived; 34 vessels due by 11/5; Barney Point: 1 vessel loading at berth; 2 vessels arrived; 11 vessels due by 24/4.
Hay Point	20-Mar-2006	Coal: Eight vessels arrived; 6 vessels due by 26/3.
Newcastle	20-Mar-2006	Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: Two vessels loading at berth; 11 vessels arrived; 42 vessels due by 10/4; 3-9 days delay expected; Dykes 4+5: 2 vessels loading at berth; 5 vessels arrived; 15 vessels due by 6/4; 3-8 days delay expected. Mar 15: Three vessels due by 20/3, all to load wheat; up to 11 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Port Hedland	20-Mar-2006	Iron ore: BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Mt. Newman (Nelson Point), "A" berth: One vessel loading at berth; 4 vessels arrived; 5 vessels due by 29/3; "B" berth: 1 vessel loading at berth, 3 arrived; 7 vessels due by 30/3; 1 other vessel due at A or B berth 2/4; BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Goldsworthy (Finucane Island "C" berth): 4 vessels due by 26/3; (Finucane Island "D" berth): 1 vessel loading at berth, 3 vessels arrived; 5 vessels due by 31/3. Cockatoo Island: 1 vessel loading at berth.
Port Kembla	20-Mar-2006	Coal: Fourteen vessels due by 30/4; up to 1 day's delay expected.
Port Walcott	20-Mar-2006	Iron ore: Two vessels loading at berth; 6 vessels arrived; 13 vessels due by 29/2.
Whyalla	20-Mar-2006	Iron ore: Five vessels due by 19/4; no delays expected.
Bulgaria		
Bourgas	20-Mar-2006	Thirteen vessels in port of which 8 loading (1 ammonium nitrate, 2 coils, 1 copper anodes, 1 metal, 1 steel sheets, 1 pig iron 1 container), 5 discharging (1 lead/zinc, 1 steel billets, 1 coal, 1 lead concentrate, 1 container); 6 vessels in roads, all to load (3 fuel, 1 wheat, 1 bunkering, 1 lead); 10 vessels due of which 6 to load (2 steel sheets, 1 coils, 1 barite concentrate, 1 gasoil, 1 wheat), 4 to discharge (1 kaolin, 2 equipment, 1 zinc concentrate).
Varna	20-Mar-2006	Varna East, Varna West, Balchik: Twenty-one vessels in port operating of which 12 loading (1 bulk maize, 1 bulk sulphuric acid, 5 soda, 1 TSP, 1 technical salt, 1 sunflower seeds, 1 bulk wheat, 1 other), 6 discharging (4 bulk coal, 1 equipment, 1 container), 3 discharging/loading (1 equipment/misc. cargo, 2 containers); no vessels waiting in roads.
Chile		
Antofagasta	20-Mar-2006	Three vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 21 vessels due this week to load/discharge concentrates, bulk copper, containers and general cargo.
Arica	20-Mar-2006	Four vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 21 vessels due this week.
Iquique	20-Mar-2006	Three vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 20 vessels due this week.
Puerto Montt	20-Mar-2006	Two vessels at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 9 vessels due this week.
Punta Arenas	20-Mar-2006	Four vessels at terminal, 3 berths vacant; 13 vessels due this week.
San Antonio	20-Mar-2006	Six vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 22 vessels due this week.
San Vicente	20-Mar-2006	Two vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 22 vessels due during the week; Steel pier: 1 vessel at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 2 vessels due this week; Coronel pier: 3 vessels at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 4 vessels due this week; Oil terminal: 1 tanker at terminal, 1 berth vacant; no tankers due this week.
Valparaiso	20-Mar-2006	Five vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 4 vessels anchored; 19 vessels due this week.
Cyprus		
Larnaca	21-Mar-2006	Five conventional vessels discharging at berth; 2 conventional vessels due 22/3; no delays expected.
Limassol	21-Mar-2006	Four container vessels discharging/loading at berth, 4 conventional vessels discharging at berth; 5 container vessels, 2 conventional vessels, 1 passenger vessel due 22/3; no delays expected.
Egypt		
Adabiya	20-Mar-2006	Eight vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 3 general cargo, 2 bulk carriers, 3 tankers.
Alexandria	20-Mar-2006	Thirty-six vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 26 general cargo, 4 bulk carriers, 4 tankers, 2 container vessels; 29 vessels at inner anchorage, 11 at outer anchorage; 16 vessels dry-docked.

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

Port Conditions

Damietta	20-Mar-2006	Nineteen vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 10 general cargo, 3 bulk carriers, 1 tanker, 5 container vessels; no vessels at inner anchorage, 4 at outer anchorage.
Dekhelia	20-Mar-2006	Nine vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 1 tanker, 8 bulk carriers; no vessels at outer anchorage.
Port Said	20-Mar-2006	Six vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 1 general cargo, 4 container vessels, 1 passenger vessel.
Suez	20-Mar-2006	Eight vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 4 general cargo, 1 reefer, 3 passenger vessels; 4 tug boats; 1 vessel dry-docked.
Suez Canal	20-Mar-2006	Twenty-three vessels transiting Northbound, 30 Southbound.
Estonia		
Tallinn	20-Mar-2006	Paljassaare (formerly Kopli): 1 coal vessel loading at berth; no vessels waiting at anchorage; 1 vessel due, with 5 days berthing delay expected.
India		
Kolkata	20-Mar-2006	4 vessels operating at berth of which 1 vessel loading Iron Ore, 1 vessel discharging Liquids, 2 vessels waiting to load (Containers, General Cargo); 1 vessel working at mid stream to discharge Pulses; 2 vessels under repairs; 1 vessel under dry docked; 1 vessel under waiting to sail; 1 vessel awaiting berth to discharge; 3 vessels due (Containers, Edible Oil-2).
Haldia	20-Mar-2006	14 vessels operating at berth of which 5 loading (Iron ore-4, Thermal Coal), 7 vessels discharging (Crude, Coking Coal, Rock Phosphate, Palmolive, Met Coke, Phosphoric Acid, Lime), 2 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 6 vessels awaiting berth (5 to discharge, 1 to load); 3 vessels waiting at anchorage (2 to discharge, 1 to load); 6 vessels due (POL, Bitudine, Crude, Rock Phosphate, Containers, Iron ore).
Paradip	20-Mar-2006	7 vessels operating at berth of which 4 loading (Iron ore-2, Chrome Concentrate, Thermal Coal), 3 vessels discharging (NC Coal-2, Coking Coal); 1 vessels awaiting berth to load; 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge.
Visakhapatnam	20-Mar-2006	15 vessels operating at berth of which 7 loading (B.F.Slag, Met Ore, Soya-2, Thermal Coal, Alumina, Steel Products), 6 vessels discharging (Crude Tanker-3, LP.Gas, Product Tanker, Rock Phosphate), 2 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 1 vessel not ready to work and waiting at anchorage to load; 2 vessel waiting at anchorage (1 to bunkering, 1 to repair) 46 vessels due (Iron Ore-11, Steel Cargo-2, Thermal Coal, Feld Spar, Granite Blocks-2, Fly Ash, Product & Crude Trap Tankers-8, Urea, Coking Coal-4, Styrene Monomer, Timber-2, Containers-2, Lime Stone, Petroleum Coke, Steam Coal-2, POL & Crude Tankers-6).
Chennai	20-Mar-2006	8 vessels operating at berth of which 3 loading (C.Stone-2, Iron ore), 3 vessels discharging (S.Coal, Met Coke, Crude oil), 2 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 2 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage to load; 1Supply vessels due.
Tuticorin	20-Mar-2006	6 vessels operating at berth of which 4 loading (General Cargo-3, Cement), 2 vessels discharging (Palm Oil, Oil Concentrate); 2 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage (1 to discharge, 1 to load).
Cochin	20-Mar-2006	6 vessels operating at berth of which 1 vessel loading Naphtha, 3 vessels discharging (Defence, Soda Ash, Crude), 2 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 5 vessels awaiting berth (3 to discharge, 1 to load, 1 to load and discharge); 1 vessel Safmarine Pakistan had been detained by Customs in Lakshadweep and brought to Cochin Port for having committed violation of various statutes on the reason for encroaching on our national security.
New Mangalore	20-Mar-2006	6 vessels operating at berth of which 2 vessels loading (Iron Ore Fines, POL Product), 4 vessels discharging (Fertiliser-2, POL Crude, LPG); 5 vessels waiting at anchorage (3 to discharge, 2 to load); 16 vessels due (LPG, POL Crude-2, Iron Ore Fines-7, Phosphate Acid, Cement, Containers, Coal, Crude Palm Oil, Granite Stone).
Mormugao	20-Mar-2006	3 vessels operating at berth of which 2 loading (Iron ore, Alumina), 1 vessel discharging Met Coke; 3 vessels working at midstream to load Iron Ore; 2 vessels awaiting berth (1 to discharge, 1 to load); 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to load; 4 vessels under repairs/dry dock; 6 vessels due (Containers, Met Coke, Iron ore-4).
Mumbai	20-Mar-2006	16 vessels operating at berth of which 5 loading (Steel Cargo, Steel/Machine, Project Cargo-2, POL), 8 vessels discharging (Containers, Rock Phosphate, Steel/Machine, Machine/ Project Cargo, Steel Cargo, POL-3), 3 vessels loading and discharging (Project Cargo, Steel/General Cargo/ Vehicle, Steel/General cargo/Project); 4 vessel awaiting berth to discharge; 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to load and discharge; 4 vessels under repairs/dry docked, 5 vessels under arrest, 1 vessel under laid up (Berths not required for cargo operations); 35 vessels due (Containers-4, Oil, Other Dry Bulk, General Cargo-29).
J.N.P.T	20-Mar-2006.	8 vessels operating at berth of which 2 discharging (Cement/HSD, MS/SKO), 6 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 7 vessels awaiting berth (1 to load, 6 to load and discharge); 7 vessels due (Containers-6, Lubricant Oil).
Kandla	20-Mar-2006	13 vessels operating at berth of which 3 discharging (Phosphoric Acid, HMS, Timber Logs), 9 vessels loading (Chemical, Agriculture Product-6, Rice & General Cargo-2), 1 vessel loading and discharging Containers; 1 vessel awaiting berth to load; 6 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage (1 to discharge, 5 to load); 1 vessel under repair/dry docked; 1 vessel under maintainance; 1 vessel under crew change.

Port Conditions

Ennore	20-Mar-2006	1 vessel operating at berth and discharge Thermal Coal; 3 vessels due (MV APJ Keshava (Thermal Coal), MV Tamil Anna(Thermal Coal), MT Rea (POL Products)).
Israel		
Ashdod	21-Mar-2006	No labour problems. Two general cargo vessels loading at berth, 13 vessels discharging at berth (9 general cargo, 4 bulkers), 2 container vessels loading/discharging at berth; 7 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (4 general cargo, 3 bulkers), 1 container vessel waiting at anchorage to load/dischARGE; 1 vessel awaiting orders; 18 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Eilat	21-Mar-2006	No labour problems. One general cargo vessel discharging at berth, 1 container vessel loading/discharging at berth; 1 general cargo vessel waiting at anchorage to discharge; no vessels due, with no delays expected.
Haifa	21-Mar-2006	No labour problems. Five vessels discharging at berth (2 general cargo, 3 bulkers), 8 vessels loading/discharging at berth (3 containers, 1 car carrier, 3 tankers, 1 passenger vessel); 3 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 general cargo, 2 bulkers), 1 container vessel waiting at anchorage to load/dischARGE; 4 vessels under repairs/dry-docked, 1 awaiting orders; 22 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Pakistan		
Karachi	20-Mar-2006	Three vessels loading at berth (2 cement, 1 naptha), 7 discharging at berth (2 crude oil, 1 palm oil, 1 coal, 1 urea, 1 general cargo, 1 sulphur), 5 container vessels loading/discharging at berth; 3 vessels waiting at anchorage to load (1 containers, 1 cement, 1 MOL), 1 container vessel waiting at anchorage to discharge; 2 vessels dry-docked, 1 awaiting orders; 6 vessels due (3 containers, 1 coal, 1 steel pipes, 1 MOL), with no delays expected.
Port Qasim	20-Mar-2006	Three vessels discharging at berth (1 palm oil, 1 wheat, 1 coal); 2 container vessels waiting at anchorage to load, 8 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (2 containers, 1 canola, 2 HSD, 1 VCM, 1 MEG, 1 fertiliser).
Russia		
Novorossiysk	20-Mar-2006	Twenty-four vessels in port operating of which 20 loading (2 bulk NPK, 1 bulk cement, 1 HBI, 1 DRI, 3 coils, 2 copper, 3 steel billets, 1 pig iron, 1 slabs, 2 vegetable oil, 1 wheat, 2 D/O), 2 discharging (1 bulk sugar, 1 citrus), 2 discharging/loading containers; 15 vessels in roads of which 11 to load (3 vegetable oil, 1 steel billets/steel sheets, 2 steel billets, 1 DRI, 1 coils, 1 wheat, 1 cement, 1 D/O), 4 to discharge (3 bulk sugar, 1 coils); 64 vessels due of which 59 to load, 4 to discharge (1 vegetable oil, 1 bananas, 1 equipment,, 1 bulk sugar), 1 to discharge/load containers; Oil terminal: 1 tanker loading crude at berth; 5 tanker in roads, all to load (4 crude, 1 fuel oil); 5 tankers due, all to load (4 crude oil, 1 diesel oil).
Slovenia		
Koper	20-Mar-2006	Port working normally; Eight vessels berthed of which 3 loading sawn timber, 2 bulk carriers discharging coal/minerals, 2 tankers discharging mineral oils, 1 vessel discharging/loading containers; 3 vessels waiting at anchorage of which 1 bulk carrier to load grain, 1 bulk carrier to discharge coal, 1 tanker to discharge mineral oils; 15 vessels due over the next 2 days of which 2 to load general cargo, 1 Ro/Ro to load general cargo, 2 bulk carriers to load coal, 1 vessel to discharge aluminium products, 3 vessels to discharge/load containers, 6 car carriers to discharge/load vehicles.
Spain		
Bilbao	20-Mar-2006	Twenty-five vessels operating (3 tankers, 22 other vessels), of which 4 loading, 10 discharging, 11 loading/discharging.
Sri Lanka		
Colombo	20-Mar-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. Ten container/feeder vessels loading at berth, 19 vessels discharging at berth (12 containers/ feeders, 1 bagged sugar, 3 bulk palm oil, 1 cement blocks on pallets, 1 bulk cement, 1 timber); 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 container/feeder, 1 bagged soya bean meal); 6 vessels dry-docked; 10 vessels due (8 containers/feeders, 1 bulk cement, 1 bulk palm oil), with no delays expected.
Ukraine		
Ilichevsk	20-Mar-2006	Twelve vessels in port operating of which 9 loading (6 steel products, 1 sunflower oil, 1 sunflower seeds, 1 wheat), 1 discharging citrus, 2 discharging/loading containers; 6 vessel in roads, of which 2 to load steel products, 2 to discharge (1 gypsum, 1 project), 1 to discharge/load containers; 26 vessels due of which 18 to load (11 steel products, 5 sunflower oil, 1 wheat, 1 iron ore pellets), 8 to discharge/load containers.

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

Port Conditions

Mariupol	20-Mar-2006	Fifteen vessels in port operating, all loading (6 steel, 2 sulphur, 4 coal, 1 wheat, 2 fire-clay); 12 vessels in roads of which 11 to load (9 steel, 1 coal, 1 fire-clay), 1 to discharge equipment; 47 vessels due of which 41 to load (21 steel, 11 coal, 1 sulphur, 1 fire-clay/containers, 3 fire-clay, 2 bran, 1 baggage, 1 sunflower beans), 5 to discharge (2 equipment, 1 pipes/equipment, 1 containers/equipment), 1 to discharge/load containers.
Odessa	20-Mar-2006	Nineteen vessels in port operating of which 9 loading (6 metal, 1 metal/ferroalloy, 1 scrap, 1 pig iron), 8 discharging (1 passenger vessel, 2 citrus, 2 vegetables, 1 meat, 1 baggage, 1 sand), 2 discharging/loading containers; 11 vessels in roads of which 8 to load (4 metal, 1 corn, 1 wheat, 2 equipment), 1 to discharge general cargo; 61 vessels due of which 33 to load (24 metal, 3 pig iron, 1 oil, 1 barley, 1 sunflower seeds, 1 equipment, 1 wheat, 1 car techniques), 8 to discharge (3 citrus, 1 vegetables, 2 bananas, 1 general cargo, 1 baggage), 20 to load/discharge containers.
USA		
Beaumont	21-Mar-2006	No new restriction in draft (40 ft. 0 ins. FW max. channel draft reported); Louis Dreyfus terminal: no delays expected.
Galveston	21-Mar-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	21-Mar-2006	Channel open under normal traffic. (Normal Max channel draft is 45 ft 0 ins. to Shell.) LDC Dreyfus terminal: 2-3 days delay expected; Cargill terminal: 1 day's delay expected.
Kalama	21-Mar-2006	Kalama export terminal: 2 days delay expected; United Harvest terminal: no delays expected.
New Orleans	21-Mar-2006	Mississippi River terminal berthing delays: Cenex-Harstates/Myrtle Grove: no delays expected. Cargill-Westwego: 2 days delay expected. ADM/Ama: 3-4 days delay expected. Bunge/Destrehan: 2 days delay expected. ADM/ Destrehan: 3-4 days delay expected. ADM/Reserve: 3-4 days delay expected. Cargill/Reserve: 1-2 days delay expected. ADM/Paulina: 3-4 days delay expected. Zen-Noh/Convent: 1-2 days delay expected. Cargill/Baton Rouge: no delays expected. Mississippi River mid-stream buoys - estimated berthing delays based on new vessel presented as load-ready and weather permitting: Mile 121.5 ADM (Gemini) - Destrehan: no delays expected; Mile 158.0 Myrtle Grove Midstream terminal: 3 days delay expected; Mile 180.0 Cooper (America) - Darrow: 7 days delay expected.
Portland	21-Mar-2006	Eight-day forecast for Carrollton Gauge/New Orleans: expected to increase to 8.2 ft. by 29/3/06 Columbia Grain terminal: 1 day's delay expected; CLD Irving terminal: no delays expected; CLD, O Dock terminals: 2 days delay expected.
Seattle	21-Mar-2006	Louis Dreyfus (Pier 86) terminal: no delays expected.
Tacoma	21-Mar-2006	Temco terminal: 2 days delay expected.
Vancouver	21-Mar-2006	United Harvest terminal: 2 days delay expected.

Published by Lloyd's Marine Intelligence Unit, part of Informa plc, Sheepen Place, Colchester, Essex CO3 3LP.

Lloyd's Marine Intelligence Unit does not guarantee the accuracy of the information contained in this publication, nor accept responsibility for errors or omissions or their consequences.

Copyright © Lloyd's Marine Intelligence Unit, part of Informa UK Limited 2005. This casualty information is copyright. Unauthorised copying prohibited by law.

ISSN 0047 4908

If subscribers wish to purchase records for networkable or shared use within their company they can contact Andrew Luxton on +44 (0) 20 7017 4625.

Lloyd's is the registered trade mark of the Society incorporated by the Lloyd's Act 1871 by the name of Lloyd's

© Lloyd's Marine Intelligence Unit 2004 These reports may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photographic, recorded or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher.