

April 21 2006

‘Wicked collaboration’ by safety chiefs and owner blamed for Al Salam tragedy

Egyptian parliamentary committee report says maritime safety authority colluded with owners to allow doomed ferry to operate, writes Rajesh Joshi — Friday April 21 2006

An Egyptian parliamentary investigation has concluded that “wicked collaboration” between the shipowner and Egyptian maritime authorities resulted in the deaths of more than 1,000 passengers when the ferry Al Salam Boccaccio 98 sank in February, .

The report, compiled by a 23-member parliamentary committee, has stopped short of blaming Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and his military command.

However, by implying collusion between the Egyptian Authority on Maritime Safety and shipowner, Al Salam Maritime Transport Co, the report has scuttled the government’s effort to pin the blame entirely on the ferry’s captain, who has not been accounted for after the casualty.

In an outpouring of outrage consistent with the raw nerve that the casualty touched in the nation, the report’s authors have vowed to “beat with an iron fist on everyone who allowed himself (sic) to tamper with the standards, laws and rules for the sake of cheap worldly gains, even if the cost was to kill people, drowning and destroying the lives of many Egyptian families and spreading calamity and catastrophe across Egypt”.

The 1970-built, 11,779 gt ferry sank on February 3 while en route from Saudi Arabia to Egypt.

The shipowning company, owned by Mamdouh Ismail, a member of the upper house appointed by Mr Mubarak, was castigated on several fronts, including the use of forged documents to hide safety deficiencies, and defective and insufficient life-saving gear.

Mr Ismail, who is understood to be staying in London after the tragedy, has steadfastly maintained his company’s innocence. In a newspaper advertisement in the semi-official Egyptian newspaper this month, he declared that the ship was certified by its insurer to have all necessary equipment.

The parliamentary committee, however, concluded that the Egyptian maritime safety authority was “aware” of the ship’s shortcomings, but “colluded” with the owner to allow the ferry to operate while evading “minimum” safety requirements.

According to a Reuters report based on an inspection of the findings, the report said accumulation of water on the car deck caused by blocked drains was one of the direct reasons for the ship listing and then sinking.

This version is consistent with recordings on the ship’s “black box”,

Reuters noted. The water accumulated on deck after its crew tried to douse a fire with hoses. Witnesses said that as the ship listed, all the water shifted to one side of the deck, making it increasingly unstable.

The deck had plenty of drains 20 cm in diameter that should have sufficed to clear the water, the report noted.

But the report’s main thrust is towards systemic failures, including the government allowing Mr Ismail to leave the country before stripping him of his parliamentary immunity, a slothful rescue operation where the first Egyptian ships reached the sinking site some 70 km offshore only 10 hours after the incident, and a lackadaisical attitude towards relations of victims trying to ascertain their fate.

While the report’s theme of cronyism and corruption has provided ammunition to opposition politicians, including those from the Muslim Brotherhood, it also buttressed human rights advocates’ criticism of the ferry being overcrowded.

Opposition politicians interviewed in Western media expressed scepticism that anyone would be prosecuted. But the report’s authors have vowed not to let go, having recommended that authorities show “no mercy to those who corrupted the [safety authority]”.



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

Vessel	Type	Flag	Class	GT	DWT	Bit	Casualty
<i>CAPE HOPE</i>	supply	USA	AB	1,489	—	1999	Struck drilling rig GSF Arctic 001 in Green Canyon Block 243, in lat 27 43.154N, long 90 47.877W, Apr 9. Lodged against rig. Vessel and rig damaged. Freed same day by another vessel. Proceeded to Bollinger Shipyard, Larose, for repairs.
<i>EASTERN CHALLENGER</i>	general	PHL	NK	6,182	7,707	1985	In collision with general cargo Tsugaru Maru off Sunosaki lighthouse, Tateyama, Apr 13. Subsequently sank in lat 25 02.5N, long 139 45.9E. All 25 crew rescued.
<i>IVS HUNTER</i>	bulker	PAN	NK	19,712	31,812	2001	Struck dock at Mile Marker 92, River Mississippi, Apr 8. Sustained 20-ft-by-5-ft gash in hull above waterline. Anchored nearby awaiting Class report. Damage to dock estimated in excess of \$100,000.
<i>JADRANKA</i>	ferry	HRV	HV	216	—	1955	Reported Apr 12 sustained massive damage after striking rocks while entering port at Crveni Otok Island in bad weather. Rescue workers pumped water out to prevent vessel sinking.
<i>JOYCE L. VANENKEVORT</i>	tug	USA	—	1,179	—	—	Reported Apr 10 vessel lost 2 of its 4 rudders in the Saginaw River, near Saginaw. Divers unable to locate rudders. Sailed to Escanaba under own power. New rudders to be installed at Escanaba.
<i>MAERSK DRESDEN</i>	container	DEU	GL	50,644	62,400	1996	Reported adrift with engine trouble in lat 35 52N, long 152 51E, Apr 7. Awaiting tug, which ETA on scene Apr 10. Still drifting in bad weather Apr 11. Tug on scene, waiting to take vessel in tow. Under tow Apr 12.
<i>REY DE COLIMAN</i>	tug	MEX	GL	342	215	1988	Grounded near Manzanillo Mar 31. Still aground Apr 10, and salvage services being rendered under LOF dated Apr 7. Damage believed minimal as vessel aground on sand.
<i>SINAR DEMAK</i>	general	SGP	(AB) ABS	2,646	4,000	—	Had explosion on board Apr 7 while under construction at Surabaya. Seven workers injured. Cause under investigation.
<i>STAR MARINER</i>	container	KOR	KR	9,522	13,007	2005	Collided with tug Wanwang 428 near Wusongkou port, Shanghai area, Apr 10. Heavy fog in area. Reported Apr 11 in good condition and detained for investigation.
<i>THE ADMIRAL</i>	tug	USA	—	461	296	1958	Touched bottom at Mile Marker 3, Vermillion River, near Intracoastal City, Mar 31 while pushing 4 empty barges. Port fuel tank ruptured. An estimated 1,500 gallons of fuel oil leaked into river. Vessel beached to minimise discharge.
<i>TOPPY 4</i>	hydrofoil	JPN	—	281	—	1979	Struck unidentified object, possibly a whale, in Kagoshima prefecture Apr 9. Over 100 people injured, 43 of whom hospitalised. Vessel damaged and towed to Yamakawa. Investigation under way.
<i>VOLGO-BALT 211</i>	general	RUS	RS	2,457	3,180	1978	Grounded at Ellekilde Hage, in lat 56 04.5N, long 12 30E, Apr 13. Aground 40 metres off shore. Master to be fined for not reporting grounding.

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The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



AL MANARA (St. Kitts-Nevis)

London, Apr 12 — A press report, dated today, states: Later this week, the Indian Navy will bring home 10 Indians who were stranded in Seychelles for over six months after their employer disowned them along with the ship. An Indian naval ship, returning from a military diplomacy mission from Mauritius, docked briefly at Port Victoria, Seychelles, to take on board the Indian sailors. General cargo *Al Manara* had 21 crewmembers, of whom 10 were Indians. While on the high seas, pirates ransacked it. The ship later developed engine trouble and abandoned its original route and made it to Port Victoria. Faced with the prospects of repairing the ship and paying the crew for a task not complete, the owner washed his hands of the matter. As the Indians were low-level workers and not paid for months, they were stranded in Seychelles with no money to pay for their journey back home. The Indian High Commission provided limited help in the form of legal and lodging assistance but not their return fare. A survey ship of the Indian Navy, *INS Sarvekshak*, finally came to their aid when it docked at Port Victoria. The Indians are expected to land in Kochi on Apr 14.

AL SALAM BOCCACCIO 98 (Panama)

London, Apr 7 — Egypt has blamed the master of passenger ro/ro *Al Salam Boccaccio 98*, the Red Sea ferry which sank in February with the loss of more than 1,000 lives, for the casualty. A cabinet statement on Wednesday claimed that analysis of recordings of the conversation on the bridge showed that key safety measures were not carried out. The master allegedly did not send a distress signal, did not report the problems to either the port of departure or the port of arrival, did not try to return to port when fire broke out, and did not order the crew or passengers to use rescue systems. Fire broke out on the car deck about one hour out of the Saudi port of Daba while the ro-ro was on route for Safaga on the Egyptian side of the Red Sea. But the ship continued to sail for several hours before it finally capsized and sank. Survivors said at the time that crew members told them not to worry about the fire and prevented them putting on life jackets. They also accused the master, Captain Sayed Omar, of abandoning the ship. Capt Omar is missing, presumed drowned. Much of the public anger at the disaster has been directed at the Cairo-based shipping company, which is owned by Mamdouh

Ismail, a member of the upper house of parliament. The cabinet statement said the investigation was not yet complete, and copies of the contents of the voice recorder have gone to the public prosecutor and a committee of inquiry. - Egyptian human rights activists have slammed compensation offered to survivors and families of *Al Salam Boccaccio 98* victims as inadequate. According to local media reports, the owner has promised the families of victims \$26,170 each and survivors \$2,617 each. Lawyers acting on their behalf maintain that the size of the payments do not take into account individual needs of families or cover losses caused by the deaths of migrant workers. But activists have commended recent government promises of additional financial assistance. Following a presidential decree, victims' families will be given \$6,316 each, while survivors will receive \$3,158 each.

ALPENA (U.S.A.)

London, Apr 7 — A press report, dated Apr 5, states: Tug vessels spent several minutes freeing cement *Alpena* (8018 gt, built 1942) that ran aground in the Saginaw River after delivering its cargo about noon, yesterday, witnesses said. Battling winds gusting near 30 mph, the 519-foot-long vessel was pivoting in the river's "turning basin" when its hull caught on the river bottom, witnesses said. The 64-year-old vessel had just unloaded its cargo of powdered concrete at LaFarge Corp., 30 Mapleridge in Carrollton Township, a worker there said.

AMADA (North Korea)

Piraeus, Apr 11 — General cargo *Amada* remains at Kalamata port, ETD unknown. — Lloyd's Agents.

ANNE-S. (Netherlands)

Esbjerg, Apr 7 — General cargo *Anne-S.* has received a replacement rudder, and repairs are being effected today. If the repairs are completed on schedule, the vessel will sail tomorrow. — Lloyd's Agents.

Esbjerg, Apr 10 — General cargo *Anne-S.* has completed repairs to the rudder. The vessel's ETD is not presently known. — Lloyd's Agents.

Esbjerg, Apr 12 — General cargo *Anne-S.* sailed 1530, Apr 10 for Stade. — Lloyd's Agents.

ANNTORO (Norway)

Trondheim, Apr 11 — General cargo *Anntoro*: Kvernhusvik Shipyard, at Hitra, inform that there is still no decision regarding possible repairs. — Lloyd's Agents.

ANTONIS A. (Panama)

Piraeus, Apr 11 — Chemical/oil carrier *Antonis A.* remains in port undergoing repairs, ETD within this week. — Lloyd's Agents.

APL PANAMA (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Apr 12 — An APL service

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

status report, dated Apr 11, states: All cargo has been discharged from c.c. *APL Panama* at the Port of Ensenada. Customers have been notified that the final 513 containers on board the vessel were lifted off Apr 9. Containers are available for pick-up once cargo owners post security required under applicable salvage and General Average rules. *APL Panama* is at anchor off the coast of Ensenada. It is expected that the vessel's owners will have it towed back to Asia for repairs. Claims specialists and insurance adjusters will now determine the total cost of the *APL Panama* grounding and apportion costs among the ship's owners, charterer and cargo owners in accordance with applicable legal rules.

London, Apr 12 — A press report, dated today, states: Five weeks after c.c. *APL Panama* was refloated, the vessel remains anchored offshore, awaiting clearances from Mexican agencies, a final inspection, and the arrival of a Dutch-owned tug that will escort it across the Pacific Ocean. The vessel's German owners, Mare Britannicum Schiffhartsengesellschaft, say the wait shouldn't be too much longer. "If we're lucky, it should be (leaving) around next week," operations director Alexander Burchard said yesterday in a telephone interview from company headquarters in Bremen, Germany. The ship was allowed to enter Ensenada for the first time on Saturday to unload 513 remaining containers, said Capt. Jose Luis Rios Hernandez, the harbour-master. Rios said the ship can't leave Ensenada without his permission, and he can't authorise the departure without clearances from government agencies. The major hold appears to be one placed by the federal environmental agency, Profepa, which has ordered the ship's owners to study potential long-term damage caused by the grounding. "We're waiting for the results of the study," said Ricardo Castellanos Percevault, head of Profepa in Baja California. "We believe that the conduct of the *APL Panama* (salvage effort) was adequate, but we want to make sure that there is no long-lasting impact." Burchard said yesterday that the study is completed, and the company is waiting for the Mexican environmental agency to act. Burchard said the ship must also undergo a final inspection by Germanischer Lloyd, a classification society. Most cargo vessels are certified by such societies, which set technical design standards. The owners have contracted with a Dutch firm, Fairmount Marine B.V., to tow *APL Panama* to Asia. The tug *Hua An* is expected to arrive in Ensenada by next week, Burchard said. *APL Panama's* destination remained uncertain yesterday.

BREAKSEA (U.K.)

Dublin, Apr 12 — Product tanker *Breaksea* is currently at Dublin

Drydocks, awaiting repairs. The vessel's engine has been removed and shipped to Denmark. No estimated completion date for repairs is currently known. — Lloyd's Agents.

BURG (Panama)

London, Apr 10 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report : A small fire broke out in the stern of general cargo *Burg* (4413 gt, built 1976) while the vessel was at the anchorage of Piraeus at 0318, today. At 0335 hrs the fire was extinguished by the crew. Keratsini Port Authority prohibited departure pending issuance of a seaworthiness certificate from vessel's class. There were no injuries to the 17 crew members.

Piraeus, Apr 10 — Fire broke out at the stern of general cargo *Burg* at 0318 today. The vessel was berthed at Piraeus port. Fire was extinguished by crew and no injuries were reported. Vessel's sailing was prohibited until class inspection. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Apr 11 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 0855, UTC: General cargo *Burg* remains at Piraeus anchorage.

CALEDONIAN ISLES (U.K.)

See "Outbreak Of Virus On United Kingdom-Flagged Vessel " under "Miscellaneous".

CAPSIZED VESSEL AT DJIBOUTI

London, Apr 6 — A press report, dated today states: A Djibouti wooden vessel, carrying about 250 people on an annual religious pilgrimage, sank today, killing at least 69 people, authorities said. The vessel, laden with construction materials and three times the passengers it was built for, sank just 100 metres from the port in Djibouti, witnesses said. It was sailing for the town of Tadjoura, 35 km (22 miles) to the north-east, when it went down shortly after 1300 hrs (1000 UTC), on a pilgrimage known as Djamaad. "It was so quick that people were brought down by the materials, which sank with them," a survivor said. Another survivor said a small wave caused the vessel to capsize. Local fishermen, later assisted by the French and Djibouti navies, scrambled to rescue the victims, many of whom were elderly men, who could not swim. At least 20 people were believed still missing from the vessel, which was built to carry a maximum of 80, officials said. The search was called off as night fell. Thirty-six people were hospitalised, with seven in serious condition, hospital officials said. Witnesses said there was pandemonium as people rushed to board the vessel earlier in the day. No passenger list was available. The dead were laid next to buildings along the port until nightfall, when some were taken to hospitals and others were buried. Captain Bob Everdeen of the Combined Joint U.S. Task Force Horn of Africa, based in Djibouti, said Navy divers had been sent to assist.

CARIBOU (Canada)

Halifax, Apr 9 — Passenger ro/ro *Caribou* entered Halifax Shipyard dry dock Apr 4 for routine and scheduled drydocking and is expected to be at the dry dock for about one month, after which it will return to its scheduled service between North Sydney, NS, and Port aux Basques, Newfoundland. — Lloyd's Agents.

CARPE DIEM I (Panama)

Leghorn, Apr 7 — General cargo *Carpe Diem I* is still in port at Piombino. Repairs have commenced and are expected to be completed at the end of next week, when the vessel will sail Piombino for Savona, its destination port. — Lloyd's Agents.

CP VALOUR (Bermuda)

Ponta Delgada, Apr 7 — C.c. *CP Valour* is still grounded at the north coast of Faial-Island waiting for dismantling. Understand that the owners are now studying some bids presented to them for the vessel's cargo removal and dismantling operations as well. Reported that 47 containers which were stowed on deck fell overboard and that 20 of them have been recovered and now being kept in the Horta Container Park under the Customs custody. — Lloyd's Agents.

Ponta Delgada, Apr 11 — Local Maritime Authorities have reported today that for environmental reasons it was decided that c.c. *CP Valour* will not be dismantled where she is grounded. The intention is to take off all the containers remaining on board and after to put the vessel afloat in order to be towed from the present position. According to information available all these operations have been awarded to the Dutch Salvage Group SvitzerWisjismuller and the works are expected to commence on the end of April or beginning of May next. — Lloyd's Agents.

CRESCENT CONNEMARA (U.K.)

London, Apr 8 — Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 0716, UTC: Chemical/oil carrier *Crescent Connemara* (1845 gt, built 2000), from Lochinver, in ballast, contacted Stornoway MRSC at 0458, UTC, to inform they had touched bottom while passing beneath the Sky Bridge, in lat 57 16.53N, long 05 44.36W. Vessel sounded: No evidence of pollution and no apparent damage. Vessel's owners are making arrangements for local divers to carry out inspection.

London, Apr 8 — Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 1038, UTC: Chemical/oil carrier *Crescent Connemara* is departing anchorage for Kyle harbour for inspection of hull by divers and class surveyors.

London, Apr 8 — Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 2153, UTC: Owners of chemical/oil carrier *Crescent Connemara* have made arrangements for divers to inspect the vessel at 0900, UTC, Apr 9. Search and rescue operations terminated.

London, Apr 9 — Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 1202, UTC: Chemical/oil carrier *Crescent Connemara* inspected by divers, no damage reported but minor scratches to starboard side of vessel. No risk of pollution.

London, Apr 10 — Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 1640, UTC: Chemical/oil carrier *Crescent Connemara* remains alongside at Kyle harbour. Vessel is expected to sail for Birkenhead at 0630, UTC, tomorrow.

DA BAK SOL

See "Germany" under "Port State Control."

DREAM-5 (Panama)

Yokohama, Apr 11 — Barge *Dream VI* was towed to Vladivostok by a tug of Russian marine salvage company. — Lloyd's Agents.

Yokohama, Apr 11 — Barge *Dream-5* (not *Dream VI* as reported in issue of Apr 12) was towed to Vladivostok by a tug of Russian marine salvage company. — Lloyd's Agents.

ELWHA (U.S.A.)

London, Apr 8 — A press report, dated Apr 7, states: An electrical problem on ro/ro *Elwha* (8275 gt, built 1968) has cancelled today's Washington state ferry run to and from Sidney, British Columbia. Spokesman Jim Fletcher says *Elwha* has stopped at Friday Harbor for repairs. Three other ferries continue to operate in the San Juan Islands, but Fletcher says there will likely be scheduled disruptions until *Elwha* returns to service.

EXXON VALDEZ (U.S.A.)

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated Apr 9, states: Oil that spilled when non specific tanker *Exxon Valdez* ran aground on a jagged rock in 1989 still lingers on and just below Alaska's surface. So does the resentment, and a series of state hearings on the continued effects of the 11-million-gallon spill is reviving the pain and anger of the people affected by the spill. Exxon Mobil spokesman Mark Boudreaux has said the company paid the compensation it owes and that its studies show Prince William Sound is "healthy, robust and thriving." But in sometimes emotional testimony on Saturday (Apr 8), fishermen, Native leaders, conservationists and academics said the government should seek additional damages of up to \$100 million from Exxon Mobil Corp. for unexpected effects of the spill. "What Exxon did to us is not fair. What has been done to us is a travesty," said Robert Wolfe, a fisherman who lives in Girdwood. Dozens of people have spoken at hearings that state officials are holding to decide whether to file a claim for additional damages, and at least two more sessions are scheduled. Some of those who testified Saturday raged against Exxon Mobil. Some offered ideas about research and restoration projects that could be done

with the money. Others talked about specific species that haven't recovered in Prince William Sound, such as Pacific herring. "We're just fishermen, but it's a way of life and it's been destroyed," said Evan Beedle of Cordova. Bill Hall, a former mayor of Cordova, said the hearings have just sharpened the painful memories of the spill, and the state and federal governments should be able to figure out the lingering effects for themselves. "This for me is an experience of a lingering effect of the oil spill. It's dragging and making it more painful and sustained over time," Hall said. Alaska Attorney General David Marquez, who is conducting the hearings, said he was struck by the emotion of the hearings. "One of the things, of course, we have been reminded about is the great passion that surrounds the aftermath of this horrible tragedy, and that's important for us to hear," Marquez said. In a 1991 civil settlement, Exxon agreed to pay \$900 million over a 10-year period ending in 2001. A "reopener" provision created a window from 2002 to 2006 in which the state and federal governments could claim up to an additional \$100 million. That is separate from an unresolved punitive damage judgment of \$4.5 billion that the company has not paid. An assessment presented by consultant Lucinda Jacobs for the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council estimated that as much as six miles of the sound's shoreline is still affected by the spill, and that as much as 100 tons of Exxon Valdez oil remains in the sound. An undetermined amount lingers beyond the sound, she said. The reopener provision expires Sept. 1, and the state and federal governments must file a claim 90 days before that date. They would have to prove that a population, habitat or species had suffered loss or decline in the area of the spill, and that the loss can be linked to the spill.

FAIRWEATHER (U.S.A.)

London, Apr 8 — An Alaska Marine Highway System press release, dated Apr 5, states: Passenger ro/ro *Fairweather* will be out of service longer than expected after maintenance workers found more extensive mechanical problems while repairing its engines, said Capt. John Falvey, general manager of the Alaska Marine Highway System. *Fairweather* has been at the Ketchikan Ship and Drydock for repairs to its four diesel engines. Maintenance workers discovered damage to the ships reduction gears while working on the engines. *Fairweather*, which was scheduled to return to service in mid-April, will not return to revenue service before June 1. *Chenega*, which is currently taking *Fairweather's* previous schedule, will continue to operate in Upper Lynn Canal and Sitka through Apr 13 when it is scheduled to be redeployed to Prince William Sound. *Chenega* will conduct crew training in Prince William Sound

until May 3 when it is scheduled to begin revenue service there. "We will be without a fast vehicle ferry in Southeast waters from Apr 13 to at least June 1," Falvey said. "Our intent is to repair *Fairweather* and return it to service as soon as possible."

FLORENCE (Bahamas)

London, Apr 9 — A press report, dated today, states: The newly launched bulk *Florence* (? Yard No.HR53-HL01 Ha Long, 31260 gt), the largest vessel ever built in Vietnam, leaked water hours after its launch Thursday (Apr 6), said news from Ha Long Shipyard in Quang Ninh. Engineers from Ha Long shipyard, a subsidiary of state-owned shipbuilding giant Vinashin, said water leaked through the outer hull of the ship, flooding half of holding compartment No 4 of five compartments onboard *Florence*. Luu Quoc Thang, member of Vinashin Board of Directors, said that the ship's rail launch system may have breached the ships hull causing the leak. Thang confirmed the problem was not serious, as the ship is equipped with a double-layer bilge system, capable of handling such incidents. Nguyen Van Anh, Vinashin Deputy General Director said the company had the ship towed to the maintenance bay and dispatched divers to check the leak. Anh predicted that some of the ship's valves had been negligently left unlocked, causing the leak. *Florence* is 190m long, 32.26m wide, as designed by the Denmark-based Carl Bro Marine Company. The ship is the first of 21 cargo vessels that the Vinashin's Ha Long Shipyard contracted with Graig Investment at a total cost of over US\$400 million. The cost of the repairs to the ship has yet to be determined but the vessel has a fully contracted insurance package.

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated today, states: Initial inspections have been made without results after bulk *Florence*, Yard No.HR53-HL01 Ha Long, took on water only hours after its launch Apr 6. Divers of Ha Long Shipbuilding Co. at 0200 today checked the bottom of the vessel, whose stern sunk slightly after water leaked through its outer hull and flooded half of the fourth among five compartments. A company official predicted that some of the ship's valves had been negligently left unlocked, causing the leak. But another official said the reason might originate from the rails under the bottom of the vessel, which were used to create momentum for the ship launch. He predicted that many rails could have hit obstacles on the ramp during the launch, crashing against the bottom of the ship, causing the leak. After the launch, many rails were found to be badly deformed. However, an engineer at the state-owned Vietnam Ship Industry Corp. (Vinashin) said inappropriate calculations for the vessel launch could be to blame for the incident. The

highly sloped short ramp may have caused the vessel to descend too rapidly into the water, breaching the ship hull and causing the leak.

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated today, states: Ha Long Shipyard workers have been successful in fixing damage to the hold of bulk *Florence*, that caused it to take in water a mere hour after its launch in Quang Ninh Province on Apr 6. Authorities from the shipyard, a member of the Viet Nam Shipbuilding Industry Corporation, said yesterday that the technical problem occurred in the fourth of five cargo holds. According to experts, the reason for the hold getting damaged was possibly that the vessel slipped off the launching tracks as it was sliding into the water, causing cables to break. The ship hit rocks hard at a depth of 8 m, resulting in a break in the cargo holds. More than 20 shipyard workers were immediately mobilised to pump water out of the hold and divers worked underwater to fix the break. When the tide started coming in, the vessel was moored in the shipyard's wharf and the problem was fixed at 2200, Apr 8.

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated today, states: Ha Long Shipyard launched its first sea faring vessel (bulk *I. Florence*) to water on Apr 6 for final check before delivery. However, it sank partly when it hit the water, due to a crack in the cargo hold No.4. When the vessel hit the water, a crack in the hull was discovered and water got into the vessel. The crack is about 6m long. The shipyard is working on the problem to ensure timely delivery of the vessel to clients.

London, Apr 10 — In a blow for Vietnam's shipbuilding ambitions the first of its breakthrough handymax bulker series for Graig Shipping sprang a leak in its hull shortly after launching. Bulk *Florence* was launched at Vietnam Shipbuilding Industry Corp's Ha Long Shipyard on Apr 6 and only hours was found to be taking water through its hull. The vessel compartment No.4, out of five, was found to be half full with water. Vinashin vice president Nguyen Quoc Anh played down the incident and claimed it had been blown out of proportion by the Vietnamese press. Mr Anh said that prior to the launching of vessel classification society DNV and the owners (Graig) had gone through the launching plan and all parties had agreed. "After the launching we found some water in hold No.4," he said. He added that the ship was now anchored at the west of Ha Long Shipyard and they were continuing the construction phase. What caused the leak in the double-hulled bulker is still unknown. Mr Anh said that surveys were now being carried out on the vessel.

London, Apr 11 — The Vietnam Shipbuilding Industry Corporation has identified the cause of a one-metre crack in the hull of bulk *Florence*. Vinashin said that it was repairing the hull crack to the first of its handymax bulker series for Graig Shipping after identifying the crack

as having been caused by one of the wooden girders that line the sliding channel for launching the ship. The ship is still due for delivery at the end of August.

FOS (St. Kitts-Nevis)

Izmir, Apr 6 — Reported locally that acid tanker *Fos* has been demolished already. — Lloyd's Agents.

FREITIND (Norway)

Trondheim, Apr 11 — General cargo *Freitind*: Kvernhusvik Shipyard inform there is no change in the vessel's situation. — Lloyd's Agents.

GENERAL GUISAN (Switzerland)

Rio de Janeiro, Apr 6 — Bulk *General Guisan* estimated time of arrival Apr 11 and expected time of berthing at Praia Mole, Vitoria, Apr 12. It is expected to submit to underwater inspection during berthing period. — Lloyd's Agents.

GENERAL VILLA (Cyprus)

London, Apr 8 — Bulk *General Villa* (19510 gt, built 1985) arrived at the Napier Pilot station at 0457, Mar 5, and the pilot boarded the vessel. At about 0540 hrs, when the vessel was turning to port to berth starboard side with two tugs in attendance, the bulbous bow of *General Villa* gently swept the concrete post of the Napier wharf, due to sudden sea swell which pushed the vessel towards the wharf. The concrete pile of the wharf was damaged and the bulbous bow sustained a dent of about 20 cm in length, 7 cm wide and 3 cm deep, near the waterline. (Note — *General Villa* subsequently sailed Napier Mar 7 and arrived Sacramento Mar 25.)

GEORGINA P. (Panama)

Piraeus, Apr 11 — General cargo *Georgina P.* was released and is in course of sale, ETD unknown. — Lloyd's Agents.

GRYF (Bahamas)

See *Villum Clausen*.

HEAVEN STAR

Manila, Apr 10 — Reported that "passenger/cargo vessel" *Heaven Star*, owned by Roble Shipping Lines, en route from Cebu City to Ormoc City, caught fire on its rooftop at about 0118 hrs, Apr 9, reportedly due to the overheating of the smoke stack at the sundeck. The fire spread to the fibreglass economy accommodation rooftop but was however, immediately put out by the crew and no-one among the 801 passengers was reported injured. The vessel continued its voyage and arrived Ormoc City about 0245 hrs, the same day. After inspection, the Coast Guard allowed the vessel to return to Cebu City but without any passengers, for any possible repairs. — Lloyd's Agents.

HELLAS (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

Falmouth, Apr 7 — Tug *Hellas* completed repairs to towing gear and sailed Falmouth at 1540, Apr 6, for

Leirvik, towing the hull of tug *Yuriy Topchev*. — Lloyd's Agents.

HOEGH GANDRIA (NIS)

Singapore, Apr 7 — Lng/Lpg *Hoegh Gandria* sailed Singapore 1540, Apr 7 for Blang Lancang.

HOLLAND (U.S.A.)

London Apr 10 — A press report, dated Apr 9, states: Cleanup crews continued efforts to remove diesel and motor fuel from the Stockton Deep Water Channel on Saturday (Apr 8) after an old barge spilled as much as 1,000 gallons of petroleum into the water. Passers-by first reported an unusual odor in the area on Wednesday, and by late Thursday the Coast Guard traced the spill to the 134-foot barge *Holland*, which was docked in nearby Mormon Slough. Late Friday, crews refloated the barge, but it quickly sank again, spilling another 30 gallons of fuel, said Lt. John Fu, a Coast Guard spokesman. "What we are doing now is trying to refloat the barge again and get vacuum trucks to the area to get fuel off the barge," Fu said. Most of the fuel, which at one point spread a sheen about a mile long and covered the width of the channel, has been cleaned up from the water, and the rest has evaporated, Fu said. But what no one knows is exactly how much fuel remains on the vessel, which has been docked for at least three years. Crews are trying to determine how much fuel remains on the barge and take steps to remove the petroleum before it also leaks into the water. Water damage has disrupted mechanical functions of the 1920s-era barge, making it more difficult for crews to move the crane and other parts of the vessel, said Lori Oldfather, a warden for the state Department of Fish and Game. "It's a very old and large vessel, and it's turning out to be a complicated puzzle," Oldfather said. The owner of the barge, developer Ryan Voorhees of Galt, is cooperating with authorities and says he will pay for the cleanup. He has blamed bad weather for contributing to the spill. He said wind sent water over the barge's deck, filling portholes and sinking the boat. He could be cited and fined for the spill if the San Joaquin County District Attorney's Office decides to press charges.

HUAL EUROPE (Bahamas)

London, Apr 11 — Understand the salvage of vehicle *Hual Europe* by salvors Kasel Salvage is around 97% complete. Note — *Hual Europe* grounded Oshima island, Tokyo Bay, in Typhoon "Higos", Oct 1, 2002.

HYUNDAI FORTUNE (Panama)

Ymuiden, Apr 7 — Salvage crews are currently on board c.c. *Hyundai Fortune*, preparing the vessel to be taken in tow for Oman. — SvitzerWijmsmuller Salvage BV.

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated today, states: C.c. *Hyundai Fortune* is being towed to Salalah

after it was severely damaged in a blaze during a voyage through the Indian Ocean, the Oman Daily Observer reported yesterday. The vessel, carrying some 4,000 containers, was en route to France from Singapore when the fire broke out, resulting in complete loss of engine power, the paper said. It added that the ship, which is expected to reach Salalah tomorrow, was given permission to enter Omani waters after ensuring all relevant safeguards were fully in place. "In keeping with Oman's obligations as a signatory to various international maritime conventions, the authorities decided to respond to the *Hyundai Fortune's* request, after fully taking into consideration all relevant safety and environmental issues," the paper quoted Sayyid Sulaiman Mohammed Al Busaidy, superintendent general of pollution control at the ministry of regional municipalities, environment and water resources, as saying. The accident occurred when the vessel was some 350 nautical miles from Salalah. The fire quickly spread through the engine room and the crew accommodation leaving the aft section completely gutted. "There were no reports of any injuries or fatalities, however," the Observer said. The blaze was brought under control on Saturday (Apr 8). The crew, who had briefly evacuated the burning vessel, later returned to the ship to help with the firefighting effort.

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated today, states: Undamaged containers on c.c. *Hyundai Fortune*, could be delivered to customers within a few weeks. Insurance claims for the lost freight are heading for the record books, with underwriters saying this is likely to be the biggest cargo loss ever. The ship was packed with high value consumer products when it caught fire. Hyundai Merchant Marine's 5,551 teu containership is now under tow and should arrive in the Omani port of Salalah later this week. There, a more detailed survey of the vessel will be undertaken and arrangements made for intact containers to be discharged and loaded onto other ships heading for Europe. A large number are thought to be in good shape, despite the devastation to the ship's aft section. In a statement, CK Yoo, managing director for HMM (Europe), said the line's head office in Seoul was studying how quickly sound boxes could be put on to other vessel and shipped from Salalah to the relevant discharge ports. Subject to securing alternative transport in time, it is hoped that arrangements can be made to start getting cargo to Europe around the middle of May, Mr Yoo said. AP Moller-Maersk's salvage company SvitzerWijismuller is in charge of the rescue effort. The port of refuge chosen is also a major transshipment hub for sister company Maersk Line and every effort is being made to ensure day-to-day operations are not disrupted by the arrival of the charred hull and hundreds of burnt

out containers, a spokesman said. Photographs show that the stern of the ship has been virtually destroyed in the inferno that blazed for more than a week. Insurance claims for the lost cargo are expected to total between \$100m and \$300m, making it the biggest such loss ever. If the ship is declared a total loss, that too could make it the largest containership casualty. The *Hyundai Fortune* was deployed within the New World Alliance's Asia-Europe Express service and was also carrying cargo for Grand Alliance lines. That means that seven major container lines are directly affected by the accident — APL, MOL, NYK, Hapag-Lloyd, OOCL and MISC as well as HMM. Compensation settlements are expected to be highly complex and take years to resolve. The ship was about to be phased out of the Asia-Europe Express and replaced by c.c. *Hyundai Shanghai*, a 6,800 teu newbuilding that will now be slotted into service loop. The cause of the blaze is still unclear, with several fire experts discounting the original theory that fireworks were to blame. Nevertheless, HMM has placed a temporary embargo on fireworks on any of its ships while the accident is investigated.

London, Apr 11 — A SvitzerWijismuller Savage BV report, dated Apr 10, states: The convoy consisting of c.c. *Hyundai Fortune* under tow of the SvitzerWijismuller Salvage tug *SmitWijis Rotterdam* and escorted by another fire fighting tug moved east-north-east along the Yemen coast during the last few days. This could be achieved when the close proximity of a logistical base like Aden became less important. During today permission was obtained from the Authorities in Yemen to actually leave the EEZ of the country, the border of which could be reached tomorrow night pending permissions to proceed further. SvitzerWijismuller Salvage contract managers are present in Yemen and Oman discussing the practicalities of the planned operations. The condition of the casualty in the meantime is further improved with actual work in progress on board by the SvitzerWijismuller salvage and fire fighting teams while the casualty is under tow. Work executed includes surgical fire fighting activities attacking the last remaining hot spots as well as further stabilisation tasks.

London, Apr 11 — An APL Service Status report, dated Apr 10, states: APL has today been notified by Hyundai Merchant Marine (HMM) the operators of c.c. *Hyundai Fortune* that the vessel is under tow to Salalah port, following a fire on the vessel on Mar 21. If towing proceeds as scheduled, *Hyundai Fortune* is expected to arrive at Salalah port around the morning, local time, Apr 12. The vessel and cargo will undergo inspection after arrival at Salalah Port. We are working with HMM on arrangements for on-carriage of the vessel's cargo and will provide further information

as soon as it is available. It is important to note that these arrangements will be subject to the terms and conditions of General Average, which was declared by the vessel's owner on Apr 5.

HYUNDAI NO.105 (Panama)

London, Apr 11 — Vehicle *Hyundai No.105* still sits at the bottom of the sea on the Indonesian side of the Singapore Strait after it collided with a large crude oil tanker in May 2004 and sank. Industry sources say that the Indonesian authorities remain keen that the wreck is removed, as it sits just 0.5 nautical miles from the traffic separation scheme; some also express fears that the wreck could shift and hit undersea pipelines in the area. Despite plans to cut off the top of the wreck, negotiations between all parties are still ongoing. Given the depth of water the wreck sits in, any contract awarded is likely to be huge.

INATTENDU (Belgium)

London, Apr 9 — Belgian inland waterways general cargo *Inattendu*, owned by the Belgian company JM Danis, Ghent, cargo 750 tons of barley, was in the River Leie near the Zulte bridge in the vicinity of Deinze, when its master discovered that vessel was making water at the bow at about 1400, local time, Apr 1. The Deinze firebrigade was called and they came to assist with portable pumps to pump out the inflowing river water. The river police tried to find an empty vessel in the neighbourhood to unload the cargo of barley from *Inattendu*, but could not find one. Then divers of the fire brigade found the hole in the bow of the vessel, most probably caused by a concrete protection slab, which has been sliding down from the river wall, according to the opinion of many skippers who were watching the salvage operations. Meanwhile a passing cargo vessel pushed *Inattendu* against the river wall, preventing it from sinking. Later divers from a specialised company closed the leak. After discharging the cargo, the vessel will be repaired.

INDAMEX CAUVERY (Germany)

London, Apr 12 — C.c. *Indamex Cauvery* passed Suez Canal Apr 9.

ISOLA DELLE PERLE (Italy)

London, Apr 12 — Ro/ro *Isola delle Perle* sailed Genoa Apr 7, arrived Leghorn Apr 8 and sailed same day for Cagliari.

IVORY TIRUPATI (Liberia)

London, Apr 8 — Ref *Ivory Tirupati* sailed Brest Apr 6 for Zeebrugge and according to LMIU AIS vessel was at Zeebrugge today.

IVS HUNTER (Panama)

London, Apr 10 — Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 1453, UTC: Bulk *IVS Hunter* (19712 gt, built 2001) struck the dock at Mile Marker 92, River Mississippi, at 1015, local time, Apr 8.

The vessel sustained a 20-foot-by-five-foot gash in the hull above the waterline, and is now at anchor nearby, awaiting a Class report. The dock sustained damage estimated to be in excess of \$100,000.

JIANG NING GUAN (China)

London, Apr 6 — General cargo *Jiang Ning Guan* arrived at Port Klang on Mar 24 and was reported sailing at Mar 29, bound for Hong Kong.

JOHN D. LEITCH (Canada)

London, Apr 11 — A small fracture was discovered on bulk *John D. Leitch* (20343 gt, built 1967) above the waterline in way of No.5 port ballast tank, hull plating at frame 65, at Lock 6, Welland Canal, Ontario, in lat 43 07N, long 79 15W, at 2100, local time, Apr 4. Inspection/repairs carried out at Wharf 12. Vessel underway at 0330, local time, Apr 5. (Note — *John D. Leitch* sailed Hamilton, Ontario, 0950, Apr 4, for Conneaut.)

JOYCE L. VANENKEVORT (U.S.A.)

Troy, Michigan, Apr 10 — Tug *Joyce L. Vanenkevort* (1179 gt, built 1998) had lost a rudder in the Saginaw River when it attempted to turn in the turning basin near Saginaw. Silting in the turning basin has become a major impediment to shipping in the river. Sources have confirmed that the vessel lost two of its four rudders on one side in the incident. The tug had rudders located in front of and behind both of her twins screws. Divers were not able to locate either of the lost rudders. The tug sailed to Escanaba using rudders on one side. New rudders are scheduled to be installed tomorrow in Escanaba. — Great Lakes & Seaway Shipping.

KAPITAN BOLSUNOVSKIY (Russia)

Busan, Apr 10 — Fish factory *Kapitan Bolsunovskiy* is still under repairs at Gamcheon harbour, Busan, which expected to complete by the beginning of May. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

KIEFERNWALD (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Apr 10 — A report from Kiel, dated today, states: General cargo *Kiefernwald* reached Kiel Holtenu roads morning of Apr 7 after it had been lying in Husum for repairs since its collision off the Dutch coast in August 2005. Destination Russia.

KOMETIK (Canada)

London, Apr 9 — Following received from Halifax RCC, timed 2345, UTC, Apr 8: Crude oil tanker *Kometik* (76216 gt, built 1997), in ballast, reported a tank fire during welding work in a tank in Conception Bay, Newfoundland, in lat 47 31.6N, long 52 59W at 1346, UTC, Apr 8. One person was killed another has 50% burns. Fire extinguished soon after. No external damage to vessel, seaworthiness not affected.

London, Apr 9 — A press report, dated Apr 8, states: One man is dead following a fire on crude oil tanker *Kometik* more than a kilometre off Newfoundland. Coast Guard officials say the man was pronounced dead aboard the *Kometik*, which services the Hibernia offshore oil platform. Another man was taken to a St. John's hospital with burns to half of his body. The two crew members were plucked from the tanker in Conception Bay after a fire broke out this morning. The fire was out by the time the men were airlifted. A Cormorant helicopter from Gander, N.L., and a civilian helicopter from St. John's were dispatched to the area.

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated Apr 9, states: One man is dead and another is in serious condition after a flash fire on board crude oil tanker *Kometik* in Conception Bay South yesterday morning. *Kometik*, that services the Hibernia platform, was anchored about a mile off Long Pond when the fire broke out at about 1130 hrs. Kevin Barnes, maritime search-and-rescue co-ordinator with the Canadian Coast Guard, said one man was pronounced dead at the scene, while another was airlifted to the Health Sciences Centre in St. John's, his body more than 50% burned. Barnes said there were 30 people on board the *Kometik* at the time of the fire. The names and ages of the men have not been released. However, the deceased was an employee of Canship Ugland Ltd., which operates the vessel. Capt. Sid Hynes, chairman of Canship Ugland, said both men's families have been contacted. Hynes said the fire occurred in a cargo area of the vessel, where the two men had been working. It was quickly extinguished, but rescue procedures were hampered by smoke and heat. The vessel was not carrying cargo at the time of the incident. As of yesterday evening, the vessel had been secured and was still running under its own power. The Royal Newfoundland Constabulary is conducting an investigation into the incident. The Transportation Safety Board is also expected to conduct an investigation into the cause of the fire, which is unknown.

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated today, states: Investigators are seeking the cause of a fire that killed one man and seriously injured another on board crude oil tanker *Kometik* anchored in Conception Bay. The two men, both from Newfoundland and Labrador, were doing welding repairs in a cargo area on the *Kometik* when a flash fire broke out on Saturday morning (Apr 8). The vessel had been waiting to take on crude oil. Wayne Dalton, 38, was killed while he and a contract employee were carrying out welding repairs in the vessel's cargo area. The injured man was taken to hospital with serious burns. He is employed by East Coast Marine. "We feel so bad about this," said Sid Hynes, chairman of Canship Ugland. "It was a terrible,

terrible event. It's a first, and hopefully the last." Hynes said the fire was quickly brought under control. Investigators with the RCMP, the Transportation Safety Board of Canada and the provincial government's occupational health and safety division are working on the case. Maurice Landry, a communications officer with Transport Canada, said investigators are looking at such things as violations to the Canadian Labour Code. Canship Ugland says all emergency procedures were followed once the fire started. The vessel was not carrying any cargo at the time of the fire.

London, Apr 11 — Crude oil tanker *Kometik*, with 30 persons on board, reported a flash fire in the number five starboard cargo tank in Conception Bay, Newfoundland, in lat 47 31.50N, long 52 59.39W, at 1344, UTC, Apr 8. Fire was quickly extinguished and two seriously injured personnel were medivaced to hospital.

LAURA (U.S.A.)

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated Apr 10, states: The US Coast Guard rescued four men early this morning from a fishing vessel that had grounded off Kodiak Island. The 83-foot shrimp vessel *Laura* (163 gt, built 1967) ran aground on Refuge Island, several miles east of the city of Kodiak. The crew called for help around 0200 hrs. The ship's master, Michael Helligso, and three crew were plucked from the fishing boat by helicopter, according to the Coast Guard. The crew members were not identified. Weather early this morning was overcast with light winds and seven-foot seas. The vessel was not severely damaged and will be refloated with the next tide, according to Coast Guard spokesman Lt. Charter Tschirgi in Juneau.

London, Apr 11 — Following received from Coast Guard Juneau, timed 0515, UTC: Fishing *Laura* was refloated around 1330 hrs, Apr 10 and was able to safely proceed.

LIBERTY A. (Cyprus)

See "Cyprus" under "Port State Control."

LILLY (North Korea)

Port Said, Apr 9 — General cargo *Lilly* arrived Damietta Apr 5 from Constantza. — Lloyd's Agents.

LYGRA (NIS)

Kristiansand, Apr 7 — Ship Manager of ro/ro *Lygra* informs that repairs have been completed and she will sail 2100 today for Denmark or England. — Lloyd's Agents.

MAERSK DRESDEN (Germany)

London, Apr 8 — Following notice to mariners issued Apr 7: Engine troubled container vessel 50644 tons (c.c. *Maersk Dresden*, 50644 gt, built 1996) adrift in vicinity of lat 36 52N, long 152 51E, at 0700, UTC, Apr 7. (Note — *Maersk Dresden* sailed Hong

Kong 2357, Mar 25 for Yantian, then with a subsequent eta at Panama Canal of Apr 17.)

London, Apr 8 — Following received from Coast Guard Japan, timed 0625, UTC: Vessel call sign DHAF (c.c. *Maersk Dresden*) is awaiting a tug which due on scene at approximately 0700, local time, Apr 10.

London, Apr 8 — Following notice to mariners issued today: Engine troubled c.c. *Maersk Dresden* reported adrift in lat 36 36.4N, long 152 42.8E at 2100, UTC, today.

London, Apr 11 — Following received from Coast Guard Japan, timed 0710, UTC: C.c. *Maersk Dresden* is still adrift in very bad weather. Tug/supply *Shin Chou Maru* is on scene waiting to take the vessel in tow. (See issue of Apr 11.)

London, Apr 12 — Understand c.c. *Maersk Dresden* is now in tow of tug/supply *Shin Chou Maru*.

MAHINABANK (Isle of Man)

London, Apr 7 — Ro/ro/c.c. *Mahinabank* sailed from Hull at 2359 hrs, Apr 5, bound for Antwerp, where it arrived at 1902 hrs, Apr 6.

MAJ DANIELSEN (Bahamas)

London, Apr 12 — Understand tug *Zeebrugge* left Terneuzen at 0040 hrs to assist general cargo *Maj Danielsen* (3120 gt, built 1985), which has propeller problems, to Antwerp. From buoy W 4 tug *Evergem* will also assist. (Note — *Maj Danielsen*, Kamsar for Antwerp, passed Cape Finisterre Apr 8.)

Zeebrugge, Apr 12 — General cargo *Maj Danielsen*, with tug *Zeebrugge* forward and another tug aft passed Flushing, bound Antwerp, at 0945 hrs. — Lloyd's Sub-agents. (Note — According to LMIU AIS *Maj Danielsen* was in lat 51 20 52N, long 03 48 16E, speed 8.8 knots, reportedly with restricted manoeuvrability at 1007 hrs.)

MARIA (Greece)

See *Monte Rosso*.

MARIETJE BENITA (Netherlands)

London, Apr 6 — General cargo *Marietje Benita* passed Brunsbittel, in an easterly direction, on Apr 4.

London, Apr 10 — Information received, dated Kiel today, states: General cargo *Marietje Benita* was re-delivered to its Dutch owners Wagerborg on Apr 7. The dry dock at Peterswerft, Wewelsfleth, had been flooded on Apr 4. In the evening of Apr 7 the repaired ship departed towards Brunsbittel. (Note — *Marietje Benita* passed Brunsbittel in a westerly direction at 2000, Apr 7 and subsequently arrived Rochester Apr 9.)

MARITIME LADY (Gibraltar)

London, Apr 8 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: The raised wreck of general cargo *Maritime Lady* is still afloat in Cuxhaven. Superstructure and parts of the bow have been scrapped, while the remaining hull berthed at the quay.

MATSUKAZE (Panama)

London, Apr 6 — Following received from Coast Guard Victoria, BC, RCC, timed 1805 UTC: At 1653, UTC, chemical/oil carrier *Matsukaze* (10795 gt, built 1981) reported engine problems off Constance Bay. Vessel is presently drifting at about two knots off Constance Bank. (Note — *Matsukaze* was last reported arrived Vancouver Anchorage, Canada, at 1058, Apr 3, and according to LMIU AIS, was in lat 48° 19' 50.4" N, long 123° 22' 13.2" W, at 1802, UTC, Apr 6, near Constance Bank, moving eastwards at 1.8 knots.)

London, Apr 6 — Following received from Coast Guard Victoria, BC, RCC timed 2145, UTC: Chemical/oil carrier *Matsukaze* reported anchored off Constance Bank at 1937, UTC, attempting to repair engine problem. (Note — According to LMIU AIS, *Matsukaze* was in lat 48° 20' 9" N, long 123° 22' 7.2" W, at 2140, UTC, nine nautical miles off Constance Bank, drifting east-south-east at two knots.)

London, Apr 7 — According to LMIU AIS, chemical/oil carrier *Matsukaze* was in lat 48 23 57N, long 124 18 22.2W, at 0834, UTC, today, under way at 11.2 knots, course 288 deg.

MEGA (Dominica)

London, Apr 7 — Following received from Aarhus RCC, timed 0730, UTC: General cargo *Mega* (1860 gt, built 1985), proceeding to bunker at Skagen, grounded off Skagen in lat 57 43N, long 10 37E, at 2028, UTC, Apr 6. Vessel was towed off by small tugs at 2225, UTC, same day. No pollution reported. The *Mega* has not been detained by Danish maritime authorities and is free to sail.

London, Apr 12 — General cargo *Mega* arrived London Apr 10.

Aalborg, Apr 12 — General cargo *Mega* refloated by its own means a few hours after grounding. The vessel only sustained minor damage, and was given permission to sail by the Danish authorities. — Lloyd's Agents.

MOBBY DICK (Honduras)

Piraeus, Apr 11 — general cargo *Mobby Dick* was released and is in course of sale, ETD unknown. — Lloyd's Agents.

MOL INITIATIVE (Panama)

London, Apr 8 — Following navigation warning issued Apr 7: Navigation and staying prohibited Hokkaido south coast, Hakodate No.6 quarantine inspection anchorage, while fire extinguishing of c.c. *Mol Initiative* is performed, navigation and staying prohibited period 0800, Apr 7, to fire extinguishing finished area within 500 metres of lat 41-47N, long 140-41E.

London, Apr 10 — A Mitsui O.S.K. Lines Ltd, press release, dated Tokyo today, states: Mitsui O.S.K. Lines, Ltd. reported that a fire in the engine-room of the MOL-operated c.c. *MOL Initiative* has been completely extinguished. The fire on *MOL Initiative* occurred off Nemuro,

Hokkaido, early morning, JST, Apr 3. The vessel was evacuated when smoke reached the crew quarters on Apr 4. After that, a rescue vessel towed the ship to an area off Hakodate, where full-scale firefighting efforts began on the evening of Apr 7. The fire was completely extinguished at 1323, JST, yesterday. There were no injuries among the crew and oil leakage. The company is taking the importance of the incident seriously and is conducting a thorough investigation into the cause of the fire.

London, Apr 11 — A navigation warning issued today states: Hakodate ko No.6 quarantine inspection anchorage: C.c. *Mol Initiative* at anchor for towing work preparation, navigation and staying prohibited period 1300, today to towing start, area within 500 metres of lat 41 47N, long 140 41E.

Yokohama, Apr 11 — The owners of c.c. *MOL Initiative* declared General Average Apr 10 and vessel is now scheduled to be towed to Tokyo early next week. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Apr 12 — An APL service status report, dated Apr 11, states: APL has today been notified by MOL Euro-Oriental Shipping S.A., owners of c.c. *MOL Initiative*, that they have declared General Average, following a fire on the vessel on Apr 3. Because GA has been declared, the vessel operator is required to hold your cargo pending authority to release from their appointed General Average Adjustors, Asai and Ichikawa of Tokyo. Please note that, as salvors have been engaged, there will be a requirement to post separate salvage security to the salvors at the completion of the salvage operation. As yet we have not received any information regarding the Salvage security but will advise you when this is received in due course.

MONTE MEIXUEIRO (Spanish)

See "Spanish Fishing Vessels Seized by Norway".

MONTE ROSSO (Malta)

London, Apr 12 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: The master of crude oil tanker *Monte Rosso* was fined Euros 29,400 on Apr 11 for the collision between his vessel and barge *Maria* at Perama on Feb 21 and the resulting pollution.

NEW FUJI (Indonesia)

London, Apr 7 — A press report, dated today, states: General cargo *New Fuji* (682 gt, built 1986) sank in the Sawu Sea, between Timor Island and Flores, in East Nusa Tenggara in the early hours of Sunday (Apr 2), however the accident went unreported until Wednesday. The vessel departed from Tenau Port in Kupang on Saturday carrying 32 people comprising of 16 crew members including its skipper, 10 cattle caretakers, two shipping company employees and four passengers, along with a cargo of 265 head of cattle, 71 slabs of marble, nine containers filled with scrap iron and a sedan.

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

Authorities only received information about the fate of the freighter three days later from three survivors who were found adrift at sea and picked up by a Pertamina tanker, *Plaju*, which was passing the area, about 65 nautical miles from Tenau Port. Tenau Port administration head, FX Bambang Julianto, when contacted yesterday, said that his office immediately coordinated with the local search and rescue team, the main naval base and related agencies after receiving information on the accident, to locate other possible survivors. "The captain did not send out an SOS before the ship sank. We only knew that a ship had sunk after the Pertamina depot manager informed us about the three survivors who were plucked from the sea by the passing tanker," said Bambang. One of the survivors, Nurhamin, the ship's third navigator, when contacted separately, said that the vessel had set sail from the port when the sky was cloudy, the sea calm and there were slight winds. However, after sailing for about 13 hours, strong winds, heavy rain and waves as high as three metres suddenly appeared. "Huge waves hit the ship's starboard, shifting the load, including the 250 head of cattle and marble slabs to the port side of the ship, and within minutes it sank," he said, adding that the captain was unable to call for help because the accident happened so quickly. "When the ship started listing, the captain at one point ordered his men to call for help through the satellite telephone, but as the ship was about to sink, we only had the opportunity to fire two flare signals. The passengers then took the life buoys and jumped overboard," said Nurhamin, from Cepu, Central Java. Vessel was owned by PT Puspa Laut Kencana in Surabaya but was leased to Surabaya-based PT Suntrako. Three vessels operated by Suntrako — Seruni, Anggrek and Altamanda — are still scouring the location in the hope of finding more survivors.

NOREN (Sweden)

London, Apr 11 — General cargo *Noren* arrived Umea Apr 2, left Apr 6 and according to LMIU AIS *Norden* is at Landskrona. (See issue of Apr 6.)

Gothenburg, Apr 12 — General cargo *Noren* is still at a yard in Landskrona. According to vessel's managers all damaged materiel was removed Apr 10, and now starting to build up the bow. Still some 15 tons steel plus. Work expected to be completed for departure yard Apr 23. — Westax Marine Services AB.

OCEAN GEM (Belize)

Yokohama, Apr 11 — General cargo *Ocean Gem* is a constructive total loss and is still aground in the same position. Although the oil removal operation was completed, salvage of vessel's hull has not yet commenced. — Lloyd's Agents.

OLUK (Malta)

Singapore, Apr 9 — General cargo *Oluk* arrived Singapore 1800, Apr 8, for bunkers, and sailed 0355, Apr 9 for Suez. — Lloyd's Agents.

OLYMPIA (North Korea)

See "Cyprus" under "Port State Control".

OOCL FRANCE (Liberia)

London, Apr 8 — C.c. *OOCL France* arrived Hamburg 1439, Apr 6, from Amsterdam, and according to LMIU AIS was in lat 53 36 15N, long 05 08 15E, at 1103, UTC, today.

OPDR SEVILLA (Canary Islands)

London, Apr 7 — General cargo *OPDR Sevilla* sailed from Hansweert at 1723 hrs, Apr 5, bound for Rotterdam, arriving at 0845 hrs, Apr 6. It departed at 2355 hrs, Apr 6, bound for Melilla, Spain.

OSCAR DYSON (U.S.A.)

London, Apr 8 — A press report, dated Apr 7, states: The NOAA research vessel *Oscar Dyson* is back in operation. The vessel was in dry dock for six weeks for repairs after hitting rocks in British Columbia waters on Feb 10. The vessel was heading for Bellingham, Washington, for warranty work on one of its two engines when it scraped its hull and damaged its propeller on rocks in Sara Passage near Vancouver Island.

OTTON (Panama)

Bilbao, Apr 7 — Firefighting tug *Ottton* is still under repair at Bilbao. — Lloyd's Agents.

PREMSHIP X (Philippines)

Manila, Apr 11 — General cargo *Premship X* is still awaiting refloating as the vessel's owner and insurer have not yet come to an agreement, the Philippine Coast Guard reported today. The wreck is blocking part of the busy Mactan Channel. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

PROTECTOR (Panama)

Mombasa, Apr 7 — Kenya Ports Authority advise bulk *Protector* arrived at the port of Mombasa Mar 23 and was allocated berth No. 3 to discharge 13,600 tonnes of wheat. It is reported that while in Maputo it lost control and hit one of the berths. While discharging wheat it was also undergoing repairs. The repairs were carried out by Southern Engineering Co. Ltd (SECO). Vessel sailed Mar 29. The next port of call was advised to be Tanga. — Lloyd's Agents.

QUEEN OF THE NORTH (Canada)

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated Apr 10, states: The diesel fuel leak from passenger ro/ro *Queen of the North* has not caused any major environmental damage, say officials in charge of the cleanup. The Prince Rupert Incident Command centre says there are still two slicks near Hartley Bay, where *Queen of the North*. Ninety-nine passengers and crew managed to escape the sinking vessel.

Two other people - a couple from the B.C. Interior - are still missing and presumed dead. The head of the command centre, Lance Sundquist, said crew only managed to clean up a small amount of the fuel using absorbent booms, but said the area covered in diesel has still shrunk significantly. He said some of it has evaporated, and some of it has now dispersed over a larger area. Sundquist also said there have been no reports of dead fish, and only a minimal effect on other wildlife. "Up to this point, there were three birds that were observed that appeared to be acting somewhat erratically. Now that's out of observations of 2,000 birds that were seen in the area at the time when the wildlife crew were doing some of their assessments." He said protective booms have been placed around areas near Hartley Bay and Kitkatla, where First Nations harvest shellfish. (See issue of Apr 4.)

London, Apr 12 — A press report, dated today, states: SMIT Salvage and SvitzerWijsmuller are assessing the wreck of BC Ferries' passenger ro/ro *Queen of the North* with a view to removing its fuel and lubricating oil. BC Ferries spokeswoman Deborah Marshall said the two companies would submit intervention plans, though it was not clear whether they would be collaborating or tendering competitively. Local spill prevention manager Burrard Clean is providing the clean-up for the limited fuel oil which is leaking from the vessel. BC Ferries has not indicated it would definitely extract the fuel from the ship, which sank in 400m of water near Queen Charlotte Islands off the coast of British Columbia on Mar 22. Two passengers are missing presumed dead and several investigations are under way, including one into the loss of life by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. BC Ferries said it would cover the route from next week with the passenger ro/ro *Queen of Prince Rupert*.

REY DE COLIMAN (Mexico)

London, Apr 8 — Understand salvage services are being rendered to tug *Rey de Coliman* (342 gt, built 1988) aground near Manzanillo, Mexico, by Titan Maritime, under Lloyd's Open Form, dated Apr 7.

London, Apr 10 — Following received from the operators of tug *Rey de Coliman*, dated today: *Rey de Coliman* grounded near Manzanillo on Mar 31. The vessel is still aground, and salvors are bringing refloating equipment to the scene. Damage is believed to be minimal, as the vessel is aground on sand.

RHEINGOLD

London, Apr 10 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Dutch rescue boats *Koningin Beatrix* and *Anna Dorothea* came to the aid of general cargo *Rheingold*, 1062 gt, which had sprung a leak on Apr 6. The tug *Aquanaut* towed the casualty to a position near Enkhuizen escorted by the *Koningin Beatrix*.

Maassluis, Apr 11 — General cargo *Rheingold* was savely towed towards Lelystad and she is still there. — Lloyd's Sub-Agents.

RUNNER 4 (Dominica)

London, Apr 9 — A press report, dated today, states: A ship (general cargo *Runner 4*) which sunk off the northern coast of Estonia a month ago has begun to leak oil again, according to the Finland's environmental administration. Finland's border guard, which has carried out surveillance in the area, says the fuel which has risen to the surface is most likely light oil. A Finnish coastguard ship, as well as the oil spill response vessel *Hylje*, have been sent to the scene. Officials predict that winds from the south could blow the oil towards areas between Porvoo and Helsinki, but ice formations would prevent the oil from moving further.

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated today, states: General cargo *Runner 4* that sank off the coast of Estonia in March is leaking oil again, Estonian authorities said Friday. Finland yesterday sent a coast guard ship and an oil combating vessel to the scene, but they were recalled in the afternoon after the Estonians said the situation had improved. Heli Haapasaari of the Finnish environmental administration said yesterday that several slicks were being pushed by southerly winds toward the Finnish coast. "But the oil will stop at the edge of the ice, which is some 50 kilometres off the Finnish coast," Ms Haapasaari added. The wreck rests at a depth of about 80 metres with at least one of its fuel tanks ruptured.

SAFE CONCORDIA (Panama)

London, Apr 8 — Semi-sub HL vessel *Safe Concordia*, Singapore for Ciudad del Carmen, passed Port Said Mar 31.

SAMHO FAMILY (South Korea)

London, Apr 11 — Chemical/oil carrier *Samho Family* arrived Hong Kong 1810, Apr 7 and sailed 1810, same day for Kaohsiung.

SANKO ROBUST (Liberia)

Limassol, Apr 10 — Bulk *Sanko Robust* arrived Limassol Apr 8 with tug *Barracuda*. — Lloyd's Agents.

SANTA MONICA (U.K.)

London, Apr 11 — Following received from Coast Guard Japan, timed 0715, UTC: C.c. *Santa Monica* (43213 gt, built 1991) is in collision with a Japanese fishing vessel in lat 38 10.5N, long 141 28.4E, at 0445, local time, yesterday and as a result the fishing vessel sank. There were four persons on the fishing vessel, of which, three were rescued and and one person is still missing. *Santa Monica* is currently at anchor near the collision position.

SARONIC BREEZE (Panama)

Busan, Apr 10 — Ref *Saronic Breeze* sailed Busan at about 1330, Apr 7 for Yosou after completion of cargo

discharge. The vessel berthed at Daehan Shipbuilding Co, Ltd, Yosou, at about 1030, Apr 8 for permanent repairs which are expected to be completed at the end of April. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

SEALARK

London, Apr 12 — A press report, dated today, states: Investigations have been started into the fire and subsequent sinking of passenger *Sealark* in Lae at the weekend. The National Maritime Safety Authority (NMSA) is heading the investigation, with three officers already in Lae. While investigating the safety aspects of the incident, in which two crew members were badly burnt when the ship's engines caught fire last Friday (Apr 7) and later the sinking of the ship just off the harbour, the NMSA is also helping to contain an oil spill from the sunken ship. The Morobe Provincial Disaster Office had been monitoring the spill which was yesterday reported to have worsened. Disaster officers took measures to control the spread of the spill, reported to be about 300 metres in radius, by placing sponge mats in an attempt to absorb the oil on the surface of the sea. But yesterday, the mats had been carried away by the tide. The NMSA and the Transport Department introduced another spill-control method, spraying a certain chemical on top of the oil on the water to absorb it. The NMSA has also issued an order to the owners of the ship, Bismark Maritime, to prevent pollution from the ship. It has also issued a "wreck removal" order on the company to raise and remove the wreck from its present location. NMSA general manager Chris Rupen said the orders were issued because the location where the ship had sunk was considered to pose a significant environmental threat. It also posed a serious threat to commercial shipping that calls at the port of Lae. Mr Rupen said the vessel owners were assisting the NMSA with its investigations. But attempts by the investigators to access the Bismark Maritime establishment at the city's waterfront were reportedly stalled yesterday. The company had demanded that a proper search warrant be obtained by the investigators to allow them access. Attempts to get comments from the company were unsuccessful late yesterday. Owner Harmish Sharpe, however, responded to queries emailed to him by demanding to know the names of the NMSA investigators and Provincial Disaster officers who raised concerns over the company's reluctance to assist the investigators. (Note — A press report, dated Oct 6, states: *Sealark* is a 75 metre, 700-passenger ship that has been based in the Philippines. The ship is being brought to PNG due to the high cost of airfares around the country especially between Port Moresby and Lae.)

SEE-STERM (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Apr 12 — General cargo *See-Stern*, Kaliningrad for Rotterdam,

passed Brunsbuttel 0938, Apr 10 and subsequently arrived Rotterdam 1425, Apr 11.

SILVA (Cambodia)

Esbjerg, Apr 7 — General cargo *Silva* has been sold at an auction. The new owner was repairing the vessel and making it seaworthy again. But the new owner has given up the repairs and have sold the vessel to a local salvage yard. The salvage yard has announced that the vessel will be gone in 10 months. — Lloyd's Agents.

SILVER ARROW (Belize)

Yokohama, Apr 11 — General cargo *Silver Arrow* (3552 gt, built 1980) had engine trouble 20 miles off Izuoshoma Mar 29. Vessel was towed to off Chiba and anchored off Mar 30. — Lloyd's Agents. *Silver Arrow* sailed Onahama Mar 28 and subsequently arrived Yokosuka Mar 31.)

SINAR DEMAK (Singapore)

London, Apr 8 — A press report, dated today, states: At least six workers were seriously and a few others lightly injures in an explosion that occurred at general cargo *Sinar Demak* (2646 gt) being built by PT Dok dan Perkapalan Surabaya yesterday afternoon, sources said. The injured workers were rushed to a nearby hospital. Bambang, chief of the company's security guards, confirmed the accident. Seven people sustained injuries and they had all been taken to the Pelabuhan Surabaya hospital for medical treatment, Bambang said. The police are still investigating the causes of the accident.

SLOPS (Greece)

London, Apr 11 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: While work to the shell plating was being carried out on sludge carrier *Slops* (10815 gt, built 1975) in the Kynossoura area, a fire broke out in No. 5 and No. 6 cargo tanks at 0940 yesterday. There were no injuries to the seven workshop personnel on board who evacuated the area in time. The fire was extinguished by craft of the firebrigade by 1100 hrs. Port authority patrol boats and tugs also proceeded to the area. There was no pollution caused.

SOSPAN-DAU (Netherlands)

London, Apr 7 — Following received from Coastguard Dover, timed 0528, UTC: Hopper barge *Sospan-Dau* (1219 gt, built 1978) is currently in lat 50 47.3N, long 00 20E with slight leak in forward compartment. Will lighten ship and investigate.

London, Apr 7 — Following received from Coastguard Dover MRCC, timed 1440, UTC: Hopper barge *Sospan-Dau* reported at 0622, UTC, today that it was proceeding for Newhaven for diver inspection.

London, Apr 11 — Hopper barge *Sospan-Dau* arrived Zwijndrecht Apr 9.

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

STADT RENDSBURG (Cyprus)

Georgetown, Guyana, Apr 10 — C.c. *Stadt Rendsburg* is still under detention. Bail bond lodged today and vessel expected to sail at high tide this evening. — Lloyd's Agents.

Georgetown, Guyana, Apr 10 — C.c. *Stadt Rendsburg* sailed at approximately 1530 hrs, today, for Jamaica, after its detention was lifted. — Lloyd's Agents.

STAR MARINER (South Korea)

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated today, states: Four Chinese sailors were missing after their tug hit Republic of Korean c.c. *Star Mariner* (9522 gt, built 2005) early this morning and sank near a harbour in east Shanghai Municipality. The collision took place at 0039 today when the Chinese tug, which was towing another ship, and *Star Mariner* were approaching the Wusongkou Port. The tug sank after the collision, throwing all the 10 sailors into the water. Rescuers lifted six shipmen out of the water, but the other four remained missing. Eleven ships went searching for the missing people this morning, but heavy fog hampered the rescue operation. Investigation into the cause of the accident is under way.

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated today, states: Four sailors were missing after their tug *Wanwang 428*, heading toward Shanghai harbour with a barge, collided with a container vessel (c.c. *Star Mariner*), bound Baoshan Container Harbour, at the Wusong mouth of Yangtze River near Shanghai at 0039 today. Rescuers have saved six sailors who fell into the water from the Anhui Province tug, which sank after the accident. Shanghai Maritime Safety Administration has sent patrol vessels, refloating boats and rescue ships to the spot and asked the passing ships to help search for the wreck. Shanghai Salvage Bureau and the East China Sea Salvage Bureau also joined the rescue mission. Because of the heavy fog this morning the helicopters could not take off, which made the search very difficult. The investigation team made up by Shanghai Maritime Safety Administration has arrived at the scene to look into the cause of this accident.

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated today, states: Rescuers were still looking for four Chinese sailors missing after tug *Wanwang 428*, from Anhui Province, collided with c.c. *Star Mariner* in Shanghai and capsized early yesterday morning. All 10 crew members on board the tug fell into the water near the mouth of the Yangtze River. Six were quickly pulled from the water in healthy condition, but the other four remained missing late last night, according to the Shanghai Maritime Safety Administration. Eleven rescue boats had been sent to cruise the waters looking for the missing sailors, but heavy fog began to hover over the accident site later in the morning, slowing the rescue

operation. *Star Mariner* was heading for Shanghai's Baoshan container dock when it ran into the tug, which was on its way out of local waterway yesterday, officials said. The Chinese vessel quickly capsized after the collision. *Star Mariner* is in good condition and has been detained for investigation. Authorities are informing all vessels in the area to keep an eye out for the missing sailors.

London, Apr 12 — A press report, dated today, states: Three sailors are confirmed dead after a ship collision (involving c.c. *Star Mariner* and tug *Wanwang 428*) at Wusong, the mouth of the Yangtze River, on Monday, it was reported today. After more than 30 hours of searching yesterday the sunken tug was found and pulled from the water. Search members found three bodies in its cabin, one sailor is still missing. Two of the sailors are from Anhui Province and two are from Hubei Province. Shanghai Maritime Safety Administration contacted their families to identify the bodies. It didn't specify who was still missing. Despite of the slim survival chance, the search will continue. The responsibility of the collision is still under investigation.

STAR PRINCESS (Bermuda)

London, Apr 9 — At 0647, UTC, today passenger *Star Princess* was at Bremerhaven.

STEENBANK (Netherlands)

London, Apr 6 — General cargo *Steenbank* was reported passing Brunsbittel at 0538 hrs, Apr 5, on a reported voyage of Delzjil for Koge.

SUPERFERRY 9 (Philippines)

Manila, Apr 10 — Ro/ro *Superferry 9* is now back to its regular operating schedule between Manila and Bacolod. The vessel was released from Keppel Batangas Shipyard on Apr 4 after repairs were completed to its defective rudder. The vessel then resumed regular operations on Apr 5. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

SUPERFERRY II (Greece)

London, Apr 11 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: Master of passenger ro/ro *Superferry II* (4986 gt, built 1974) advised the port authority of Rafina that departure would be delayed due to a damage to the Starboard Main Engine at 0800, yesterday. The vessel was programmed to depart at 0805 hrs for Andros- Tinos-Mykonos but was then prohibited to depart until the repairs were completed. On board were 368 passengers, 85 cars, 11 trucks and 12 motorcycles.

London, Apr 11 — Lloyd's Casualty Representatives in Piraeus report: Passenger ro/ro *Superferry II* (4986 gt, built 1974) had starboard main engine mechanical failure at 0800, Apr 10, while berthed at Rafina port. Vessel was scheduled to perform the voyage Andros - Tinos - Mykonos Island. Local port authorities prohibited the

vessel's departure until inspection by her class surveyor and repair of the damages.

London, Apr 12 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: Passenger ro/ro *Superferry II* was permitted to sail Rafina for Andros at 1045, Apr 11, following repairs to the starboard main engine damage.

SUPERSEACAT TWO (U.K.)

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated today, states: Passenger ro/ro *Superseacat Two* (4662 gt, built 1997) which operates between the Isle of Man and Liverpool is out of service, less than a month after improvement work on it was completed. The Isle of Man Steam Packet Company says *Superseacat Two* will go into a dry dock for two days. Damage to a water-jet which powers the vessel, which may have been caused by floating debris, is being investigated. The route will be run by *Sea Express One*. *Superseacat Two* returned to service last month after eight weeks in the dry dock at Birkenhead for refurbishments.

London, Apr 10 — Understand passenger ro/ro *Superseacat Two* will be drydocked at NSL Birkenhead this week. It will depart Douglas for Birkenhead via Liverpool at 0645, Apr 10.

THOR TRAVELLER (Thailand)

London, Apr 8 — Bulk *Thor Traveller* arrived Singapore Apr 6.

TOPPY 4 (Japan)

London, Apr 9 — A press report, dated today, states: Hydrofoil *Topy 4* (281 gt, built 1979) has struck an unidentified object, possibly a whale, in waters in Kagoshima Prefecture today, leaving 49 passengers injured, officials of the Japan Coast Guard and the ferry operator said. *Topy 4*, with 103 passengers onboard, was heading from Yaku Island to Kagoshima port when the incident occurred at 1805 hrs, coast guard officials said. Coast guard officials said the ferry was heading toward Kagoshima port on its own power after the incident.

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated today, states: At least 86 people were injured, some seriously, when a high-speed Japanese ferry (hydrofoil *Topy 4*) struck an object which passengers said they believed was a whale. The two-deck ferry was carrying 103 passengers and five crew when the accident happened yesterday evening as it headed to Ibusuki on the southern tip of Japan's main western island of Kyushu. Initially, officials reported 49 injuries including roughly a dozen people who were seriously injured. "The number of injuries has risen as we continue the investigation. The number of those in a serious condition also appears to have risen," said a Japan Coastguard official. He said the ferry had been towed to the port of Yamakawa and that an investigation was under way to find out exactly what happened. Some passengers and crew told investigators they believed

the ferry might have struck a whale, the official said. The impact was so strong that the ferry was disabled.

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated today, states: Japan's coast guard were today searching for a giant whale that they suspect collided with hydrofoil *Toppy 4*, injuring 97 people. Three patrol vessels and a helicopter were deployed to investigate yesterday's accident, in which the vessel is believed to have hit a whale or another large sea animal near Kagoshima Bay, according to Coast Guard official Hidehiro Yamada. Ninety-seven people were hurt, including 43 hospitalised, up from original reports of 49 injuries according to ferry operator Kagoshima Shosen. The Coast Guard received a distress call from the vessel shortly after the collision. The vessel was damaged but was not in danger of sinking. The ferry was on its way to Kagoshima from Tanegashima island off Kyushu, Japan's southernmost main island.

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated today, states: More than 100 people were injured when hydrofoil *Toppy 4* struck an unidentified marine object, possibly a whale, off Cape Sata, Kagoshima Prefecture, on Sunday, a Japan Coast Guard spokesman said. According to the 10th Regional Coast Guard Headquarters in Kagoshima, 98 of the 103 passengers and all six crew members on the high-speed ferry were hurt. Of those, 12 were seriously injured. Thirty-six, including a crew member, were hospitalized. JCG officials started yesterday morning inspecting the waters around the accident site, about three kilometers west-northwest of Cape Sata, near the entrance to Kinko Bay. The JCG found a dent measuring 1.9 metres across and 30 centimetres wide in the hydrofoil's bottom. Koichi Akase, the ferry's master, who was hospitalized, told JCG officials that the vessel probably was hit by a whale or some other marine animal. According to a spokesman at Kagoshima Shosen, which operates the ferry, *Toppy 4* was cruising near its maximum speed of 80 kph at the time of the accident. "Something hit the hydrofoil's port stern quarter, and the boat plunged forward," Akase was quoted by the spokesman as saying. "There was no driftwood in sight, so I think it's highly likely that *Toppy 4* hit some kind of marine creature like a whale." The JCG dispatched six patrol vessels and two helicopters after it received an emergency call from a passenger on board *Toppy 4* at about 1800 Sunday. The 12 seriously injured people and infants were transferred from the ferry to two patrol boats in Kinko Bay. The two boats arrived in Ibusuki by 2150 that evening. The patrol ship Sendai towed *Toppy 4*, which was unable to continue under its own power, and the remaining 85 passengers on board reached Yamagawa port at 2330 same day. The district transport bureau believes it highly likely that many of the ferry's

passengers who were injured had not fastened their seat belts. The bureau is expected to question company employees whether the firm had taken appropriate measures to ensure passengers had fastened their seat belts.

TUGEN (Luxembourg)

London, Apr 9 — As at Apr 7 product tanker *Tugen* was still at the Eldock floating dock, Durban.

VILLUM CLAUSEN (DIS)

Malmö, Apr 7 — Passenger ro/ro *Villum Clausen*, collision with ro/ro *Gryf*: *Villum Clausen* sustained damage on starboard side forward over the mooring deck. Permission given to sail if waves not over three metres. Repairs will be carried out during time in port and during vessel's sea passage between Ystad and Ronne, Bornholm. Following damages to *Gryf* were noted by the classification society at a survey in Swinoujscie: Starboard side: Broken lower part of two web frames — frames 151 and 154; broken deck draining overboard pipe with valve at frame 155; indent on starboard side shell plating between frames 150 and 155 and between No 2 deck third side longitudinal above No 2 deck, maximum indent 60 mm. Port side: Scratches on shell plating in way and forward of vessel's name — between frames 200 and 205. Vessel is in traffic and repairs will be carried out at next docking. — Lloyd's Agents.

WANWANG 428 (China)

See *Star Mariner*.

WESERSTERN (Isle of Man)

Pozan, Apr 10 — Chemical/oil carrier *Weserstern* is expected to leave the Gdansk Remontowa Shipyard in one-two weeks. Destination will be known shortly before sailing. — Lloyd's Agents.



GELASA STRAIT, INDONESIA

London, Apr 7 — A press report, dated today, states: A Panamanian-registered freighter with a Japanese skipper was attacked by sword-wielding pirates on Mar 21 off Indonesia's Sumatra Island, Japan Coast Guard officials said Thursday. Several armed men aboard a small boat boarded bulk *Martha Verity* in the early hours of Mar 21 while it was cruising east of Sumatra and tied up the ship's 59-year-old master, who has yet to be identified. No injuries were reported among the 21 crew members, the officials said. The pirates stole about \$ 4,074 and 14,000 yen in cash plus binoculars, they said. The freighter left Brazil on Feb 22 with a load of iron ore and entered the port of Oita on Mar 31. It is currently in

Tobata port in Kitakyushu. The JCG plans to ask Indonesia and its neighbouring countries for information.

SOMALIA

London, Apr 7 — A press report, dated today, states: The pirates who seized fishing *Dong Won No.628* off the coast of Somalia presented the terms of the release of 25 crew, including eight South Koreans, but the first negotiation ended with no tangible results, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Seoul said on Thursday. "They presented the conditions," a ministry official said on condition of anonymity. "The agent working for the Korean side had negotiations with them late on Wednesday night, Korea standard time (KST). But it failed to reach an agreement over the conditions." The two sides were to hold the second round of negotiations at 1400 (KST) on Thursday, he said. The official did not specify what the conditions were. But he indicated that ransom is what the kidnapers have in mind. "You can guess what they want, judging from the past abduction cases that have happened in that area," he said. Last year alone, Somali insurgents attacked 35 vessels passing through or fishing in the economic water zone where the Korean trawler was hijacked. But there were no reported casualties from those assaults as all of the crew were set free after paying a ransom. The official did not elaborate who the "agent" is. But he said that "the agent is in a position that can influence the kidnapers."

London, Apr 7 — A press report, dated today, states: Somali pirates are demanding \$400 000 for the release of fishing *Dong Won No.628* seized with a crew of 25 Asians off the coast of Somalia, village elders said today. Village elders, the traditional power base of rural Somalia, in the area near where the vessel is being held, said the gunmen who commandeered the vessel were seeking payment of a "fine" for illegal fishing and not a ransom. "This is not a vessel that brought humanitarian aid to Somalia, it is not a commercial ship passing through international waters," said one elder taking part in negotiations to free *Dong Won No.628* and its crew. "It came to take our marine resources maybe by making deals with the wrong people, who claim to be national officials. I can personally say that \$400 000 would be acceptable, a fine offer on both sides," said the elder, who spoke on condition of anonymity. As the talks were set to continue, a maritime official in neighbouring Kenya said the vessel's owners, Dongwon Fisheries, had obtained a fishing licence from Somalia's fledgling and largely powerless transitional government. The South Korean firm was paying \$4,500 per month for fishing rights, mainly to catch tuna, in Somalia's Exclusive Economic Zone, according to the official who said the contract was valid from March to May 10.

London, Apr 9 — A press report, dated today, states: Somalia's interim government was confirmed today to have engaged in negotiations for the release of South Korean fishing *Dong Won No.628* and its 25 crew, seized last week off the coast of the country. Ali Mohamed Gedi, prime minister of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, said his government was trying to free the Dongwon Fisheries tuna vessel and its 25 Asian crew, including eight South Koreans. Four rounds of negotiations between the kidnappers and Dongwon's local agents had shown no progress as today. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Seoul said the two sides were to conduct their fifth round of talks in the afternoon Korean Standard Time. Two Dongwon executives arrived in Dubai, yesterday to accelerate the negotiation process. The fishing company said it was necessary to dispatch the two officials as the local agents have difficulties in making "critical decisions." A news wire service reported on Friday the kidnappers were demanding a \$400,000 ransom. But Dongwon rebuffed the report, saying the Somali faction had not yet expressed how much they wanted. The kidnappers, identified by the foreign ministry in Seoul on Friday as "Somali Marine," reportedly argued they are not pirates and what they want from Dongwon is not ransom but a "fine" for the vessel's illegal fishing in its economic water zone. Dongwon received a fishing license from the interim Somali government, but the kidnappers do not acknowledge it, the foreign ministry said.

Port State Control



CYPRUS

Limassol, Apr 10 — Cyprus vessel *Liberty A.*, P3GT8, 226 net tons, is currently detained by Cyprus Port Authority at Limassol. It is destined for scrap and is not in condition to sail. — Lloyd's Agents.

Limassol, Apr 11 — Passenger *Olympia* is still under detention. Understand the vessel will be taken to India to be scrapped. — Lloyd's Agents.

GERMANY

Bremen, Apr 11 — General cargo *Da Bak Sol* is still at Bremerhaven. According to local press inspectors sent her to the shipyard because of numerous deficiencies. Already, during call at the port of Bremen, the navigator on the river Weser complained about the poor technology on board the vessel and when police officers of the Bremen harbour police boarded her in the timber port, they could not leave early. The deficiencies found even filled several pages of the protocol. On Wednesday past week called at the timber port of Bremen in

order to load fishmeal for Angola. Via illegal pipelines toxic oil sludge has obviously systematically been disposed outboard for years, an illegally performed practice. The radar and gyrostatic compass are defective. A leakage was detected in the fore body and a further one in the engine-room, where traces of heavy water inrush showed. The investigators of the Seaman Trade Association, who in Germany are in charge for naval control, imposed departure ban on the spot. In addition vessel's owners had to pay an extremely high surety exceeding the amount of € 20,000.00. This is to guarantee that deficiencies will be removed and that the fine will in fact be paid later. The numerous deficiencies could not be removed with equipment available on board. First of all she was hauled to the Motorenwerke Bremerhaven (MWB). Until all certificates have been re-issued, the vessel will still have to stay moored for some. — Lloyd's Agents.

SWEDEN

Visby, Apr 10 — Bulk *Orhan Ekinci* (22085 gt, built 1982), at Slite roads, has been detained by Port State Control following inspection Apr 8. — Lloyd's Agents.



ALBO (Russia)

Beirut, Apr 8 — Chem.tank *Albo* is still under arrest for breaking the rules of Israeli Boycott office. — Lloyd's Agents.

ATLANTIC MERCADO (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Apr 10 — General cargo *Anastacia*, ex *Atlantic Mercado*, sailed Durban Apr 4.

CHURON (Azerbaijan)

London, Apr 8 — A press report, dated Apr 7, states: Russian border guards have detained and brought to Mahachkala port an Azerbaijani vessel suspected in poaching. Fishing *Churon* (86 gt) has been detained in the central part of the Caspian Sea by the marine guard vessel, RSN reports. The vessel is signed to the Baku port, has a tonnage of 86 tons and crew of 8 persons; all are Azerbaijani citizens. A half ton of sturgeon fish, 30 boxes of sprats and 30kg of dried fish have been discovered at the vessel. The fate of the crew and vessel will be decided after the investigation.

CIMARRON (Mexico)

Guadalajara, Apr 7 — The administration at the port of La Paz have advised that ro/ro *Cimarron* has been detained since Apr 24, 2005. The reason for the detention is unknown. — Lloyd's Agents.

DONG YIH NO.668

Karachi, Apr 12 — Maritime Security Agency (MSA) and Karachi Port Trust (KPT) have advised that fishing *Dong Yih No.668* was released at 1715 hrs, Apr 8. As per KPT records *Dong Yih No.668* presently has a licence for fishing in the Persian Gulf (Iranian waters). Therefore KPT have presumed that the fishing vessel has sailed towards the Persian Gulf. — Lloyd's Agents.

FORESIGHT DRILLER V (Cyprus)

London, Apr 12 — A press report, dated today, states: A legal row is continuing in the UAE over the ownership and alleged wrongful arrest of a drilling rig at the centre of a multi-million dollar dispute between Foresight Drilling (Cyprus) and Hallworthy Shipping and Schlumberger and ME Gulf Services. In a series of related legal actions dating back to 2002, Hallworthy Shipping claimed ownership of the rig. This has been disputed by ME Gulf Services (previously known as Dresco) and oil services giant Schlumberger which claims that Hallworthy Shipping and Foresight Drilling are closely related, thus allowing the company to arrest the rig for a debt it claims is owed by Foresight for work undertaken for the Iranian national oil company. Following an arrest order in Dubai, where the rig was undergoing repairs, Hallworthy was required to put up a bank guarantee of \$5m to ensure the release of the rig. The dispute has resulted in a number of cases being brought before the UAE courts. In the first case, Dresco obtained an order to arrest the drill ship *Foresight Driller V* (2769 gt, built 1980), claiming Foresight Drilling Cyprus was the owner of the rig. Foresight, for its part, maintains that it was only the manager involved in servicing a contract for National Iranian Oil Co over which there is a payment dispute. While the Dubai Court issued a judgment in favour of Foresight Drilling stating lack of jurisdiction in May 2004, this was subsequently overturned on appeal and Foresight was ordered to pay a claim worth \$1.4m. The Court of Cassation confirmed the verdict in June 2005. Hallworthy and Foresight say that court proceedings claiming they were closely connected and Foresight was the owner of the rig were based on a court-ordered expert opinion which was subsequently withdrawn by the expert. In a second case, Schlumberger arrested the *Foresight Driller V*, in the Court of Ajman claiming Foresight as the owner with a debt of Dirham12.9m (\$3.5m) to the company. The Court of Ajman has stayed proceedings pending judgment by the courts in Dubai. The third case involves a successful appeal by Schlumberger and Dresco, which was confirmed by the Court of Cassation against a judgment in favour of Hallworthy cancelling the arrest of the *Foresight Driller V*. Hallworthy claims that the the court has not

taken into consideration the rig's registry documents as the real proof of ownership. Hallworthy has sent a letter to the ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohamed Bin Rashed Al Maktoum, stating its case and questioning the competence of the court appointed expert. A spokesman for Schlumberger was unable to comment further.

GABRIELLE (Antigua & Barbuda)

Port of Spain, Apr 10 — Understand part c.c. *Gabrielle* (3978 gt, built 1994) was arrested at Port of Spain Apr 9 under instructions from the charterers' agents, Alstons Shipping. — Lloyd's Agents.

GRAMPIAN DAWN (U.K.)

See *Grampian Princess*.

GRAMPIAN PRINCESS (U.K.)

Hull, Apr 7 — Standby safety vessel *Grampian Princess* and support *Grampian Dawn* are still moored at Ipswich, with no change in their situation. — Lloyd's Agents.

JOHN CHEEK (Falkland Islands)

Buenos Aires, Apr 6 — Our Sub-agents in Comodoro Rivadavia report that fishing *John Cheek* was anchored at Comodoro Rivadavia Apr 1. It will be detained there for around 20 days. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Apr 8 — A press report, dated Apr 7, states: The owners of the Falkland Island flagged fishing vessel *John Cheek* pleaded guilty of fishing illegally in Argentine territorial waters and were fined US 400,000 according to the Argentine press. The reports, later confirmed to Mercopress by the Argentine Fisheries Department, earlier this week after the owners of the vessel, Petrel Trawling Limited of Stanley, paid the 1.2 million peso (US 400,000) fine they signed a document in which they "unconditionally abide by the ruling", thus accepting the determination of the fine. The Falklands' flagged fishing vessel was detained last Feb 20 by the Argentine Coast Guard on the grounds that it was operating in Argentine waters, although the captain of the vessel insisted that he was in international waters when the incident occurred. Petrel Trawling had originally said that the vessel was operating in international waters when it was stopped and boarded by an Argentine Coast Guard vessel and was ordered to proceed to Comodoro Rivadavia on the mainland. According to the Argentine Coast Guard the *John Cheek* was boarded after having been detected within the Argentine Exclusive Economic Zone 198 nautical miles to the southeast of the Patagonian port of Comodoro Rivadavia. During the enquiry the Argentine Coast Guard submitted the recording of the radio exchanges with the Coast Guard cutter Figue at the time in which the Spanish Captain of the *John Cheek*, Jaime Cortizo, gives his position "proving conclusively that he was in Argentine waters" according to local sources. At the time it was

detained the *John Cheek* was manned with a mixed Chilean, Peruvian and Spanish crew of 31, and was carrying 100 tons of squid and hake according to the Argentine Coast Guard report. The incident highlights the continued tension between Argentina and Britain over the disputed Falklands / Malvinas islands. According to an Argentine Foreign Ministry official consulted by Mercopress, this incident highlights not only the "illegal" fishing by a Falkland Islands flagged vessel, a flag that is not recognised by Argentina, but of "the continued disregard demonstrated by the British government who, despite knowing that the *John Cheek* had been caught clearly in Argentine EEZ waters continued insisting that it was fishing in international waters." Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Lord Triesman had reported to the House of Lords that the vessel was in international waters when the incident occurred. According to the Argentine diplomat the other topic that is increasingly annoying Argentina is that the Spanish fishing industry is seen to be playing one side off against the other, fishing in both Falklands waters with Islands' licences and in the Argentine EEZ with Argentine licences. "There are moves underway to ban companies who hold "illegal" Falkland Island fishing licences from also fishing in Argentine waters," he added. The *John Cheek* is owned by Pecapuerta a Spanish firm with several fishing operations in Argentina.

London, Apr 8 — A press report, dated today, states: Jan Cheek from Petrel Trawling Limited has announced that fishing *John Cheek* has been released from Argentine custody following the "without prejudice" payment of an administrative penalty. Petrel Trawling Limited confirmed that at the time of the seizure of the vessel by an Argentine Coast Guard vessel, it was operating over half of a mile inside the Argentine 200-mile limit.

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated today, states: Fishing *John Cheek*, which had been detained by the Argentine authorities since Feb 20, arrived back in her home port of Stanley today. Mrs. Jan Cheek, Director of Petrel Trawling, which owns the vessel, spoke to Stacey Bragger of the Falkland Islands Radio Service (FIRS) about the circumstances leading to the vessel's release on Friday evening. According to Mrs. Cheek, after some weeks of the vessel's detention, the Argentine Sub-Secretariat of Fisheries had put together a 'Sumario' (Summary), which included all the information about the arrest of the vessel and further background information on the vessel's ownership, and related topics. This summary was then presented to Petrel Trawling's representatives in Argentina, with notice that an administrative fee would have to be paid before the vessel could be released. In Mrs.

Cheek's own words, the fee would be "quite a large sum, running to hundreds of thousands of dollars" Petrel Trawling were also informed that the fee would double, if it wasn't paid within a certain period. Mrs. Cheek continued: "After careful discussion with fellow owners and in discussion with the Foreign Office representatives in Stanley, we decided that the best thing was to pay the administrative penalty and get the vessel released, but before doing so we had an Argentine lawyer write a letter saying that we did so, not quite under protest, but without prejudice. In other words we were not admitting that the vessel had been poaching, because as far as we were concerned, given the information that we had, the vessel hadn't been." "According to the information that we had, which was based on the coordinates provided by the UK Hydrographic Office, we were not within their waters. We were taking the advice of that office in keeping the vessel over half a mile outside what they said was the two hundred mile line from the Argentine coast." Coming to the decision to pay the administrative fee was quite difficult, said Mrs. Cheek, "It's a lot of money and there's a feeling that when you have acted in entirely good faith you shouldn't have to pay something like that. But in the end it was that or see the ship mouldering over there for months and months ahead." Mrs. Cheek stated that the effect of both the administrative fee and the loss of fishing time would be that the *John Cheek* would be operating at a very significant loss for some time to come. However, she told F.I.R.S. the important thing was that the vessel was in the harbour today, collecting its fish licence, having its nets checked and about to go off and fish.

LUCKY DOLPHIN (Panama)

Ashdod, Apr 9 — Understand from the law firm that were nominated by the Haifa Admiralty court to sell general cargo *Lucky Dolphin* that the sale-auction was due to have taken place on Apr 4. Also understand the vessel was not sold and is still in Eilat port. The law firm are looking for a buyer. — Lloyd's Agents.

ORIENT STRIDE (Sri Lanka)

Durban, Apr 11 — C.c. *Orient Stride* sailed Durban Apr 5 and is currently at Tema. — Lloyd's Agents.

PROTON (North Korea)

Piraeus, Apr 11 — General cargo *Proton*: Scheduled auction was cancelled and vessel remains in port under arrest. Prospects of release unknown. — Lloyd's Agents.

SENTINEL (Comoros)

Genoa, Mar 10 — General cargo *Sentinel* is still moored at Genoa (under arrest). — Lloyd's Agents.

SPANISH FISHING VESSELS SEIZED BY NORWAY

Trondheim, Apr 11 — Norwegian newspapers report that Norwegian

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court ordered NOK 12 mill to be confiscated from the owners of fishing *Monte Meixueiro* in connection with illegal fishing in Svalbard waters in 2005. The court also ordered owners to pay a penalty of NOK 600.000 and NOK 200.000 in legal costs. In addition the vessel's master has been ordered to pay a penalty of NOK 100.000 for several violations of the law regarding fishing in Svalbard waters. — Lloyd's Agents.

TANIA (North Korea)

Piraeus, Apr 11 — Ferry *Tania* remains at Alexandroupolis port under arrest. Prospects of release unknown. — Lloyd's Agents.



Pipeline Accidents

BOLIVIA

London, Apr 12 — A press report, dated Apr 11, states: Flooding and landslides from rains in Bolivia have damaged an 800 m section of a condensate pipeline in Bolivia and created gas-supply problems in Brazil. The pipeline damage forced restriction of gas output from San Antonio and Margarita fields and lowered throughput of the Bolivia-Brazil natural gas pipeline to 19 million cu m/day from 26 million cu m/day, according to Petroleo Brasileiro SA (Petrobras). The state company holds major interests in and operates parts of the damaged condensate pipeline and the integrated gas production and transportation system. Brazil's energy ministry reduced gas deliveries to electric power generators and local distribution companies. The rationing is affecting the 11 refineries Petrobras owns. Pipeline repairs have been delayed by Bolivian protests, which have blocked roads used by pipeline repair crews, Petrobras said. Protesters want higher royalties for the Chaco region in the south of Bolivia where the largest gas producing fields are located.

CHENNAI AREA, INDIA

London, Apr 12 — A press report, dated Apr 11, states: Over half a kilometre stretch of pipeline for carrying crude from the Bharati dock of Chennai port to an oil refinery at suburban Manali, sank into water today as the support system gave in, a top official said. However, production would not be disrupted at the Chennai Petro Chemicals Limited (CPCL) refinery, as it had crude stocks for a fortnight, A Kasturirangan, Director, Operations, CPCL, told reporters. He said 580 metres of pipeline sank into water as the support system gave in. The port trust, which owned and operated the pipeline, would repair the line and CPCL would not suffer any financial loss due to this. Restoration of the pipeline would take

about a fortnight, he said. Fortunately, no oil ship was berthed at the port for unloading and there was no cause for concern regarding oil seepage, port authorities said.

KERMAN PROVINCE, IRAN

London, Apr 7 — A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters extinguished a blaze at a pipeline carrying petrol from Rafsanjan to Anar in Kerman province, Manager of Rafsanjan pipeline network Qodratollah Modaresi said, IRNA reported. The blaze engulfed 23 kilometres of the pipeline on Wednesday (Apr 5) as a result of which three civilians suffered burn injuries, he said. It took four hours for the fire fighters to control the fire, he said. Some technical equipment along with one lifter were also damaged, he pointed out. He did not reveal the extent of damage or the volume of petrol lost during the incident.

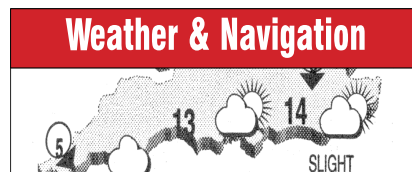


Pollution

BRITTANY, FRANCE

London, Apr 7 — A court in the French port city of Brest has imposed a record Euro 800,000 fine on the master and manager of the German KG company-owned c.c. *Maersk Barcelona* for causing the longest marine pollution slick detected in recent times off the French Atlantic coast. Rendering judgement after a hearing on Feb 1, the court went beyond the Euro 600,000 fine called for by the public prosecutor for the 61 km slick, despite the claim of the Ukrainian master's defence that it had been due to a "sudden and unexpected breakdown of the vessel's waste water separator". Unusually for this type of case, the bulk of the fine - 90% - is to be borne not by the vessel's owner, the KG company Munia Mobilengesellschaft, but by the vessel's technical manager, V.Ships. V.Ships confirmed this yesterday but was unable to explain why the court had imposed the fine on it rather than on the vessel's owner. It said that it would, however, be making an appeal against the judgement. The 1975-built, 2,328 teu Bahamas flagged vessel was spotted by a French customs service aircraft at the head of the slick 160 km off the tip of Brittany on September 20 last year. The ship, which was en route from Antwerp to Gioia Tauro, was ordered into the port of Brest for inspection and only released after payment of Euro 500,000 bail. An inspector from the Brest ship safety centre told the court in February that he had never seen a waste water separator in such a poor state and the prosecutor said: "We are not in the presence of an accident but of a lack of maintenance of the oily water separator." V.Ships said after the incident that the vessel had

undergone a full flag state inspection, including an examination of its oily water separator, in Antwerp on Sep 19 and that no deficiencies had been found. There were reports that an alarm had gone off on board the vessel on the day the vessel was arrested, however, indicating the possibility of a malfunction. The separator was shut down after the alarm had sounded but was thought to have been functioning properly for two hours prior to this.



Weather & Navigation

AUSTRALIA

Canberra, Apr 6 — Hundreds of Australians fled their homes in the remote outback town of Katherine today as floodwaters from days of rain swamped it and other nearby towns and the Katherine River threatened to burst its banks. Emergency services in Katherine, a town of about 2,000 people some 300 km south of the tropical northern city of Darwin, said the river peaked at 18.8 m above the riverbed today after days of monsoon rains. "The level of water in Katherine township is expected to start stabilising ... water has entered the streets of the CBD but is still at low levels in the township," the emergency services said in a statement, referring to the central business district. Around 600 people were evacuated to two schools in the town. Later today, emergency officials said between 200 and 300 residents of the nearby Jilkminggan community were being evacuated in two flood boats, with the remote township expected to be under water by early tomorrow. — Reuters.

London, Apr 7 — The damage bill from flooding in Katherine, the Northern Territory's third-largest town, is expected to run into millions of dollars. Up to 100 homes are expected to have been damaged by flooding in Katherine, some with water up to their roof-tops, insurer Territory Insurance Office (TIO) said. About 600 people evacuated from their homes yesterday spent the night at one of three shelters set up at Katherine schools. The NT government today declared a state of emergency over the Top End, including the flood-stricken town. TIO general manager insurance Les Holden said claims officers hoped to gain access to the flood-damaged areas in the next couple of days. "Our early high level guess is there might be up to 100 homes that may be affected," Mr Holden said.

HURRICANE "KATRINA"

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated Apr 8, states: Alabama officials expect to solicit bids this month for a \$1.6 million project to remove two dozen uninsured shrimp boats

Hurricane "Katrina" stranded in the mud and trees in Bayou La Batre. The Alabama fishing village received official word Thursday (Apr 6) that the project will be financed by \$1.6 million from the Bush-Clinton Katrina relief fund. State officials originally set a target date of mid-April for the start of the work. The process for getting the Bush-Clinton money took longer than expected, however, and the work will likely begin in early or mid-May, said Debbie Jones, the city's grant writer. City officials said they expect to advertise for bids by April 24, then select a contractor at the City Council's May 8 meeting.

KENYA

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated Apr 10, states: Flash floods in drought-hit Kenya have left thousands homeless and washed roads away, hampering aid efforts. At least one person has drowned in the capital, Nairobi, and a woman is feared dead after being swept away by water. Helicopters are being used for emergency aid, especially in central Isiolo, where at least 3,000 people lost their homes. Last week, the UN launched a \$425m appeal to help feed eight million people in need of drought relief across East Africa. Oxfam warned last month that north-eastern Kenya could take 15 years to recover from the effects of drought. Communities that rely on animals as a store of wealth as well as source of food have lost thousands of animals, leaving them destitute. Kenya's Special Projects Minister John Munyes says more flooding is expected in the west and has issued an alert urging people around Lake Victoria to move to higher ground.

RIVER RHINE

London, Apr 12 — A press report, dated today, states: European river traffic is still hampered by high water levels after a spring thaw and heavy rain. The Rhine in southern Germany was closed to shipping yesterday, stopping traffic going north from France or Switzerland. At Iffezheim, water levels climbed by 129 cm to 522 cm in just one day. The peak was expected later the same day. Europe's largest inland port of Duisburg is not affected. About 300m tonnes of cargo are carried on the Rhine each year, according to the German transport ministry. Despite the rapid growth of container transport, bulk goods are still dominant. The situation has started to get better on the Rhine in Switzerland. Water levels in Basel came down clearly, allowing vessels to travel again. Officials said they do not expect the Rhine to be closed again any time soon and the thaw will not show further serious effects before May or June.

TROPICAL CYCLONE "HUBERT"

Sydney, Apr 7 — Western Australia's offshore LNG and oil operations have shut down for the second time in a week, as the season's seventh cyclone moved closer to the coast. The Bureau

of Meteorology said this morning that cyclone "Hubert" was about 195 km north of Onslow and 240 km north-north-east of Exmouth, heading south-south-west at 12 kph. The category-two cyclone is expected to be downgraded to category one by the time it reaches the coast between Exmouth and Onslow tomorrow morning. Woodside and Santos closed their offshore operations, and sent vessels out to sea to ride out the storm. Rio Tinto closed its iron ore loading operation at Dampier and Cape Lambert, with some analysts predicting the loss of production to be up to six million tonnes for this quarter. — "Lloyd's List Daily Commercial News."

London, Apr 7 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical cyclone "Hubert" near lat 20.5S, long 114.9E at 0600, UTC, today. Movement for the past six hours 195 degrees at four knots. Position accurate to within 60 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds 55 knots, gusts 70 knots. Forecast position lat 21.7S, long 114.8E at 1800, UTC, today. Maximum sustained winds 45 knots, gusts 55 knots. Forecast position lat 22.9S, long 115.0E at 0600, UTC, Apr 8. Maximum sustained winds 30 knots, gusts 40 knots.

London, Apr 8 — A press report, dated today, states: Tropical Cyclone "Hubert", which shut almost a third of Australia's oil output and interrupted iron ore exports, has been downgraded to a storm as it moves toward the nation's north-western coast. "Hubert" is now classed as an ex-cyclone and is no longer expected to cause sustained gales, Australia's Bureau of Meteorology said in a statement issued last night. BHP Billiton, Woodside Petroleum Ltd. and Santos Ltd., the nation's three biggest oil and gas producers, this week shut down offshore fields because of the cyclone, stopping about 154,000 barrels a day of oil output.

UNITED STATES

London, Apr 8 — A press report, dated Apr 8, states: Tornadoes and severe thunderstorms struck Tennessee yesterday afternoon, killing at least seven people, peeling away roofs and flipping cars over, officials said. All seven deaths were in Sumner County northeast of Nashville, said Eddie Boatwright, spokesman for the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency. Fire Chief Joe Womack said three bodies were pulled from the wreckage of homes in a subdivision of Gallatin, about 24 miles northeast of Nashville. Tornadoes were also reported in the Nashville suburbs of Goodlettsville, Hendersonville and Ashland City, and in Holladay, about 90 miles west of Nashville. The storms flattened trees, knocked down power lines and damaged homes and other buildings. At least seven people injured in the storm were being treated at Hendersonville Medical Center yesterday afternoon, spokeswoman Marissa Murphy said.

The hospital was operating on emergency power because its regular electric service was knocked out. At Volunteer State Community College in the Nashville suburb of Gallatin, several people suffered cuts and scratches, spokesman Eric Melcher said. Two campus buildings were severely damaged, Melcher said. Three car dealerships near the college were devastated, with 250 cars totaled.

London, Apr 8 — A press report, dated Apr 7, states: Winter rains and flooding have caused at least \$259 million in damage to California roads and highways over the past six months, transportation officials said. Mudslides, sinkholes and washouts have damaged nearly 450 locations on state highways, and rains in March caused more than \$70 million in damage, David Anderson, a spokesman for the California Department of Transportation, said yesterday.

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated Apr 9, states: Tennessee's Cumberland County Emergency Management Director Keith Garrison said today that there were indeed two tornadoes that hit Cumberland County Friday (Apr 7) night. He estimated damage caused by the tornadoes is approximately \$3.2 million as of today. This figure excludes hail damage, damage to public roads and public utilities. He added that the number of county homes damaged by the storm now totals more than 200. Power has been restored to all 3,500 customers in Cumberland County today with an exception of a few isolated pockets. Tornadoes were spotted in about 10 Tennessee counties on Friday, the second wave of deadly storms to hit the state in less than a week, weather officials said. The worst damage appeared to be in Gallatin and other suburbs northeast of Nashville. Later Friday and early yesterday, another line of severe thunderstorms rolled through Alabama and Georgia. Homes and businesses were damaged in the Atlanta suburbs, but the National Weather Service had not confirmed whether the area was hit by tornadoes. Several people were injured in Alabama, two by falling trees, but no deaths were reported, officials said Saturday. A store was destroyed in Ohatchee, near Anniston, and homes and apartments were damaged in the Birmingham area. Storms also pounded southern West Virginia, blacking out more than 16,000 customers, utilities said.

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated today, states: At least four tornadoes touched down in Georgia on Saturday (Apr 8), damaging about 250 structures and toppling trees. The storms later moved into coastal Georgia, delaying the Masters golf tournament in Augusta for about four hours, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported. The storms at one point knocked out power to more than 50,000 people, but Georgia Power Co. expected to have everyone's

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power restored by midnight. State Insurance Commissioner John Oxendine estimated damage in the tens of millions of dollars.

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated Apr 10, states: California's Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger declared a state of emergency today in seven northern and central California counties, saying the region's rainiest March on record and more rain on the horizon put people and property in "extreme peril." Many reservoirs in California's Central Valley are at full capacity, and at least 10 more days of rain are forecast for the region. Levee repairs are typically done in the summer, when water behind them is at its low point, but state water officials fear the heavy rain could weaken some levees to the point of failure. They took advantage of a weekend lull in the storms to patch some weak spots in the system but were still concerned. Schwarzenegger had already declared a state of emergency for California's levee system in February, a step that freed up about \$103 million for repairs to 24 flood-prone sites. His new declaration today didn't specify an amount of aid but directed "all agencies of the state" to dispatch staff, equipment and facilities. In the declaration, Schwarzenegger wrote that "extreme peril to the safety of persons and property" afflicted the counties of Amador, Calaveras, Fresno, Merced, San Joaquin, San Mateo and Stanislaus. The levee work yesterday had included reinforcing levees, building a berm and adding rocks to protect a river bank from eroding in San Joaquin County near the confluence of the San Joaquin and Stanislaus rivers. In Fresno County, crews worked on raising a levee that protects the town of Firebaugh, population 7,000.

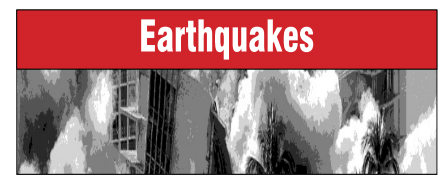
London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated today, states: The Emergency Management Agency Cheatham County in Tennessee is estimating the damage to the county at about \$1 million in the wake of Friday's (Apr 7) storms. Edwin Hogan, the agency's director, said yesterday that figure is a "conservative" estimate and that officials were in the process of breaking it down between residential and commercial structures. Local officials were also awaiting word yesterday from the federal government as to whether the area would be declared a disaster area. Ashland City and the Greenbrier community were the hardest hit after an F1 tornado made its way through Cheatham County.

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated Apr 10, states: As state and federal teams assess damage from last week's severe storms, losses from earlier storms and tornadoes are becoming clear. The first round of severe weather in 2006 killed 10 and damaged thousands of buildings in Missouri. Insured losses from the storms, which dropped dozens of tornadoes in mid-March, add up to more than \$394 million. The Missouri

Department of Insurance asked the 25 insurance companies with the most clients in the state to estimate their insured losses. With only one company, which has less than 1 percent of the marketplace, left to report, the storms prompted 100,963 claims and an average loss per claim of \$3,903, the agency said. More than 61,000 claims for vehicles totaled \$135 million in damages, while the 40,000 homeowners' claims totaled \$259 million. The most recent storms, which killed 28 people in several states, hit the hardest in Pemiscot County and its county seat, Caruthersville. Officials from the State Emergency Management Agency report that building inspections in the Bootheel city found 112 structures were destroyed, 239 are uninhabitable and 247 were only partially habitable. An additional 358 buildings were cleared. Thus far, only 50 rental units have been identified in the area. And state and federal emergency officials plan to use the Army Corps of Engineers to provide \$5 million worth of temporary dwellings. Federal officials estimate it will take at least two more days before its building inspections can begin. Disaster assessments from the latest storms are continuing, with inspectors finding damage to 450 homes and 42 businesses in St. Francois County and nine homes and four businesses in St. Louis County.

VIETNAM

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated today, states: Strong winds accompanied by hail caused one death and severe damage last Friday (Apr 7) to nine communes in Yen Chau District, Son La. Five people were injured during the storm that blew the roofs off 200 houses, killed dozens of cattle, buried 14ha of fish rearing ponds and seriously damaged crop fields. Electricity and telephone networks in some communes were cut causing a black out in the region.



GREECE

Athens, Apr 11 — An earthquake measuring 5.7 on the Richter scale shook western Greece early today, but no damage or injuries were reported, Greek authorities said. The epicentre of the quake was in the sea south of the Ionian island of Zakynthos and was felt along Greece's western coastline, the Athens Geodynamic Institute and fire brigade said. Authorities decided to keep all schools closed as a precaution, the semi-official news agency ANA said. — Reuters.

Athens, Apr 11 — An earthquake of 5.6-magnitude rattled western Greece late today but caused no injuries or

damage, the semi-official Athens News Agency reported. A tremor of about the same magnitude hit the same region, south of the Ionian island of Zakynthos, earlier in the day, and was followed by several small jolts. — Reuters.



AFGHANISTAN

London, Apr 9 — A press report, dated Apr 8, states: A suicide car bomber has attacked an Italian peacekeeper base in the Afghan city of Herat today, killing a local guard and two civilians along with himself. Seven people, one of them an Italian civilian, were also injured when the bomb exploded outside the compound but no peacekeepers were hurt. Yesterday, a suicide car bomber attacked a US military base in the capital of the Afghan province of Helmand, Lashkar Gah. That attack was aimed at Dyncorp, a US company training the Afghan police force in poppy eradication work. Three US nationals suffered minor injuries.

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated today, states: Unidentified gunmen killed five Afghan health workers at a remote clinic in the north-western province of Badghis, officials said today. Taliban insurgents are not known to be active in the area but there have been several recent attacks in the generally peaceful north and west, part of a surge in violence blamed on the insurgents fighting foreign troops and the government. "Five Health Ministry workers including nurses, doctors and a driver were killed when gunmen fired at them in their clinic last night," said provincial governor Enayatullah Enayat. There have been three suicide car-bomb attacks on Afghan and foreign military bases since Friday (Apr 7). Two policemen were killed and two wounded by a roadside bomb in the southern province of Helmand today. The driver of a truck supplying a foreign military base was killed in an ambush in the same province, police said. A Taliban spokesman said today that US aircraft had bombed parts of Helmand today. A US spokesman said offensive operations were under way.

Asadabad, Apr 11 — A rocket hit an open-air Afghan school in the yard of a mosque today, killing six children and wounding about 30. Taliban or allied militants were believed responsible for the latest attack in an intensified insurgency that has brought a wave of suicide and roadside bombs, raids and ambushes in different parts of the country. "Two rockets were fired ... one hit the compound of a primary school where children were studying," said deputy provincial police chief Mohammad

Hassan Farahi. About 180 children were at the school in the courtyard of a mosque outside Asadabad, capital of the eastern province of Kunar, when the rocket hit. Wounded children and teachers were taken to a hospital run by the US military and one in Asadabad. A witness counted about 30 wounded people, most of them children, at the hospitals. Ten people were discharged after treatment, the others were more seriously hurt. A second rocket hit a police base some distance away. The provincial governor said no one was hurt in that blast. Shortly after the attack, a bomb went off in a ditch beside a road in the centre of the eastern city of Jalalabad, 80 km south-west of Asadabad, wounding five passers-by, said a doctor at a city hospital. The bomb was near offices of several foreign aid groups but police said the target was not clear. There were no immediate claims for the rocket attack or the Jalalabad blast. — Reuters.

ALGERIA

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated Apr 8, states: Thirteen Algerian customs officials were killed and eight wounded after gunmen attacked a convoy of government vehicles in the south of the country. The officials, including two regional directors, were travelling to a seminar in Ouargla when they were ambushed in the desert region of Ghardaia. A local journalist said the gunmen used automatic weapons and burned the vehicles before escaping. Ghardaia is known as a transit route for arms traffickers and insurgents. The convoy came under attack by unidentified individuals about 0800 (0700, UTC), Algerian news agency APS reported. The gunmen, whose numbers were not immediately known, fled in two four-wheel drive vehicles. Survivors alerted security forces who evacuated the injured and began a search for the attackers, a local journalist said. One person in the convoy was also listed as missing, according to the report.

CHAD

N'djamena, Apr 9 — Chad's government said insurgents backed by Sudan had attacked an army base in its south-eastern border region today with the aim of derailing presidential elections set for May. The Chadian army sent reinforcements to the garrison in the town of Haraze Mangueigne, close to the borders with Sudan and Central African Republic, to try to overcome the attackers, Communication Minister Hourmadji Moussa Doumgor said. "The attackers in 22 vehicles used Central African territory to outmanoeuvre Chadian army units based in this border region," Doumgor said in a statement. "Fighting is ongoing around the area but the Chadian armed forces are about to push the attackers back ... this attack was orchestrated by the Sudanese government, which has for several days ... been delivering arms

and munitions to various small groups of Chadians aiming to destabilise the country." There was no immediate independent confirmation of the fighting. — Reuters.

N'Djamena, Apr 10 — Fighting flared for a second day in eastern Chad today as rebels attacked police at a refugee camp, killing one, in a military campaign to oust President Idriss Deby before polls next month. U.N. officials said three other Chadian policeman were injured when rebels occupied the camp housing 17,000 Sudanese refugees outside the village of Koukou, 80 km from the isolated border with Sudan. "The rebels arrived at around 1530 hrs. There appear to have been a large number," said U.N. refugee agency (UNHCR) spokesman Matthew Conway, speaking by telephone from the town of Abeche, 270 km to the north. "The rebels told some of the villagers they were going on to (the town of) Goz Beida," Conway said, adding the rebels had given assurances they would not harm civilians, refugees or foreign aid workers. The rebel United Front for Democratic Change (FUC) said it had seized Goz Beida, 50 km northwest of Koukou, but the government denied this. "There are no towns under rebel control," Information Minister Hourmadji Moussa Doumgor told Reuters. "Goz Beida has not fallen." Conway said there were no reports of fighting in Goz Beida although aid workers had taken refuge in the UNHCR compound. The latest clash came after the FUC said yesterday it had seized three towns in southeastern Chad — Haraze-Mangueigne, Am Timan and Abou-Deia. A spokesman for the rebel movement said on Monday their forces had withdrawn. The government said it had repelled an attack on Haraze-Mangueigne and was in control of all three towns. FUC spokesman Abdullahi Abdel Karim said rebel fighters were positioned deep inside Chad and would step up attacks between now and May 3. "The final objective is to take N'Djamena before the elections," Abdel Karim said. The rebel assault on Haraze-Mangueigne extended the eastern front much further to the south. Chad said that to carry out the Haraze-Mangueigne attack, a rebel column of 22 vehicles had crossed through Central African Republic territory to avoid Chadian forces. Diplomats in N'Djamena said it remained to be seen whether the rebels could push to N'Djamena before the elections but they had shown they could inflict damage by killing the Chadian army commander, Deby's nephew, Brigadier General Abakar Youssouf Mahamat Itno, last month. In May's election, Deby — who won power in a 1990 military revolt from the east — will face four candidates with links to his government. — Reuters.

N'djamena, Apr 11 — Chadian rebels today raided the town of Mongo, about 400 km east of the capital N'Djamena, in their boldest attack so far in a

campaign to disrupt elections next month, officials said. President Idriss Deby's government, which accuses neighbouring Sudan of supporting the insurgents, said the raiders succeeded in entering Mongo. But it denied a claim by a rebel group that its fighters captured the town. "They came to Mongo, they got in," Information Minister Hourmadji Moussa Doumgor told Reuters. But he added government forces repulsed the latest rebel strike in the landlocked central African oil producer. The raid on Mongo, a regional administrative center halfway between N'Djamena and the Sudan border, was the closest to the capital so far by rebels who have vowed to try to oust Deby, who is standing for re-election in a May 3 poll. The attack followed a series of hit-and-run raids in the last three days in which mobile columns of rebels travelling in pick-up trucks have attacked government forces in the east, briefly occupying at least one village and a refugee camp. Doumgor gave no details of casualties in the Mongo attack but said the assailants caused "some damage". "These strikes are aimed at sowing panic among the population and above all at disrupting the ongoing presidential election campaign," he said. The rebel United Front for Democratic Change (FUC), which has claimed responsibility for a series of attacks in eastern Chad since Sunday, said in statements posted on a Chad opposition Website that it captured Mongo and nearby Bitkine. Doumgor said the rebels controlled no towns in the country and FUC forces have in the past quickly withdrawn from towns and villages they initially claimed to have occupied. — Reuters.

COLOMBIA

London, Apr 8 — A press report, dated Apr 7, states: Bombs exploded on two buses in a working class district of Colombia's capital Thursday (Apr 6), injuring two dozen passengers, including three children with burns over half their body, officials said. Authorities said the near simultaneous blasts in southern Bogota were likely the work of leftist rebels. Police officials said the attacks were likely the work of Colombia's largest rebel group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces, or FARC, which has been trying to overthrow the government for more than four decades.

INDIA

Lucknow, India, Apr 6 — Two people were killed and several injured today when groups of Hindus and Muslims clashed over prayers at a Hindu temple, officials said. The rioting erupted in a crowded neighbourhood of Aligarh town in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh after Muslims objected to the use of loudspeakers overnight by Hindus, who were celebrating the birthday of the Hindu god-king, Rama. "Additional police, including riot police, have been deployed in affected areas and a

curfew has been imposed," said S.K. Aggarwal, the principal home secretary for Uttar Pradesh. Knives, bricks and bamboo sticks were used in the fighting, and police reported gunshots being fired. Eight of the injured were in a critical condition, officials said. Aligarh, which has a large Muslim population, has seen frequent clashes between Hindus and Muslims in the past. — Reuters.

INDONESIA

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated today, states: Four people have been killed in an exchange of fire between soldiers and suspected separatists in Indonesia's remote resource-rich province of Papua, a military spokesman said. Ahmad Yani Basuki, spokesman of the Indonesian armed forces in Jakarta, said the clash erupted when a group of 30 armed men attacked soldiers monitoring a health event in a village some 70 kilometres from the provincial capital Jayapura. Papuan independence activists have waged a campaign for more than 30 years to break away from Indonesia while a low-level armed rebellion has also simmered for decades.

IRAQ

Najaf, Iraq, Apr 6 — A car bomb exploded in the Shi'ite Muslim city of Najaf today, killing at least 13 people, as Iraqi leaders struggled to break a deadlock over forming a government they hope can avert sectarian civil war. The explosion prompted the authorities to impose a curfew. Police said the blast occurred in a crowded area between an ancient cemetery and the Imam Ali shrine, one of the most sacred to Shi'ites. The mosque was not damaged. Hospital officials said the bomb killed 13 people and wounded about 40 others but police put the death toll at 15. — Reuters.

London, Apr 8 — A press report, dated today, states: Suicide bombers, one dressed as a woman, blasted worshippers as they left a Shiite mosque after Friday prayers, killing at least 79 people and wounding more than 160 in the deadliest attack in Iraq this year. The horrific explosions at the Buratha mosque are likely to stoke the already raw tensions between Shiite and Sunni Muslims. Also yesterday, the US military reported the deaths of four more American service members, including one who died from wounds suffered in Baghdad. Two Marines and a soldier were killed Thursday. The mosque attack occurred as worshippers left Friday prayers, the main weekly religious service. Several hours earlier, the Interior Ministry warned the public to avoid crowds near mosques and markets because of a car bomb threat.

Musayib, Iraq, Apr 8 — A car bomb killed at least six Shi'ite pilgrims south of Baghdad today, the latest in a wave of attacks that had prompted a fresh warning against civil war in Iraq. The blast in the Shi'ite town of Musayib also wounded 16 people, said

police Captain Muthana al-Ma'amouri. Town residents at the scene of the blast threw stones at US troops in Humvees who fired warning shots in the air. One man also blamed fractious Iraqi leaders, who are struggling to form a government four months after elections. — Reuters.

London, Apr 9 — A press report, dated today, states: Roadside bombs killed at least three people in Iraq today, the three-year anniversary of Baghdad's fall to US forces, as security forces bolstered security in the capital to prevent attacks on Freedom Day. The holiday commemorates US marines tearing down the statue of Saddam Hussein as Iraqis cheered in Firdos Square on Apr 9, 2003, marking the collapse of Saddam's regime. American troops killed eight suspected insurgents in a pre-dawn raid north of Baghdad. Drivers in the capital were stopped and searched by Iraqi forces at extra checkpoints in the city. A militant group threatened in a video posted on the Internet to kill two German hostages unless US-held Iraqi prisoners are freed. Clashes erupted during a pre-dawn raid today when US forces surrounded a suspected safehouse and nearby tent on the northern outskirts of Baghdad. After taking fire, troops gunned down five suspected insurgents and three others were killed in an air strike. Bombs and weapons were found inside the house, a US statement said. Roadside bombs killed at least two civilians and a policeman today. One targeting an Iraqi army patrol killed a passer-by in Mahmoudiya, about 32 kilometres south of the capital, and another bomb meant for police killed a civilian when it exploded in eastern Baghdad.

London, Apr 12 — A press report, dated Apr 11, states: Bitter rivalry between two powerful clans for leadership of Iraq's Shiite Muslims snarled efforts today to agree on the next prime minister, the key issue that is blocking a national unity government. Neither side showed any sign of compromise over Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari, leaving negotiations deadlocked four months after elections for a new parliament that the Bush administration hopes can improve stability and lessen the need for U.S. troops. Meanwhile, the U.S. military reported the deaths of five more soldiers, including three killed today in a roadside bombing north of the capital. The latest casualties raised the U.S. death toll so far this month to at least 31 - the same for all of March, according to an Associated Press count. Elsewhere today, a car bombing killed five people, and three others died when a bomb exploded on a minibus, both attacks in Shiite areas of the capital, police said. Police also found the bodies of 24 people - apparent victims of sectarian death squads. Most of the bodies were found in Baghdad but it was unclear when they died, police said. Sunni Arabs and Kurds, whom the Shiites need as coalition partners in parliament, blame al-Jaafari, a

Shiite, for the rise in sectarian violence bloodying Iraq. They are demanding that he be replaced before they agree to join a new government. Al-Jaafari has repeatedly refused to step aside. And his Dawa party and his key backer, radical anti-American cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, remained firm in their support for him during a meeting of the seven factions in the Shiite alliance today. Behind the scenes, al-Jaafari's bid to remain prime minister is opposed by the biggest Shiite party, which is led by a member of a family that has competed for decades with al-Sadr's clan to lead Shiites. Shiite negotiators planned to meet again tomorrow, but officials said there was no hint an agreement was near. Al-Jaafari's supporters want assurances that if the prime minister steps aside, he will not be replaced by Abdul-Mahdi or someone else from al-Hakim's party, Shiite officials said.

ISRAEL

London, Apr 8 — A press report, dated Apr 7, states: Israeli aircraft fired missiles into a car carrying Palestinian militants today, killing six people including a bombmaker and his 5-year-old daughter, in the deadliest Israeli attack since the Hamas-led Palestinian government took office. The air strike in the southern Gaza town of Rafah came as the Palestinian prime minister, Ismail Haniyeh of Hamas, and moderate President Mahmoud Abbas met to try to settle some of their growing differences. The Israeli military said the aircraft targeted the car as it was leaving the isolated training camp, and Palestinian police said four missiles were fired. The car was destroyed and four people inside were instantly killed, police said. Two others died later of their injuries. Among those killed were at least three militants. Fourteen people were wounded, most of them militants, police said.

London, Apr 9 — A press report, dated today, states: Israeli air strikes killed eight Gaza militants yesterday, the latest in what Palestinian leaders called an escalation of violence. Hamas says the raids are aimed to draw international pressure to change its policies. The latest strike, near the town of Khan Younis, killed six men in a training camp used by the Abu el-Reesh Brigades, which is part of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah faction and which has often fired rockets into Israel from Gaza. Abu el-Reesh Brigades spokesman Abu Haron said the group would still train its militants and continue attacking Israel. Two militants from Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, also part of Fatah, died in a similar Israeli airstrike earlier in the day. The deaths raised to 14 the number of Palestinians in Gaza killed by Israeli airstrikes in two days.

Gaza, Apr 10 — Israel suspended formal security ties to the Palestinian government today in what Hamas said amounted to "a declaration of war". European Union foreign

ministers added to U.S. and Israeli pressure on the Islamic militant group by approving a temporary halt in direct EU aid to the new government. Thousands of Palestinians poured onto the streets of Gaza, protesting Western aid cuts and a spike in Israeli military strikes since election victor Hamas took control of the Palestinian Authority in late March. An Israeli shell killed a young Palestinian girl and injured 12 others, including five children, when it hit a house in the northern Gaza Strip, Palestinian officials said. Israel says the shelling in Gaza is meant to combat rocket attacks by militants. Avi Dichter, a top adviser to interim Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, told Israel Radio that a ground assault of Gaza could not be ruled out. The Palestinians urged the U.N. Security Council to act against Israel for intensifying military strikes. "The international community cannot continue to stand idly by while defenseless women, children and men continue to be killed, wounded and maimed," Palestinian U.N. Observer Riyad Mansour said in a letter to the Council. In statements issued in quick succession today, President Mahmoud Abbas and Hamas denounced Israel for branding the Palestinian Authority a "hostile entity". Mahmoud al-Zahar, foreign minister in the new Hamas government who has a reputation as a hard-liner, said in a statement that the European Union decision was "unacceptable" and "collective punishment against the Palestinian people". Zahar added that the Palestinian people would not succumb to the international pressure and would remain committed to their goal of establishing an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said in a statement that Israel's decision to sever contacts with the Palestinian Authority constituted "a declaration of war and a failed attempt to cause internal divisions among Palestinians". In the West Bank city of Ramallah, Abbas said Israel's position "completely violates the agreements we have signed with them and violates international law". Having ruled out contacts with the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority, the Israeli army moved today to suspend remaining security co-ordination. At a joint co-ordination office near the West Bank city of Jericho, Palestinian Colonel Khaled Ziyar and his men piled their belongings on to a pick-up truck and turned keys to the facility over to the Israelis. The Jericho district co-ordination office, located on the outskirts of the ancient town, was the last security facility to be manned by both Israelis and Palestinians. In other parts of the West Bank, co-operation was done by telephone. As part of its new policy, Israel blocked Brigadier General Ala Hosni, who heads the Gaza police, and several other officials from moving between Gaza and the West Bank. Many Palestinians who lined up to get travel permits at civil administration

offices in the West Bank were turned away, witnesses said. — Reuters.

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated today, states: Israeli gunboats shelled a Palestinian police position in northern Gaza today, Palestinian security officials said. There was no immediate word of damage or casualties. The Israeli navy has been taking part in shelling northern Gaza to try to stop Palestinian militants from firing rockets at Israel.

NEPAL

London, Apr 7 — Hundreds of anti-king protesters took to the streets of Nepal today, burning tyres, hurling stones at police and chanting pro-democracy slogans, as a four-day nationwide general strike entered its second day. The strike and protests have been called by the Himalayan kingdom's seven main political parties in what they hope will be a definitive campaign against King Gyanendra, who sacked the Government and grabbed control of the nation last year. Riot police fired tear gas shells at protesters in Lalitpur town in the capital region, where the Government has banned protests. Protesters also set fire to a post office, which was doused. Tyres were thrown on the road and set on fire at one place.

Kathmandu, Apr 8 — Nepali troops killed a demonstrator today west of the capital when they opened fire on massive protests against King Gyanendra's absolute rule. Thousands of activists in Pokhara fought pitched battles with troops who fired dozens of tear gas shells, witnesses said. Yogesh Bhattarai, a senior leader of the Communist Party of Nepal (UML), said a man was shot in the resort town about 200 km west of Kathmandu, during a pro-democracy rally. "He was shot in his head and he died instantly," he said. The army said in a statement the killing occurred when troops opened fire in self defence when protesters tried to attack a telephone office in Pokhara. The killing, the second in two months, was expected to further stoke passions in the Himalayan country where troops rarely shoot protesters despite regular demonstrations against the king since he took power last year, analysts said. The violence occurred on the 16th anniversary of democracy in the Himalayan kingdom, sandwiched between Asian giants India and China, where mainstream political parties began a four-day nationwide general strike and protests on Thursday (Apr 6). The parties had planned a massive show of strength with a big rally in the heart of Kathmandu today. However, a curfew and stringent security, including armoured personnel carriers with machine gun-wielding soldiers, blocked access. However, dozens of young activists on the outskirts of the city briefly defied the curfew and clashed with riot police. "Gyanendra leave the country", "Death to Gyanendra", "Long Live Democratic Republic", the youths shouted before pelting riot police with stones. The

police responded by charging at them with batons and firing teargas to disperse them. The parties said they would hold more protests tomorrow. The government responded by announcing another 11-hour curfew starting at 0700 tomorrow, state radio reported. Soldiers and baton-wielding policemen patrolled the deserted streets of Kathmandu and ordered people indoors as a curfew began at 1000 today in the capital region. Activists managed to organise big protests in Biratnagar in the east and Narayanghat in the south, with an estimated 10,000 people gathering in both towns, witnesses said. While the rally in Biratnagar was peaceful, protesters in Narayanghat damaged government buildings, threw stones at police and clashed with them, injuring dozens, they said. Three people were wounded when police opened fire at protesters in Narayanghat, about 150 km south of the capital, they said. Kathmandu residents said mobile phone and some Internet services were disrupted, although there was no official announcement about links being cut. — Reuters.

Kathmandu, Apr 9 — Nepali police opened fire today on anti-king protesters demanding the restoration of democracy, killing one person, an official said. The shooting took place in Banepa, about 30 km east of the capital Kathmandu, when demonstrators tried to storm a police post, a Home Ministry official said. It was the third death from firing by troops in the troubled Himalayan kingdom since a nationwide strike and protests were launched against King Gyanendra's rule on Thursday (Apr 6). — Reuters.

Kathmandu, Apr 11 — Nepali troops opened fire and baton-charged protesters who burned tyres, chanted slogans and clashed with government forces today before a fresh curfew took hold on the sixth day of mass protests against the king. Today's protests came as international pressure increased on King Gyanendra to end his crackdown, which has killed three people and wounded hundreds of demonstrators. Troops baton-charged, tear-gassed and then opened fire to disperse more than 500 slogan-shouting demonstrators in the Kathmandu suburb of Gongabu, wounding at least 50 protesters, a reporter at the scene said. It was the first time troops opened fire in the capital during the latest anti-king campaign. Troops also opened fire at a meeting called in the western tourist resort town of Pokhara to mourn a protester shot dead by the army there on Saturday (Apr 8), wounding two people, witnesses said. In another Kathmandu suburb, about 500 youths burned tyres on the road, chanting "We want Democracy" and "Gyanendra leave the country". Riot police charged at them with batons and beat them up, wounding at least two people before the crowd was dispersed. So far, more than 300 people have been wounded and about 1,500 protesters detained during

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protests. Paris-based media watchdog Reporters Without Borders said 97 journalists had been detained and 24 wounded across the country. — Reuters.

PAKISTAN

Islamabad, Apr 6 — Pakistani forces killed at least 40 pro-Taliban militants in a troubled tribal region near Afghan border, the military said today, sharply raising the tally from the previous day's fierce fighting. "Latest information shows that at least 40 miscreants were killed," military spokesman Major-General Shaukat Sultan said, raising the tally from 16. Pakistani forces launched a counter-offensive using helicopter gunships yesterday after militants killed four paramilitary troops in an attack on their post in the Shawal area of North Waziristan. A statement from the administration of tribal affairs in North West Frontier Province said 19 militants were arrested and they all belonged to North and neighbouring South Waziristan. It said about 150 militants were involved in the fighting. Tensions have been running high in North Waziristan since clashes last month in which around 200 tribesmen were killed. The tribesmen were answering a call to arms by militant Muslim clerics following a special forces attack on an al Qaeda camp. Three paramilitary troops were injured in another attack by militants in nearby Datta Kheil area yesterday, and on Monday (Apr 3), five people were killed in a landmine explosion and two militants were killed in a clash with security forces in the same area. — Reuters. (See issue of Apr 4.)

Karachi, Apr 7 — Gas supply to a number of factories in the Lasbela Industrial Estate in Balochistan Province was suspended after a gas pipeline in Hub, the industrial town of western Province of Pakistan was blown up yesterday. According to local media reports, some people had planted an explosive device under the pipeline supplying gas to factories in Hub. It blew up on yesterday evening damaging the pipeline. The supply of gas was cut off from the main line after the explosion. The supply is expected to be restored by this morning. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated today, states: A bomb exploded during evening prayers at a park in this southern Pakistani city today, killing at least 40 people and wounding dozens. An angry mob burned cars and threw stones at police, who fired into the air to disperse the crowd, a witness said. A bomb was planted under a stage prepared by a Sunni Muslim group at Nishtar Park in Karachi, Pakistan's largest city, for a prayer service to celebrate the birthday of Prophet Muhammad, said area police chief Shah Nawaz. "We don't know who might be responsible, but we are handling a big tragedy," Nawaz said.

PHILIPPINES

Manila, Apr 6 — About a dozen people were hurt today when Philippine anti-riot police, using batons and a fire hose, clashed with some 1,000 student activists calling for President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to resign. Arroyo, who faced small but regular street marches last year over allegations of vote-rigging and corruption in her family, has banned protests without permits. However, Thailand Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's decision to step down this week despite his political party's victory in a snap election triggered fresh calls for Arroyo to quit. Thaksin stepped down after months of popular protests that prompted him to call snap parliamentary elections on Sunday, which his political enemies boycotted. "What had happened to Thaksin will also happen definitely to Gloria," said Venzer Crisostomo, head of the leftist League of Filipino Students, as he left a march near the Malacanang presidential palace in Manila. Philippine anti-riot teams initially clashed with protesters who tried to cross a police line far from the presidential palace. Some of the marchers were brought to hospital with minor injuries. The student activists later surprised police when they regrouped in the intense midday heat and marched within 500 metres of the palace gates. Anti-riot teams rushed to block them with a fire hose and batons. Arroyo was not in the palace when the clashes occurred. — Reuters.

Manila, Apr 7 — The Philippine army said today it had killed about 10 rebels from the communist New People's Army (NPA) after troops overran a large guerrilla base on the southern island of Mindanao. Colonel Francisco Simbajon, an army spokesman in the south, said the fighting yesterday was triggered by a military raid on a rebel encampment on the slopes of Mount Bawaya. Simbajon said two soldiers were killed during the assault and two were wounded as army commandos battled about 50 Maoist-led rebels for an hour. "We were told by some villagers that they saw the fleeing rebels dragging 10 bodies," he said, adding that troops had found several bunkers that could accommodate more than 100 people in the rebel camp. — Reuters.

London, Apr 8 — A press report, dated today, states: Troops mounted fresh offensives yesterday against the New People's Army after fierce clashes left at least a dozen rebels and soldiers dead in Mindanao, a regional Army spokesman said. At least 10 rebels and two soldiers were killed and two more wounded in the fighting since Thursday (Apr 6) in Paquibato district on the outskirts of Davao City, a known stronghold of the NPA, armed wing of the outlawed Communist Party of the Philippines. Three rebels were also killed in separate clashes Thursday in Agusan del Sur.

SOMALIA

Nairobi, Apr 11 — Two people died when fighting broke out among Somali militia after a UN aid convoy was held up at checkpoints, the world body said today. Nine others were injured in the clash near Baidoa, in the south of lawless Somalia, in the early hours of yesterday. The victims appeared to be mainly militia members, although a local member of parliament who had tried to negotiate a dismantling of the checkpoints was among the injured, UN World Food Programme (WFP) spokesman Peter Smerdon said. The 72-truck convoy was taking 2,600 tonnes of food aid into Baidoa for distribution in southern Somalia, where 1.4 million people need emergency aid due to drought. It was delayed going through 19 checkpoints in the last 30 km stretch into Baidoa, resulting in a visit by local politicians to negotiate with the militia. Some of the checkpoints were dismantled but other groups refused, resulting in a firefight. The WFP convoy had by then gone through, however, and none of its contractors were hurt, Smerdon said. — Reuters.

SPAIN

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated today, states: A Spanish judge has charged 29 mostly Moroccan suspects with involvement in the Mar 11, 2004 Madrid train bombings, which killed 191 people in Spain's worst terror attack. In a charge sheet running to 1,460 pages, judge Juan del Olmo accused five Moroccans of 191 murders and 1,755 attempted murders. A Spanish former miner, Jose Emilio Suarez Trashorras, said to have organised the transport of the explosives from a disused former mine in northern Spain to Madrid, was also accused of 192 murders. As well as the train murders he will have to answer for the death of Francisco Javier Torronteras, a policeman who died when seven key suspects committed suicide three weeks after the blasts during a police raid on an apartment in the Madrid suburb of Leganes. The five Moroccans, cited to appear in court to answer charges on May 16, 17 and 18, as well as Trashorras, are set to face prosecution demands for jail terms running into the thousands of years, though under Spanish law they could only serve a maximum of 40 years behind bars. They and 23 others, charged as accomplices, will go forward to one of Europe's biggest ever terrorist trials, set to last over a year.

SRI LANKA

Colombo, Apr 8 — Suspected Tamil Tigers killed one Sri Lankan soldier today and wounded two, the army said, while the rebels also said they had been shot at and ceasefire monitors warned rising violence could hit peace talks. The army said one soldier had been killed and one wounded in after the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) fired on an observation post, while another

soldier and civilian were wounded in a fragmentation mine attack on an army truck in the north. "In the last two days, we've seen a dramatic escalation in violence," said Helen Olafsdottir, spokeswoman for the Nordic mission overseeing a strained 2002 truce. "This could end up jeopardising not only the talks but also the ceasefire itself." — Reuters.

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated Apr 10, states: At least five Sri Lankan soldiers and two civilians have been killed in a mine attack in the northern Jaffna peninsula, the army says. The troops were on patrol when the claymore mine exploded, army spokesman Brigadier Prasad Samarasinghe said. Tamil Tiger rebels are suspected to be behind the attack, he said. The rebels have denied being involved. The government and the rebels are due to meet in Geneva later this month for a second round of peace talks. The violence comes as ambassadors from the European Union (EU), Japan and Norway met rebel political leaders in their headquarters in the northern town of Kilinochchi. Brig Samarasinghe said two soldiers were injured in the blast, which took place at Mirusuvil in Jaffna peninsula. The civilian victims were Tamil humanitarian workers with an international Catholic aid agency - Caritas' Human Development Centre - who were travelling in another vehicle coming from the opposite direction, he said. "These are clear violations of the ceasefire as well as agreements reached in Geneva. the Tigers promised in Geneva to stop all attacks against the troops", Brig Samarasinghe said. Denying involvement, the rebels have condemned the attack. Hours earlier, a grenade exploded near the newly-opened office of a breakaway rebel faction in the eastern town of Batticaloa, Brig Samarasinghe said. No-one is reported to have been injured in the blast. The government and the rebels are scheduled to hold the second round of talks in Geneva between April 19 and 21.

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated today, states: At least 12 people have been killed and another eight wounded after suspected Tamil Tiger rebels blew up a bus full of sailors in north-eastern Sri Lanka. Police say the bus was travelling from the port town of Trincomalee to Kantale, the next main town in the region, when the convoy in which it was travelling was ambushed. They say the bus then hit an oncoming van. "Victims have been sent to two hospitals," a police spokesman said. The attack has come a day after suspected Tamil Tiger rebels carried out a mine attack against troops in the island's north, killing five soldiers and two civilians.

SUDAN

Abuja, Apr 9 — All-night negotiations involving the warring parties from Sudan's Darfur region and two African heads of state failed to produce a breakthrough in

deadlocked peace talks but further meetings were planned later today. Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and Denis Sassou Nguesso of Congo Republic, past and current chairmen of the African Union (AU), held talks with delegates from the Sudanese government and two rebel movements until 0430 hrs. The presidents met separately with the government and the rebels, and an AU spokesman said a plenary involving Sassou and all the Sudanese parties was planned for 1100, UTC. Sassou's visit to the Nigerian capital, venue of the Darfur peace talks, was part of a diplomatic push to persuade the warring parties to make compromises and reach a peace settlement before an Apr 30 deadline set by the AU. They have failed to meet several previous deadlines. The AU, which is mediating the talks and has 7,000 peacekeepers in Darfur monitoring an often-violated ceasefire, came up with an improved, more detailed ceasefire proposal on Thursday (Apr 6) and the pressure is on the parties to sign it. Observers had said they hoped the intervention of Obasanjo and Sassou would speed up the process of signing the document but there were no indications this morning that any signature was imminent. The AU mediators and the Sudanese parties all say the detailed, technical negotiations have gone as far as they can and political decisions now have to be taken but so far there is little sign either side is ready for the leap. As well as a peace deal in itself, the possibility of sending UN troops into Darfur is at stake in Abuja because Khartoum has said it will consider a transition from an AU to a UN force only after a deal is signed. — Reuters.



Labour Disputes

FRANCE

London, Apr 6 — Operations at the ports of Montoir, Donges and St. Nazaire are now back to normal, following the towage and general strikes earlier this week. Berthing operations are now being arranged for vessels waiting on roads, reducing delays as far as possible.

London, Apr 10 — Vessel movements at Lavera/Fos were stopped this morning (Apr 10), with no berthing or sailing, due to union demonstrations at the Harbour Master's office.

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated Apr 10, states: Trade unions and protesters in France are claiming victory after the French government performed a complete U-turn on its controversial youth jobs law. Today, the French government said it would withdraw the law, which would have allowed employers to sack anyone under the age of 26 within the first two years of their employment. The

measure had provoked weeks of protests, until finally, Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin conceded defeat and said he would find other ways of reducing the numbers of young jobless. Today, Mr de Villepin did his best to paint this climbdown as the actions of a government and a prime minister listening to the French people. Yet student leaders Victor Vidilles and Nabila Ramdani say Mr de Villepin's withdrawal of the law was only a first step, with more student protests planned for tomorrow to keep up the pressure on the French government as it formulates a new proposal this week.

London, Apr 11 — A port strike started without notice at Fos and Lavera this afternoon (Apr 11). It is not currently known how long the strike is likely to last.

INDIA

London, Apr 7 — A press report, dated today, states: The strike by the State Bank of India (SBI) employees is now in its fifth day and the losses are running into hundreds of crores. If the strike continues, the SBI stands to lose its market share as well. With the bank having more than 90,000 branches, the impact is now being felt by customers all across the country. People are not being able to withdraw any money from the bank's ATM counters and tempers are running high. Following the strike, defence personnel and lakhs of government employees are waiting for their salaries.

London, Apr 9 — A press report, dated today, states: State Bank of India (SBI) employees called off their seven-day-long strike tonight after the pension issue was settled in a fresh round of discussion at the intervention of the Finance Minister. As per the settlement, SBI employees with basic pay up to Rs 21,800 are likely to get 50% of it as pension while officers having last basic pay drawn over Rs 21,800 are likely to get 40% as pension. The pension issue was settled at 50% of the last drawn salary as pension, with a ceiling at Rs 21,040. It was officially announced by Vinod Rai, Additional Secretary of Finance Ministry. Earlier, Finance Minister P Chidambaram intervened this morning after talks between SBI employees and the bank management failed in Mumbai last night.

London, Apr 12 — A press report, dated Apr 11, states: A strike by nearly 4,000 contract workers at Hero Honda Motors' Gurgaon plant entered the second day, crippling production at India's largest motorcycle manufacturer. The plant employs 5,200 workers, 1,200 of whom are permanent workers. Contract workers are demanding regularisation of services. However, company sources claimed that only about 2,000 workers stayed away. The casual workers have asked for benefits like compensatory offs and medical facilities. Hero Honda described the strike as "irresponsible," but said it was working for an early resolution. The

strike is likely to impact the fiscal targets of Hero Honda in 2006-07. The company produces 6,500 bikes a day. It made 3.1 million motorcycles last year. Talks are on between the company's management, contractors, representatives of contract workers and other government officials to find a solution.

MEXICO

Mexico City, Apr 10 — Grupo Mexico declared force majeure today on copper and molybdenum contracts as strikes at some of its Mexican mines dragged into a third week and workers vowed to continue their action. At the same time, Grupo Mexico said the strikes should not hit earnings at its Southern Copper Corporation (SCC) mining unit, because of the cushion from high prices of the other metals it produces. Workers at the group's La Caridad copper mine in the northern state of Sonora walked out on March 24 in support of a discredited union leader and are being backed by miners and steel workers across Mexico. In all, some 4,000 are on strike. "We have declared force majeure in some cases. We've started to inform about some contracts we could have problems meeting," Grupo Mexico executive Juan Rebolledo told Reuters. The company said potential losses should be more than compensated by high prices of gold, silver, zinc and copper. "A very small part (of the impact) will be in the first quarter and another very small part will be in the second quarter but we don't expect it to be very significant because of efforts to hike capacity at other copper mines like Cananea and because copper prices have risen and that will partly mitigate the financial cost of this problem," Rebolledo said. Striking workers vowed today to keep up the 18-day-old walkout in support of deposed union leader Napoleon Gomez, and threatened to extend it to other industries in Mexico. Unionised workers across the country, including teachers, electricians and telephone employees, plan to stop work for two hours unless demands are met, Juan Linares, a senior miners and metal workers union official, told reporters. The strike is aimed at pressuring the government to recognize Gomez as their representative. The government has accused him of corruption. Copper miners at La Caridad are supported by miners and steel workers at Villacero's and Mittal's steel installations. government and companies consider the strikes illegal, and union representatives refer to some of the walkouts as "stoppages" rather than formal strikes. At least 600 striking steel workers have been fired over the past three days. "We are planning a national work stoppage on April 28, from 1300 hrs to 1500 hrs," Linares said. "Unless we see a way toward an agreement, we will continue to take more drastic steps." Gomez, accused of fraud involving the disappearance of millions of dollars of workers' funds, was ousted in

February in a quickly convened union vote, according to the government, which now recognizes a new leader. But many union members do not recognise the February vote and still support Gomez, who has not been seen in public for several weeks. At the Lazaro Cardenas steel complex in Michoacan state, steel maker Villacero fired 300 workers from its Viga Trefilados steel wire plant today, adding to 300 fired from its larger Sicartsa steel making unit at the weekend, Villacero Chief Financial Officer Ignacio Trevino told Reuters. "We're losing out on production of about 5,000 tons of liquid steel per day worth about \$3 million a day," he said. Rotterdam-based Mittal Steel took steps at the weekend to fire around 800 workers who ignored ultimatums to return to jobs at the Lazaro Cardenas steel facility, local media said. Mittal and Grupo Mexico executives could not be reached today and a union representative could confirm only that 30 workers had been fired as a result of the strikes. Grupo Mexico has said it has taken measures to lay off a handful of miners, but was moving more slowly than the steel companies toward large-scale firings. — Reuters.

NORWAY

London, Apr 9 — A press report, dated Apr 8, states: Airline traffic all over Norway was returning to normal today after flight attendants at SAS Braathens went back to work. Late-night bargaining ended a strike that had left passengers stranded and furious. The strike, which started early Thursday (Apr 6), ruined the start of Easter holidays for as many as 30,000 Norwegians and others trying to travel into, out of and around Norway. Most domestic flights and a string of international departures to such destinations as London, Amsterdam and Rome were cancelled yesterday. That left little need for baggage handlers, gate personnel and other ground workers at airports all over Norway. It was the latest in a string of labour conflicts that have disrupted airline travel in Scandinavia for months. John Lyng, head of the flight attendants' union, claimed he was "very satisfied" with the settlement hammered out with SAS Braathens' management. He claimed the flight attendants won all their demands and also secured pay hikes "in line with those others have received." Lyng, who just two days ago was blaming the strike on SAS' management, is now full of praise for SAS Braathens' chief executive Petter Jansen and claimed that Jansen had managed to win back confidence among the flight attendants. Jansen said he was relieved the strike was over, and he apologized to passengers who once again were unable to travel when they should have. He expected all SAS Braathens flights to be back on schedule by this evening, or tomorrow morning at the latest. Airline passengers in and out of Norway continue to face further

disruptions later this spring, however, with SAS' pilots and Norwegian air traffic controllers among the groups still needing to agree new contracts.

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated Apr 10, states: Last week's strike by flight attendants is believed to have cost airline SAS Braathens around NOK 70 million (nearly USD 11 million). The cost of angry customers, however, is harder to calculate, and SAS will be scrambling to win back their confidence. SAS Braathens boss Petter Jansen shook hands with the leader of the flight attendants' union after agreeing to terms that ended a strike last week. The embattled airline plans to launch a major promotional campaign right after Easter, aimed at preventing a massive customer exodus. Thousands of passengers were furious when their flights were cancelled or delayed during last week's strike, and many vowed never to book tickets on SAS again.

SCANDINAVIAN AIRLINES CABIN ATTENDANTS

London, Apr 6 — A press report, dated today, states: Virtually all domestic flights by Scandinavian airlines unit SAS Braathens were grounded today when 1,070 cabin attendants went on strike over a new contract. An estimated 28,000 passengers on 400 flights would be effected today. The strike could affect as many as 190,000 travelers during the Easter holidays. "We have no idea how long the strike will last," said SAS Braathens information chief Siv Meisingseth. Union representatives told NRK (Norwegian Broadcasting) that the real reason for the strike were divisive differences in pay for men and women, and different treatment of pilot and cabin crew work scheduling. The NKF also pointed out that former SAS cabin crew are not paid extra for working Sundays, night shifts, movable holidays and national holidays on the 1st and 17th of May. Overtime payment only begins after 45 hours in a five-day period.

SOUTH AFRICA

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated today, states: The South African Transport and Allied Workers Union in Cape Town and Durban go on strike today over a wage dispute with the South African National Security Employers Association. The union met yesterday to decide on the strike following Saturday's (Apr 8) Labour Court ruling which declared an agreement on wage increases between the Sansea and 14 other security unions null and void. The 14 unions agreed last week on a wage deal which would see security guards get an annual eight percent increase over the next three years. Satawu, which has more members than the other 14 unions combined, was not party to the agreement. On Saturday, the Labour Court ruled the agreement was not legally binding because Satawu was not part of it. Satawu is demanding

an 11% increase across the board. The court also set aside an interim interdict which declared Satawu's strike illegal. Satawu regional secretary Evan Abrahams said: "We are basically going out and finalising our planning. We will meet at the Cape Town train station to decide how we do it. The strike is legally protected and will start (today). However, we don't have permission (to march) from the city so we will also be discussing that," he added.



CLASS-ACTION SETTLEMENT, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated Apr 9, states: A federal judge has approved a 2.65 billion dollar class-action settlement of claims that advertising revenue was counted in a fraudulent manner before the merger of America Online and Time Warner. Judge Shirley Wohl Kram had given the settlement tentative approval last September. Shareholders had sued, complaining that AOL improperly accounted for dozens of advertising transactions, inflating revenue for 15 quarters between 1998 and 2002. The lead plaintiff was the Minnesota State Board of Investment. The board manages the investment of retirement fund assets of the Minnesota State Retirement System, Teachers Retirement Association and the Public Employees Retirement Association. It lost about 249 million dollars.

FALSE IMPRISONMENT AND MALICIOUS PROSECUTION, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 12 — A press report, dated Apr 11, states: An El Paso jury awarded \$27.5 million in damages to a woman of Iranian descent who alleged she was racially profiled when Southwest Airlines accused her of assaulting a flight attendant and interfering with a flight crew. Samantha Carrington, of Santa Barbara, Calif., won in the civil case Friday (Apr 7) after suing the Dallas-based carrier for false imprisonment and malicious prosecution. Carrington was arrested by federal authorities in 2003 after her Houston-to-Los Angeles flight made a scheduled stop in El Paso. Criminal charges were never filed. According to court records, three flight attendants said Carrington, a naturalized citizen from Iran, became verbally abusive during the flight, grabbed the arm of one flight attendant and threatened to go to the cockpit if the captain was not summoned. Carrington, 54, denied those allegations and said she was the one mistreated during the short flight. She said the flight attendants lied about her behaviour. "In the evidence it came out that one of the

flight attendants stated that Ms. Carrington reminded her of a terrorist, and in our views she was the victim of profiling stereotypes and discrimination," her lawyer Enrique Moreno told the El Paso Times. In a sworn deposition Carrington, who teaches economics at California State University, Los Angeles, said since her arrest she has been the subject of increased scrutiny and security checks when she travels internationally. Though Southwest Airlines has denied any wrongdoing, a few months after the incident the company did send Carrington an apology letter, offering her 20 round-trip tickets. The letter was signed by Colleen C. Barrett, president and former chief operating officer. Barrett said in a sworn affidavit that she didn't know anything about the case and didn't write the letter. A Southwest spokeswoman said they will appeal against the decision. "We certainly don't agree with this particular verdict," spokeswoman Beth Harbin told the newspaper. "The verdict was not based on all the available facts because those facts were not presented to the jury for their consideration."

ILLNESS DUE TO PAINKILLER, UNITED STATES

Atlantic City, New Jersey, Apr 11 — A jury today awarded \$9 million in punitive damages to a New Jersey man who blamed Merck & Co Inc's Vioxx painkiller for his heart attack. Nearly a week ago, the jury found that Vioxx was a significant contributing factor in the heart attack suffered by 77-year-old John McDarby and awarded him and his wife \$4.5 million in compensatory damages. Merck has said it will appeal any monetary damage award. Under New Jersey state law, punitive damages were capped at five times the amount of the compensatory damages, or \$22.5 million. — Reuters.



BOX BUTTE COUNTY, NEBRASKA, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 9 — A press report, dated Apr 8, states: Thirty-eight rail cars filled with coal derailed early this morning five miles southeast of Hemingford in Box Butte County. The train was headed to Alliance from Edgemont, South Dakota. Several tons of coal spilled from the 38 cars, blocking the Burlington Northern Santa Fe tracks. BN-SF spokesman Steve Forsberg said crews hoped to have the tracks cleared and reopened tonight. He says the train had three engines and 129 loaded coal cars. What caused the derailment is under investigation.

COMILLA AREA, BANGLADESH

Karachi, Apr 7 — Four bogies of Dhaka-bound Mahanagar Express train of Bangladesh Railway from Chittagong derailed near Laksam Junction, near Comilla in east southern Bangladesh at about 1015, yesterday. As a result, rail communications disturbed quite some time on Dhaka-Chittagong route. Later, a rescue rail reached the accident spot and cleared the track. No injury was reported. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

LINZHAI AREA, GUANGDONG PROVINCE, CHINA

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated today, states: A railway in south China's Guangdong Province on which two passenger trains collided this morning has resumed operation, said Guangzhou Railway Group. The collision led to delay and change of routes for a couple of trains, and railway authorities have notify passengers with the accident. More than 20 passengers and stewards were injured with no one being killed in the mishap which took place at 0932 when the two trains collided between the stations of Linzhai and Dongshui on the rail route linking the national capital Beijing with Kowloon of Hong Kong. The railway resumed operation at 1930 today. According to the Ministry of Railways, the collision occurred when train T159 was heading for east Guangzhou from Qingdao in east China's Shandong Province while train 1017 was on its way from the city of Wuchang in central Hubei Province to Shantou in Guangdong. The locomotive of train T159 was damaged and the last four carriages of train 1017 derailed. The injured passengers have been rushed to hospital for medical treatment, the ministry said. The railway is operated by Guangzhou Railway Group.

MEHAL GANJ AREA, INDIA

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated today, states: Two persons were killed and seven injured when a Delhi-bound train from Raxaul in Uttar Pradesh hit an engine between Mehal Ganj and Jungbahadur Ganj stations, about 100 kms from Lucknow, this morning. The Raxaul-Delhi Satyagraha Express collided with the engine on the Sitapur-Roza section of the Moradabad division, killing two persons and injuring seven others, Northern Railway sources said. The injured passengers were rushed to the civil hospital, Shahjehanpur and the train resumed the journey after a brief halt, they said.

NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 6 — A press report, dated today, states: Two slow-moving commuter trains bumped during the morning commute today, injuring at least one passenger and temporarily halting service, a railroad spokesman said. The extent of the passenger's injuries were immediately clear. Both trains had been headed east from

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Manhattan through Queens at about 0815 hrs, Long Island Rail Road spokesman Pete Palamaro said. The cause of the crash was under investigation, Palamaro said.

Miscellaneous



COLLAPSE OF BUILDING UNDER CONSTRUCTION, MILTON KEYNES, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated today, states: Up to 20 people were hurt and two were feared trapped after scaffolding collapsed at the site of a hotel in Milton Keynes today. Two walls collapsed causing scaffolding from 14 floors up to fall. Thames Valley Police said they believed a number of people had been injured. Fire service and ambulance crews were attending. The Jury's Hotel and homes are being built at Wytan Gate. An eyewitness said high winds were blowing when the accident happened. A witness at the scene said that 15 ambulances and two air ambulances were attending. "It's quite a massive building site and a large, twenty-five or so storeys of scaffolding has collapsed completely around the building where workmen were working," the witness said.

DELAY IN OPENING OF THE SAIMAA CANAL

Helsinki, Apr 10 — The Saimaa Channel is planned to be opened Apr 20. According to Finnish Maritime Administration/Inland Waterways District, the time is rather late when compared to the previous years. The reason for the delay is the ice situation in the Gulf of Finland and the ice limitations of the vessels in Kotka and Hamina harbours. There are very few vessels that can sail through the channel. Normally the channel is opened at the beginning of April. Ice breaker *Protector* will break the ice from Juustila to Malkia, after which it will start breaking the ice from the deep waterways from Lappeenranta and onwards to Joensuu and Puhos. — Lloyd's Agents.

OUTBREAK OF "BIRD FLU"

Abuja, Apr 6 — The deadly H5N1 bird flu virus has been found in backyard poultry and at a commercial farm in Lagos, Africa's largest city which is home to about 13 million people, health officials said today. The latest discovery of the virus hundreds of miles from Nigeria's first infection indicates the disease is defeating measures to contain it and raises the prospect of much wider human contact with infected birds. "We are taking samples from humans who had contact with infected poultry in Lagos state and sending them to the virology

lab," said Jide Coker of the Health Ministry, who is co-ordinating the response in Lagos and neighbouring Ogun state. H5N1 has been confirmed at Agege Farm, a commercial poultry farm in the Ikeja area of mainland Lagos, and in backyard poultry in Victoria Island, an exclusive business district on the Atlantic coast, he said. A government-run bird flu crisis centre in the capital Abuja said it did not have information about the Lagos outbreak. The deadly strain has now been confirmed in poultry in 13 of Nigeria's 36 states and in the Federal Capital Territory but no human case has been detected in Africa's most populous country. — Reuters.

Cairo, Apr 6 — Egypt has found two more people infected with the bird flu virus, bringing the number of human cases in the country to 11, a government minister said. Health and Population Minister Hatem el-Gabali, quoted by the state MENA news agency late yesterday, said the latest cases were a 16-year-old girl and an 8-year-old boy from two provinces north of Cairo. The deadly H5N1 strain of the bird flu virus has so far killed two Egyptians. "The girl and the boy were infected after coming into contact with domestic birds which had died, and tests ... confirmed they (the boy and girl) had been infected with bird flu," Gabali said, adding the two were in a stable condition. The government says 11 Egyptians have now been infected by bird flu. The World Health Organisation has verified that four Egyptians have caught the deadly H5N1 strain, including the two who died. Earlier yesterday, Egypt confirmed its ninth case of human bird flu infection, in a girl aged 16 months from southern Egypt. On Sunday (Apr 2) two sisters were confirmed to have the virus. — Reuters.

London, Apr 7 — A press report, dated today, states: A swan found dead in Scotland has tested positive for the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu. The Scottish Executive has extended surveillance zones in Scotland to include 175 properties with 3.1 million birds, as well as free-range poultry. The dead mute swan was found in Cellardyke, Fife, eight days ago. Fourteen other birds are being tested. The H5N1 virus does not currently pose a large-scale threat to humans as it cannot pass easily between people. But experts fear the virus could mutate to gain this ability, and in its new form trigger a flu pandemic, potentially putting millions of human lives at risk. Scotland's Chief Veterinary Officer Charles Milne, announcing confirmation of H5N1, said a surveillance zone was being extended to 965 sq miles. The zone contains 175 registered premises, with in total 3.1 million poultry. About 48 are free-range premises with 260,000 birds. A total of 14 birds are being checked for bird flu from Scotland including 12 swans and two other species. Mr Milne said: "There is no indication that any of these are positive." Farmers are being

ordered to house their birds where possible, or separate them from wild birds. However, the Scottish Executive said it would be "disproportionate" to house poultry UK-wide. Officials were also banning the gathering of birds and enhancing their surveillance. An initial 1.8 mile protection zone was set up around Cellardyke on Wednesday, surrounded by a six-mile surveillance zone. The infected bird, a native UK breed, was collected from Cellardyke harbour on Mar 30, a day after it was reported by a resident. Mute swans are considered to have a "stable" population in Scotland at this time of year, but Mr Milne said he "cannot entirely rule out" that the swan had migrated. It is vital that test results are accurate and, because of the badly decomposed state of this sample, a number of tests were carried out. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs responded to criticism over the delay in dealing with the dead swan by saying there was no reason to suggest it should be given priority over other samples. Preliminary work was carried out on Friday in preparation for testing on Monday. "Where we have specific reason to believe that a sample is infected the labs at Weybridge are open on a 24/7 basis," Defra said. "It is vital that test results are accurate and, because of the badly decomposed state of this sample, a number of tests were carried out." Defra said that since Feb 21 the laboratory at Weybridge had tested more than 1,100 samples. The UK's chief veterinary officer, Debbie Reynolds, said bird flu could stay in Britain for some time. "We simply don't know, but of course that's why we've got our programme of wild bird surveillance. "It's been very extensive; over 3,000 wild birds tested already this year, and over 400 swans. "There are more under way, being tested at the moment, and any wild swan that's reported found dead should be collected and tested," Dr Reynolds said. The National Farmers' Union said the presence of H5N1 was an "unwelcome and important development from the point of view of poultry health" but that it was "well prepared". Liberal Democrat leader Sir Menzies Campbell, whose Fife constituency includes Cellardyke, said the government appeared to have the situation in hand. Restrictions on the movement of poultry, eggs and other poultry products have been implemented. It is the first time the strain has been found in a wild bird, but H5N1 was detected in birds held in quarantine in the UK after infected Taiwanese finches arrived at a secure animal unit in Essex in October. Officials emphasised that the risk to humans was very low. Scotland's chief medical officer Harry Burns said that eggs and poultry should be "properly cooked" as per usual. "It's proven very very difficult for the virus to get into human populations. We know that it doesn't have the right composition to easily infect humans. "So the arrival of one bird in Scotland does not really

add to the risk of this virus emerging as a human strain. "I will be eating chicken tonight but it will be well-cooked chicken. The evidence from the Food Standards Agency is that in properly cooked meat the virus is killed."

London, Apr 12 — A press report, dated Apr 11, states: The authorities in Egypt have confirmed the country's 12th case of a human contracting bird flu. An 18-year-old woman from north of Cairo, is suspected of contracting the virus after handling infected birds. She is being treated in hospital. Officials said the woman was in a stable condition and members of her family were being tested for infection. The H5N1 virus has killed three Egyptians - the only confirmed human deaths so far on the African continent. However, four West African countries have now confirmed cases of H5N1 in birds - Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Burkina Faso. Scientific experts are meeting in Nairobi today to discuss how migratory birds are spreading bird flu around the world, and what further measures can be taken to prevent domestic fowl being infected.

London, Apr 12 — A press report, dated Apr 11, states: An Indonesian man in his twenties has been confirmed to have the H5N1 strain of the bird flu virus, officials said. Health Ministry official Hariadi Wibisono said the man was in a stable condition in hospital. Indonesia has seen the second-highest number of human cases of the virus, with more than 20 confirmed fatalities. Mr Wibisono said tests by the WHO-affiliated laboratory in Hong Kong had confirmed the virus in the Indonesian man, who had been working at a chicken farm in west Java before he became ill. Meanwhile, in Guangzhou in southern China, officials were testing a 41-year-old woman for the virus. WHO spokesman in Beijing, Ashaluk Bhatiasevi, said the woman sold vegetables at a market where poultry was also for sale. The woman was currently in a stable condition in hospital, she said. Eleven people have died from the virus in China. Around the world, more than 100 people have died from the H5N1 strain of the disease since 2003.

OUTBREAK OF "BRD FLU"

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated Apr 10, states: Bird flu in Myanmar is more serious than originally thought, an official from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Agency (FAO) said today. There have been 100 recorded outbreaks of the disease in the country since the deadly avian virus was first confirmed last month. At a news conference in Bangkok, He Changchui, the FAO's regional representative, said: "The situation there was more serious than we imagined." Since confirming the outbreak of bird flu in the Mandalay and Sagaing regions on March 13, Myanmar authorities have slaughtered 500,000 chickens and quails at 400 farms in efforts to

prevent the spread of the disease. He said Myanmar didn't have the means, such as diagnostic equipment and protective gear, to adequately cope with the spread of the disease, adding that two FAO teams had been working in the country. A team from the UN World Health Organisation is expected to arrive later this month. In a separate development, the H5N1 virus has been found in three out of the 10 cases of bird flu in the Czech Republic, Josef Duben, spokesman for the State Veterinary Authority said today. Duben said that the confirmation of H5N1 had changed nothing in the passed protective measures. All previous cases of bird flu have been detected in South Bohemia and all of them involved swans. Special veterinary measures have been in effect in the affected areas in south Bohemia for two weeks. The towns and villages situated in the zones of strict protection and supervision must make a count of all household poultry breeds and secure containers for the dead birds. Local breeders must not keep poultry in open-air enclosures. A ban has been imposed on the transfer of poultry, eggs and further material, and access to poultry farms has been limited. Steps have been taken to secure disinfection of the people and cars in contact with the farms. The measures are to last at least 21 days.

OUTBREAK OF VIRUS ON UNITED KINGDOM-FLAGGED VESSEL

Glasgow, Apr 10 — Following a report of seven or eight cases of diarrhoea and vomiting among the crew, passenger ro/ro *Caledonian Isles* was taken out of service on morning of Apr 5. Suspecting a possible outbreak of Norovirus, the decision was taken by the owners, Caledonian MacBrayne Ltd, to carry out a full clean, sanitise and superchlorination at Brodick. The vessel returned to service with the 1500 hrs sailing on Apr 7, the standard 72-hour period from the last reported case of illness. — Lloyd's Agents.

Fires & Explosions



COAL MINE, WILLIAMSVILLE AREA, ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated Apr 9, states: Authorities are investigating the cause of a fire at a central Illinois coal mine over the weekend in which no injuries were reported. The fire yesterday at the Viper Mine facility began in the morning around a belt system that lifts coal up a 300-foot-long coal production shaft, said Elkhart Fire Chief Mason Boyer. The blaze, which was extinguished by yesterday evening, damaged underground equipment and a surface building at the mine - located near Williamsville

and about 10 miles northeast of Springfield. No injuries were reported. The Viper Mine is owned by the International Coal Group, the same company that owns the Sago Mine in West Virginia where 12 miners died in an accident in January. The cause of the fire remained under investigation, ICG Illinois spokesman Dale Harper said. Three workers were in an elevator near the fire but managed to escape when they felt the heat, Harper said. As many as 20 workers in other parts of the mine were also evacuated, he said. It wasn't immediately clear whether the incident would affect production, Harper said.

FOREST, CHINA

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated Kunming, Apr 10, states: Firefighters and civilians gathered here today to celebrate victory in the battle against a 10-day forest fire in China's Yunnan Province. Local authorities announced the fire was extinguished after monitoring the forest for 72 hours since the blazing flames were put out last Friday (Apr 7). It ruined 1,333 hectares of forest, but caused no casualties or damage to homes. More than 800 evacuated villagers have returned to their homes. Premier Wen Jiabao and other high-ranking officials including Hui Liangyu, Zhou Yongkang and Hua Jianmin have monitored progress of the firefighters, asking rescuers to ensure the safety of lives and property. Police have arrested a woman in connection with the alleged arson that started the blaze.

FOREST, NEPAL

London, Apr 7 — A press report, dated Apr 6, states: Forest heritages worth corers of rupees have been gutted in a wild fire that has been raging in the Royal Chitwan National Park for the past three weeks. Twenty people have been arrested in connection with fire incident in the National Park. According to the National Park, forest heritage, important herbs, extinct animals, snakes, birds and their habitats have been gutted as the fire continued to rage in dense forest area near Thori area of Parsa district as well as forest area adjoining Bandarjhula slum stelements. According to the administration of the National Park, some locals of Manahari and Haadhikhola were arrested suspecting that they might have caused fire in while digging for asparagus in forest area. Although locals of Bandarjhula and Thori and security forces are making collective efforts to bring the fire under control, they have not yet succeeded to put out the fire completely, said the administration of the park adding that it has restricted the movement of group of people into the forest area who usually come to gather asparagus. Meanwhile, in Jalewsor, relief assistance was collected in Jaleswore yesterday in order to help normalise daily life of

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fire victims and rehabilitate them in Mahottari district. One hundred houses were gutted in a fire that broke out in Madhawa VDC of Mahottari district last week.

HOSPITAL, SHANXI PROVINCE, CHINA

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated today, states: The death toll from an explosion at a hospital complex in northern China rose to at least 33 today amid reports that explosives stored in a garage may have caused the tragedy. Rescuers found a total of 33 bodies amid rubble after the Monday morning (Apr 10) blast at the Xuangang Coal Power Company's staff hospital in Shanxi province, China Central Television (CCTV) reported in its evening news. The first report of the blast which emerged on Monday afternoon said 15 were killed. Various state-run media reports said that between 40 and 200 people were injured in the explosion, some of whom were nearby villagers whose houses have been damaged. The powerful explosion, which occurred in a garage in a building in the hospital complex, flattened that building and six other houses nearby, the CCTV report said. It caused damage within one square kilometre of the blast site, with one end of a five-storey residential building for hospital staff completely destroyed. The blast site was less than 500 metres from the main building and the patients have since been moved to other local hospitals. Some of the windows of the main hospital building, which can accommodate 300 patients, were smashed. The cause of the blast remained unknown, according to police. But official press reports said investigators were looking into the possibility that explosives stored at the site were responsible.

MARINA, CHELSEA, MASSACHUSETTS, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated Apr 9, states: More than a dozen boats were destroyed as a Chelsea marina went up in flames last night. Around 2030 hrs, a blaze broke out in the storage lot of the Admiral Hill Marina at 1000 Justin Drive. Nobody was injured. "It was a very acrid smoke, with fire extending probably 20 feet up into the air," the marina's general manager, Jim Jaoul, said. "I was just absolutely shocked to see the total devastation that was taking place." Fire officials will not know what started the fire until they begin their investigation tomorrow, but they are not ruling out any potential causes. In the way of their investigation is the fact that many of the boats are made of fiberglass, which creates a hazardous materials situation. Jaoul estimates that close to \$2 million in damages was caused, but also says that insurance is mandatory for all boat owners at the marina.

MARINA, CHELSEA, MASSACHUSETTS, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated today, states: Investigators are treating as potentially suspicious a fire that devoured a dozen large power boats at The Admiral's Hill Marina Saturday (Apr 8) night, though they have not ruled out an accidental cause such as improperly stored chemicals, officials said yesterday. Twelve boats were destroyed and three others were damaged in the fire, said Jim Jadul, the marina's general manager, who estimated the total loss could exceed \$2 million. No one was injured. The boats were among 120 that were dry-docked for the winter a couple hundred yards from the marina, behind a chain-link fence along Beacham Street. The investigation could take months to complete. Later yesterday, authorities declared the area a hazardous material site after the Chelsea Fire Department's hazardous materials team assisted in the investigation because of the large amount of fuel and burned and powdered fiberglass at the scene. The fire had turned the sides of some giant fiberglass boats into frayed nets of fine-spun glass, and as the wind dried the damaged boats yesterday. Firefighters and investigators appeared to focus on the charred carcass of a 30-foot pleasure boat, where officials believe the blaze may have started about 2015 hrs. One of the first witnesses to arrive on the scene Saturday night, an Everett police captain who lives on a boat at the marina, told investigators he saw the interior of either that boat or its neighbour on fire before the flames spread. All of the damaged vessels were power boats, ranging in size from 27 feet to 51 feet, with values as high as \$400,000. He said the marina requires all boat owners to fully insure their boats.

MARINA, ILE PERROT, QUEBEC, CANADA

London, Apr 7 — A press report, dated Apr 6, states: Damage was estimated at \$2.5 million after fire ravaged the Ile Perrot marina late Tuesday (Apr 4). The blaze destroyed a warehouse and 12 boats, six of which were docked outside the building. One of the boats dated back to 1907 and was considered priceless, Surete du Quebec Constable Chantal Mackels said. The marina's alarm company called the emergency services at about 2100 hrs. Firefighters from several surrounding municipalities rallied to fight the fire. The building was too heavily damaged for investigators to determine the cause of the fire yesterday. The investigation will focus on finding witnesses to the fire. Arson has not been ruled out, Mackels said.

PREMISES, MEERUT, INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 10 — Police said at least 45 people were killed today when a huge fire broke out at a

crowded consumer electronics fair in the northern Indian city of Meerut, but one official said the toll could be twice as high. "There are 45 to 50 bodies in the mortuary," Police Inspector-General N.B. Singh told Reuters. A local administrative officer in Meerut said around 100 people were feared dead. "There were around 1,000 people inside the enclosure," he told Reuters. "There are bodies still in the ruins." One police officer said many people had found it difficult to escape from the long tent where the exhibition was being held. "The tent was very long, extending for more than 100 metres and there was only one exit corridor, so people could only come out one by one," said a police official at the control room in Meerut, 80 km northeast of New Delhi. Officials said it was too early to say what caused the fire, which witnesses said broke out at around 1615, local time. Around 60 people were taken to one hospital, some with very serious burns, a witness at the hospital said. — Reuters.

PREMISES, SKIBBEREEN, COUNTY CORK, REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated today, states: A number of business premises in Skibbereen, Co Cork, have been extensively damaged by a fire which broke out around 1830 last night. It is understood that at least one of the buildings has been destroyed. Gardai believe the fire may have been started deliberately. The blaze began at the Church Restaurant on Bridge Street, which is a former Methodist Church, dating back to 1833. Several premises adjoining the restaurant, including a hardware store and the local Social Welfare Office, have been damaged. Fire crews fought the blaze for several hours. Forensic tests at the scene will not get under way until this afternoon at the earliest, due to the heat of the blaze and the unsafe nature of the buildings. Gardai were called to the scene following reports that a number of people were involved in a row, several cars were damaged and that a number of premises had been entered.

PREMISES, TELFORD, SHROPSHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Apr 9 — A press report, dated today, states: A fire has caused hundreds of thousands of pounds in damage to a row of shops in Telford, Shropshire. The fire broke out just after 1600, UTC, yesterday at a shopping complex in Acorn Way, in Shawbirch, Telford, which took fire crews two hours to control. A Spar store has been extensively damaged and the nearby pharmacy and doctor's surgery may also be affected. A cordon has been placed around the shops as the buildings are unsafe. Police and fire investigators are looking into what started the blaze. West Mercia Police said that as well as the loss to the local community the cost of the fire would run into hundreds of thousands of pounds. The force said it

was treating it as a crime scene until a cause for the fire had been established.

STEEL MILL, AJAOKUTA, NIGERIA

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated today, states: A late night fire on Friday night (Apr 7) gutted the multi billion naira Ajaokuta Steel Mill but was prevented from spreading to the entire complex by a rapid response of the men of fire service. Wire/Rod Mill and was said to have been caused by electrical voltage at the underground. The fire was extinguished at about 0300 on Saturday. The timely extinguishing of the fire ensured that it did not spread to the production stage of the mill.

WILDFIRE, PLISKA, BULGARIA

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated Apr 9, states: Blazes in the southern town of Pliska have consumed a farm building of over 700 square meters and killed many domesticated animals, media reported. Firefighters managed to stop the flames before they reached a nearby farm. However they failed to save the livestock from the burning building. Luckily no people were hurt in the fire that was put out with about 14 tons of water. Investigators are yet to determine what caused the inferno.

WILDFIRES, AUSTRALIA

London, Apr 7 — A press report, dated today, states: Gusty winds and rugged terrain are hampering efforts to contain several large bushfires in the New South Wales Hunter Valley and south coast regions. Two fires burning in the Great Lakes area, north of Newcastle, for the past few days were causing the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) most concern, it said. The blaze in the Shoalhaven, on the state's south coast, although much smaller, also was out of control. But a fire that swept through about 100ha of the Mogo State Forest, near Eurobodalla on the far south coast, was contained overnight. The RFS today said no property was currently under threat. The Great Lakes fires, located at Bungwahl and at Pindimar South, have blackened approximately 300ha of land.

WILDFIRES, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 8 — A press report, dated today, states: Wildfires in the Texas Hill Country that have killed one man were threatening about 50 homes today and have burned about 6,200 acres, officials said. One fire in Kerr County, about 100 miles west of Austin, had burned about 1,100 acres and was putting about 50 homes at risk, said Texas Forest Service spokeswoman Traci Weaver. In the same county, a fire that scorched 150 acres burned a camper-trailer and two mobile homes. That fire was about 75 percent contained, the forest service said. Winds in the region were blowing at about 15 mph, and the humidity was expected to fall throughout the day, said Bill Runyon

of the National Weather Service. Temperatures were in the mid-50s to low 60s, he said. In Uvalde County, officials said a man found dead yesterday next to his bulldozer was most likely killed by the fast-moving flames. He had been trying to protect his property from the fires. Wildfires in Texas have burned more than a million acres since Dec 1, including about 40,000 acres this week in the Panhandle, Weaver said. About 431 homes have been lost in fires since Dec 27. (See issue of Apr 7.)

London, Apr 9 — A press report, dated today, states: Parts of Florida and Texas were still burning today after a series of wildfires scorched hundreds of acres in both states. Florida officials said they hope rain in today's forecast will help firefighters in their battle against fires that have burned hundreds of acres of trees and grassy areas. There have been some evacuations and road closures but no reports of homes damaged. Some parts of Florida have not received measurable rainfall in at least six weeks. Meanwhile, Texas firefighters are getting control of some blazes west of Austin. Three fires have scorched about 6,200 acres. Officials said they think the calmer winds expected today should prevent the fires from spreading. A fire official said crews think they'll have "full containment" of the burns sometime today.



AIRCRAFT PUT BACK TO DAVAO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, PHILIPPINES

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated today, states: A Philippine Air Lines Airbus 330 bound for Manila was forced to land again at the Davao International Airport, 30 minutes after it took off around 0730 today. Arturo Balaga, PAL branch manager, said the Airbus 330 experienced a problem in its air compressor system, which is responsible for the operation of its emergency slide. Balaga said there was a sound coming from the compressor, which forced the pilot to return to Davao. "As a safety procedure the aircraft returned to ramp after some 25 to 30 minutes (of being) airborne," Balaga said. He said the problem did not compromise the safety of the passengers and of the crew. Balaga said they asked passengers seated near the affected area if they wanted to disembark and wait for the next flight. He said all 22 passengers in the business class opted to disembark, but the rest of the passengers went ahead with their flight.

C-IDAK

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated Apr 9, states: A 2005 Dova

Skylark (C-IDAK), valued at \$75,000, lurched from its moorings, rolled across a pedestrian walkway and narrowly missed a parked car containing children, Lakeland police said. The aircraft did clip the car, causing minor damage, as well as a pickup, which suffered considerable damage. The aircraft came to rest when it hit a fence with a bent wing draped over the pickup. The aircraft was heavily damaged. Just before 1800 hrs, Eric Dellenbach, an aircraft representative from Wisconsin, flipped the ignition switch as a test, and the engine "went full throttle."

CRASH, BUCHAN AIRPORT, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated Apr 9, states: An Aero Commander Darter crashed at Buchan Airport 0900 Thursday (Apr 6), coming to a stop in a drainage ditch at the end of a runway, spilling fuel out of its right wing. No one was injured in the incident. The aircraft was carrying about 40 gallons of fuel. Englewood firefighters, Sarasota County sheriff's officers and Sarasota County Hazmat officials responded to the scene. The Federal Aviation Administration was also notified about the crash.

CRASH, MARSABIT, KENYA

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated today, states: A Kenyan aircraft carrying politicians and tribal elders has crashed in the north of the country, killing at least 14 people, officials say. Four severely injured passengers are said to have been rescued from the crash site, near the town of Marsabit. Four members of parliament and a junior minister are believed to have been among 18 people aboard the aircraft. Witnesses report seeing burnt bodies scattered on the hillside where it crashed amid heavy rainfall. "Fourteen people have been burned beyond recognition," a Red Cross official at the scene of the crash said. A Marsabit official, Mutua Iringu, told the Kenya Television Network there was "no way" anyone but the four rescued passengers could have survived a blaze that broke out in the wrecked aircraft. Poor visibility is being blamed for the crash. The officials aboard the aircraft are said to have been travelling to Marsabit, 450 km north-east of the capital, Nairobi. Reports say the politicians were travelling to the region to mediate in a bloody feud between rival communities near the border with Ethiopia.

London, Apr 11 — Harbin Yunshuji Y-12-II, registration 132, operated by the Kenyan Airforce, departed Nairobi-Eastleigh AB bound for Marsabit Airport (RBT), carrying several government officials. On approach the aircraft flew into Marsabit hill at about 1000, Apr 10. Four crew on board, two fatalities. Thirteen passengers on board, 12 fatalities.

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

CRASH, NEAR BLACKBURN, MISSOURI, UNITED STATES

See N34200.

CRASH, STARA ZAGORA, BULGARIA

London, Apr 12 — A press report, dated Apr 11, states: An agricultural aircraft crashed near the city of Stara Zagora, south Bulgaria, about 1800 hrs, killing the pilot. Dinko Kolev was the only passenger on board.

CRASH, SVISHTOV AREA, BULGARIA

London, Apr 12 — A press report, dated Apr 11, states: Two people died in the plane crash near town of Svishtov, according to Svishtov's Deputy Mayor. The 42-year-old pilot Evgeni Panayotov and the other crew member - 23-year-old Atanas Ganev died in the crash. Eleven-year-old Georgi Danchev has been admitted into Svishtov hospital with fractures. The crash happened between villages of Kozlovets and Dragomirovo. The owner of the plane is company "Polier". The plane was hired by the agricultural co-operative in Kozlovets.

London, Apr 12 — A press report, dated Apr 11, states: The cause of an aircraft crash in Svishtov area remains unclear. The Transport Ministry has launched investigation into the case.

CRASH, WASHINGTON COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI, UNITED STATES

See N3887P.

EMERGENCY LANDING, LANDVETTER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, GOTHENBURG, SWEDEN

London, Apr 7 — A press report, dated today, states: City Airlines Embraer 135 from Birmingham was forced to make an emergency landing at Gothenburg's Landvetter airport yesterday after colliding with birds. The pilot sent an emergency signal to air traffic control reporting that the aircraft, which was carrying 22 passengers, could have been damaged on one of the wheels. The flaps, which are angled to slow the aircraft down on its approach, were also thought to have been damaged. The airport was on high alert in anticipation of a high speed landing. Other aircrafts were brought down first in case the runway was blocked by the City Airlines aircraft. The aircraft landed just after 2200 hrs. Police said that the landing went smoothly.

EMERGENCY LANDING, LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 11 — A press report, dated Apr 10, states: A Continental aircraft, Flight 386, bound for Newark, with 97 passengers, made an emergency landing at Los Angeles International Airport. The flight had originated from a nearby airport in Santa Ana, but it was forced to land when crew in the air traffic control tower reported seeing fuel leaking from the plane. None of the passengers on board were hurt.

EMERGENCY LANDING, MASADA, ISRAEL

London, Apr 7 — A press report, dated today, states: Initial reports indicate that a small Cessna aircraft made an emergency landing this morning on the summit of Masada. It was not immediately clear whether the aircraft had crashed or why it was unable to continue flying. The pilot and three passengers of the privately owned Cessna were lightly injured and taken to Soroka Medical Center in Be'er Sheva for treatment. The Transportation Ministry's chief accidents investigator, Yitzhak Raz, was making his way to the scene.

EMERGENCY LANDING, ORLANDO, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 7 — A Northwest Airlines flight made an emergency landing Wednesday (Apr 5) evening when an Airbus A320 carrying 149 people and five crew members experienced a mechanical problem, officials said yesterday. Flight 579 departed from Orlando to Minneapolis about 1745 hrs and began having a hydraulics problem. The aircraft turned around and landed with fire engines and emergency workers standing by. No injuries were reported.

EMERGENCY LANDING, SINGAPORE

London, Apr 9 — A press report, dated today, states: An Indian Airlines aircraft carrying 80 passengers from Singapore to New Delhi made an emergency landing at Singapore's Changi airport following engine trouble half an hour after its take off, sources in the airlines said in New Delhi today. The pilot noticed some problems in the aircraft's engine and did not take any risks, deciding to return to the airport in Singapore this evening. After attending to the fault, the aircraft would leave for Delhi tonight, the sources said.

HK-2969

London, Apr 9 — Cessna 206 HK-2969, was destroyed upon impact with obstacles while attempting a forced landing in a sport field following a reported loss of engine power near Medellin, Republic of Colombia, at 0805, EST, Mar 29. The pilot and his four passengers were killed. A student attending the Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, was also killed, while five other students received minor injuries.

N209CH

London, Apr 10 — Eurocopter AS 350B (Ecureuil) N209CH crashed on landing at Haines, Alaska, at 2350, Apr 6. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The three persons on board were not injured.

N34200

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated Apr 8, states: A Cessna crashed near Blackburn, Missouri, yesterday. The only person on board died on

impact. Witnesses told authorities it looked like the aircraft was attempting an emergency landing when it crashed into a small field. The closest airport is about 15 miles away from the crash site. The Federal Aviation Administration has taken over the investigation and says it's too early to know the cause of the crash.

London, Apr 10 — Cessna 177B (Cardinal) N34200 crashed near Blackburn, Missouri, at 1942, Apr 7. The aircraft was destroyed. The one person on board was killed

N3887P

London, Apr 6 — Piper PA-18-150 (Super Cub) N3887P crashed near Hollandale, Mississippi, at 0001, Apr 6. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The two persons on board were killed.

N4316T

London, Apr 10 — Piper PA-28-140 (Cherokee) N4316T crashed near Lakeview, Arkansas, at 1700, Apr 7. The aircraft was destroyed. One of the three persons on board was seriously injured and the other two suffered minor injuries.

Product Recalls**MINI-TRAMPOLINES, UNITED STATES**

Washington, DC, Apr 6 — The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with Stamina Products Inc., of Springfield, Mo., today announced a voluntary recall of about 668,000 InMotion Trampolines. Consumers should not assemble or disassemble this product until they have the revised assembly instructions. If a person assembles the trampoline alone and the outside rail is released momentarily, the trampoline can snap back into the folded position and strike the consumer, posing a risk of serious injury. Stamina has received 13 reports of injuries including two concussions; a rotated disc; two reports of facial bone fractures; six injuries requiring stitches to the forehead, eyebrow, lip and/or chin; a corneal abrasion; and two reports of chipped teeth. The round, black mini-trampoline measures 36 inches across and has six 7 Ω-inch long metal legs. The mini-trampoline is used for in-place jogging and other cardiovascular exercises. Most mini-trampolines that have model numbers containing 35-1625 are included in the recall. Model 35-1625C and 35-1625CW units are not included in the recall. The model number along with the customer service and serial numbers are stamped on a black and white label on one of the legs containing the name "Stamina." Sold at Wal-Mart, Play It Again Sports, and various other retail

outlets nation-wide and online sellers, including Wal-Mart.com, from August 2000 through March 2006 for about \$20. Manufactured in China. Consumers should not assemble or disassemble these mini-trampolines until they have the revised assembly instructions. Consumers should contact Stamina immediately for new assembly instructions.

RENAULT MOTOR VEHICLES, WORLDWIDE

London, Apr 10 — A press report, dated Apr 9, states: Renault SA said it has recalled an undisclosed number of its Scenic minivans to repair a potential fault with the seatbelts in the rear seats, confirming a report on the website of German automobile magazine Auto Service Praxis. Renault said it was not able to say how many cars are affected by the recall, but Auto Service Praxis said nearly 900,000 Scenic models will need to be serviced. No accidents have been reported because of the problem, the company said.

SUZUKI MOTOR VEHICLES, JAPAN

London, Apr 7 — Suzuki Motor Corp said today it is recalling a total of 313,199 minivehicles in three models for free replacement of faulty ignition switches. The vehicles were

manufactured under the Every, Carry and Scrum brands between December 1998 and November 2000, Suzuki said. The Scrum vehicles were manufactured on behalf of Mazda Motor Corp on an original equipment manufacturing basis. Suzuki also said it is recalling a total of 44,755 vehicles it produced under the Wagon R and Chevrolet MW brands between November 2000 and December 2005 because they are equipped with defective accelerator cables.



ITALY

Genoa, Apr 10 — Port situation Apr 10: Genoa: No vessels awaiting berths. La Spezia: No vessels awaiting berths. Savona: Two vessels waiting for special berths, delay one day. One vessel waiting for normal berth, delay 1/2 day. — Lloyd's Agents.

PANAMA CANAL

London, Apr 7 — Continued heavy arrivals are still hindering efforts to

reduce the backlog and waiting times for vessels wishing to transit the Panama Canal. Despite the concerted efforts of the Panama Canal Authority, non-booked Panamax/restricted vessels currently face delays of three-four days and regular vessels four-six days or more. The Authority started auctioning a booking slot on Sunday (Apr 2).

Balboa, Apr 10 — The situation at the Panama Canal shows deterioration rather than improvement. Heavy arrivals persist. Also inclement weather (fog) has been a disrupting factor over the weekend. Whilst the Panama Canal Authority claim to be utilising all their resources to maximize number of daily transits, severe delays continue and appear to be growing. Delays to non-booked vessels are in the six day range. No improvement is foreseen in the days to come. Projected vessel arrivals: today: 41, tomorrow: 46, the next day: 32. Backlog: today: 99, tomorrow: 104 (projected) and the next day: 109 (projected). ACP continues to auction one booking slot per day. — Lloyd's Agents.

SYRIA

Lattakia, Apr 8 — As at today, the waiting period for Lattakia port is currently two days and for Tartous it is four days. — Lloyd's Sub-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	10-APR-2006	Coal: Thirteen vessels due by 2/5; 1-2 days delay expected.
Brisbane	10-APR-2006	Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth; Four vessels due by 29/4; no delays expected.
Dalrymple Bay	10-APR-2006	Coal: Three vessels loading at berth; 9 vessels arrived; 31 vessels due by 22/4; 3-10 days delay expected.
Dampier	10-APR-2006	Iron ore: Parker Point A berth: One vessel loading at berth; 3 vessels arrived; 6 vessels due by 20/4; Parker Point B berth: 1 vessel loading at berth; 2 vessels arrived; 8 vessels due by 25/4; Parker Point C berth: 1 vessel arrived; East Intercourse Island; One vessel loading at berth; 6 vessels arrived; 10 vessels due by 14/4; 8-12 days delay expected;
Esperance	10-APR-2006	Iron ore: Three vessels due by 26/4; up to 1 day's delay expected.
Geraldton	10-APR-2006	Iron ore: One vessel due 24/4.
Gladstone	10-APR-2006	Coal: R.G. Tanna coal terminal: Two vessels loading at berth; 24 vessels arrived; 30 vessels due by 17/5; Barney Point: 1 vessel loading at berth; 3 vessels arrived; 16 vessels due by 15/6; 9-16 days delay expected.
Hay Point	10-APR-2006	Coal: One vessel loading at berth; 7 vessels arrived; 7 vessels due by 23/4; 3-10 days delay expected.
Newcastle	10-APR-2006	Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: Three vessels loading at berth; 18 vessels arrived; 36 vessels due by 6/5; 7-18 days delay expected; Dykes 4+5: 2 vessels loading at berth; 7 vessels arrived; 13 vessels due by 3/5; 8-16 days delay expected.
Port Hedland	10-APR-2006	Iron ore: BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Mt. Newman (Nelson Point), "A" berth: One vessel loading at berth; 3 vessels arrived; 7 vessels due by 18/4; "B" berth: 1 vessel loading at berth; 6 vessels arrived; 6 vessels due by 18/4; 4 other vessels due by 21/4 at A or B berth 2/4; BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Goldsworthy (Finucane Island "C" berth): 2 vessels due by 19/4; (Finucane Island "D" berth): 1 vessel loading at berth, 5 vessels arrived; 2 vessels due by 17/4; up to 14 days delay expected: Cockatoo Island: 1 vessel due 19/4.
Port Kembla	10-APR-2006	Coal: Fourteen vessels due by 5/5; up to 4 days delay expected. Grain: One vessel due 5/4 to load wheat.
Port Walcott	10-APR-2006	Iron ore: Sixteen vessels arrived; 6 vessels due by 23/4; 8-12 days delay expected.
Whyalla	10-APR-2006	Iron ore: Seven vessels due by 24/5; up to 2 days delay expected.
Azerbaijan		
Apsheron	10-APR-2006	Oil products: Four vessels at berth, all discharging (3 crude oil, 1 gasoil); 2 vessels in roads, both to discharge
Baku	10-APR-2006	Oil products: Bay of Baku: No information; Azerneftiyag terminal: no information; Azertrans terminal: Nobel Avenue: port open; 1 vessel due 10/4 to discharge; Sangachal District: port open; no vessels.
Bulgaria		
Bourgas	10-APR-2006	Twelve vessels in port of which 9 loading (1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 3 coils, 1 cigarettes, 2 wheat, 1 profiles, 1 equipment), 3 discharging (1 billets, 1 zinc concentrate, 1 gasoil); 2 vessels in roads of which 1 to load gasoil, 1 to discharge fuels; 11 vessels due of which 6 to load (4 coils, 1 profiles, 1 equipment), 5 to discharge (1 zinc concentrate, 1 billets, 1 metal, 1 coal, 1 equipment).
Varna	10-APR-2006	Varna East, Varna West, Balchik: Twenty-seven vessels in port operating of which 15 loading (1 scrap, 1 equipment, 1 chamote/kaolin, 4 soda, 1 bulk sulphuric aid, 1 bulk clinker, 1 polypropylene/soda, 2 silica sand, 1 scrap, 1 container, 1 sunflower seed), 7 discharging (1 raw sugar, 2 raw phosphate, 2 bulk coal, 1 petroleum coke, 1 container), 5 discharging/loading containers; no vessels waiting in roads.
Chile		
Antofagasta	11-APR-2006	Four vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 18 vessels due this week to load/discharge concentrates, bulk copper, containers and general cargo.
Arica	11-APR-2006	Three vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 21 vessels due this week.
Iquique	11-APR-2006	Three vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 22 vessels due this week.
Puerto Montt	11-APR-2006	Two vessels at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 9 vessels due this week.
Punta Arenas	11-APR-2006	Four vessels at terminal, 3 berths vacant; 13 vessels due this week.
San Antonio	11-APR-2006	Six vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 23 vessels due this week.
San Vicente	11-APR-2006	Two vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 20 vessels due during the week; Steel pier: 1 vessel at terminal, 1 berth vacant; no vessels due this week; Coronel pier: 3 vessels at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 2 vessels due this week; Oil terminal: 1 tanker at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 2 tankers due this week.
Valparaiso	11-APR-2006	Four vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 4 vessels anchored; 22 vessels due this week.

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

Port Conditions

Cyprus

Larnaca	11-APR-2006	Three conventional vessels, 1 Ro/Ro discharging at berth; no vessels due 12/4; no delays expected.
Limassol	11-APR-2006	Five container vessels discharging/loading at berth, 2 conventional vessels discharging at berth; 3 container vessels, 1 conventional vessel, 2 Ro/Ros, 3 passenger vessels due 12/4; no delays expected.

Egypt

Adabiya	11-APR-2006	Six vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 5 general cargo, 1 livestock.
Alexandria	11-APR-2006	Forty-three vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 38 general cargo, 4 tankers, 1 containers; 27 vessels at inner anchorage, 9 at outer anchorage.
Damietta	11-APR-2006	Twenty-one vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 12 general cargo, 3 bulk carriers, 1 live stock, 5 containers; 28 vessels at outer anchorage, none at inner anchorage.
Dekhelia	11-APR-2006	Seven vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 5 general cargo, 1 bulk carrier, 1 containers; no vessels at outer anchorage.
Port Said	11-APR-2006	Six vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 2 general cargo, 4 containers.
Suez	11-APR-2006	Seven vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 3 general cargo, 4 passenger vessels; 3 tugs, 1 vessel dry-docked.
Suez Canal	11-APR-2006	Twenty-two vessels transiting Northbound, 31 Southbound.

Estonia

Tallinn	10-APR-2006	Paljassaare (formerly Kopli): 1 sugar vessel discharging at berth; no vessels waiting at anchorage; 1 vessel due, with 8 days berthing delay expected.
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India

Kolkata	10-APR-2006	4 vessels operating at berth of which 2 vessels loading (Granite Blocks, Iron ore), 1 vessel discharging Logs, 1 vessel waiting to discharge Containers; 1 vessel working at midstream to discharge logs; 2 vessels under repair; 1 vessel under dry docked; 3 Container vessels due.
Haldia	10-APR-2006	14 vessels operating at berth of which 4 loading (Iron ore-3, POL), 8 vessels discharging (Crude, Coking Coal, Sulphur, Palmolive, A.Coal, MAP, Project Cargo, POL), 2 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 4 vessels awaiting berth (1 to discharge, 3 to load); 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to discharge; 6 vessels due (Butadin, POL, Crude, Containers-2, Steel).
Paradip	10-APR-2006	3 vessels operating at berth of which 2 loading Iron Ore, 1 vessel discharging Met Coke; 2 vessels awaiting berth to load; 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to load.
Visakhapatnam	10-APR-2006	10 vessels operating at berth of which 6 loading (Iron ore-2, Steel Plates, Soya, C.P. Coke, Granite), 3 vessels discharging (Sulphuric Acid, Sulphur, Gypsum), 1 vessel loading and discharging Containers; 7 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage (5 to discharge, 2 to load); 1 vessel under repair (MV Chin Shws Haw at Hsy Jetty which was collided with MV Uttar Kasi); 28 vessels due (Iron Ore-6, Steel Cargo-3, Thermal Coal, Granite Blocks-2, Feld Spar, Soya, Urea-2, Rock Phosphate, Coking Coal-5, Containers, Timber Logs, Styrene & Mathanol Steam Coal, Crude & POL Tankers-2).
Chennai	10-APR-2006	13 vessels operating at berth of which 5 loading (Granite Blocks-3, Sugar, Project Cargo), 7 vessels discharging (Petroleum Oil, Steel Plate, Logs, S.Coal, S.Ash/Bauxite/ Project Cargo, Containers, Thermal Coal); 1 vessel loading and discharging Containers; 1 vessel not ready to work and waiting at anchorage to load; 1 HSD vessel due.
Tuticorin	10-APR-2006	10 vessels operating at berth of which 5 loading (Cement, General Cargo-3, Granite), 5 vessels discharging (Petroleum oil, Timber Logs, Cu. Concentrate, Thermal Coal-2); 7 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage to load.
Cochin	10-APR-2006	3 vessels operating at berth of which 1 vessel loading HSD/MS, 1 vessel discharging logs, 1 vessel loading and discharging Container.
New Mangalore	10-APR-2006	3 vessels operating at berth of which 3 vessels loading (Containers, Timber Logs, POL Product); 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge; 10 vessels due (Timber, Cement, Iron Ore Fines, Granite Stone, Methonol, POL Crude, Sulphur, LPG, Phosphoric Acid, Coal).
Mormugao	10-APR-2006	1vessels operating at berth and loading Iron ore; 5 vessels working at mid stream and loading Iron ore; 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to load Iron ore; 4 vessels under repairs/dry docked (Repairs/dry docking is being carried out by the Western India Shipyard Ltd. in their yard); 6 vessels due (S.C.Coal, Met Coke, Iron ore-4).
Mumbai	10-APR-2006	12 vessels operating at berth of which 7 loading (Transformer, Project Cargo, Steel, Lift Cargo, Bagged Sugar, POL), 4 vessels discharging (Bulk Salt, Rock Phosphate-2, POL); 1 vessel loading and discharging Steel/General Cargo/Project; 2 vessels awaiting berth to discharge; 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to load; 6 vessels under repairs/dry docked; 5 vessels under arrest, 1 vessel under laid up(Berths not required for cargo operations); 29 vessels due (Containers-3, Oil-2, Fertiliser (RM), General Cargo-23).
J.N.P.T.	10-APR-2006	6 vessels operating at berth of which 1 vessel discharging MSD/MS), 5 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 5 vessels (*) awaiting berth (1 to discharge, 4 to load and discharge; 5 vessels due (Containers-4, Edible oil).
Kandla	10-APR-2006	15 vessels operating at berth of which 8 discharging (Other Liquid-4, POL, Timber Logs-2, Urea), 4 vessels loading (C. Pipes, Cement-2, Rice and General Cargo), 3 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 3 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage to load; 2 dredger vessel waiting under maintenance work.

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

Port Conditions

Ennore	10-APR-2006	1 vessel operating at berth and discharging Thermal Coal; 1 vessel working at midstream to load Iron Ore; 3 vessels due (MV rani Padmini(Thermal Coal), MV Jag Padma(POL Products, MV Ilebei Hope(Thermal Coal) due.
Israel		
Ashdod	11-APR-2006	No labour problems. Two general cargo vessels loading at berth, 12 vessels discharging at berth (8 general cargo, 4 bulkers), 6 vessels loading/discharging at berth (4 containers, 2 tankers); 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 general cargo, 1 bulker), 4 container vessels waiting at anchorage to load/discharge; 1 vessel awaiting orders; 19 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Eilat	11-APR-2006	No labour problems. One general cargo vessel discharging at berth; no vessels anchored; 2 vessels due, with no delays expected.
Haifa	11-APR-2006	No labour problems. Five vessels discharging at berth (3 general cargo, 2 bulkers), 9 vessels loading/discharging at berth (4 containers, 2 car carriers, 3 tankers); 4 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (3 general cargo, 1 bulker), 6 vessels waiting at anchorage to load/discharge (1 containers, 5 tankers); 4 vessels under repairs/dry-docked, 1 awaiting orders; 8 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Kazakhstan		
Aktau	10-APR-2006	Oil products: One crude oil vessel at berth; 8 vessels in roads, all to load; 3 vessels due by 11/4, all to load.
Russia		
Novorossiysk	10-APR-2006	Nineteen vessels in port operating of which 15 loading (1 bulk cement,1 WRIC, 1 DRI, 2 steel billets, 2 slabs, 1 pipes/h-beams, 1 copper, 1 coils, 1 slabs/coils, 1 aluminium, 1 vegetable oil, 2 diesel oil), 3 discharging (2 bulk sugar, 1 citrus), 1 discharging/loading containers; 9 vessels in roads of which 7 to load (1 WRIC/steel billets, 1 scrap, 1 steel billets/steel sheets, 1 pipes/coils, 1 tin plates/steel billets, 1 bulk sugar, 1 diesel oil), 2 to discharge bulk sugar; 74 vessels due of which 72 to load, 2 to discharge/load containers; Oil terminal: 4 tanker in roads, all to load crude oil; 7 tankers due, all to load (5 crude oil, 1 diesel oil, 1 fuel oil)
Slovenia		
Koper	10-APR-2006	Port working normally; Six vessels berthed of which 2 loading (1 bulk cargo, 1 general cargo), 3 vessels discharging bulk cargo, 1 discharging/loading containers; 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to discharge/load containers; 27 vessels due over the next 2 days of which 11 to load (4 bulk cargo, 7 sawn timber/general cargo), 1 car carrier to discharge vehicles, 2 vessels to discharge bulk cargo, 1 tanker to discharge liquid cargo, 6 vessels to discharge/load containers, 5 car carriers to discharge/load vehicles.
Spain Apr 10		
Bilbao	10-APR-2006	Thirty-one vessels in port operating (7 tankers, 24 others), of which 7 loading, 17 discharging, 7 loading/discharging.
Sagunto	10-APR-2006	Twenty-nine vessels in port operating, of which 2 loading bulk fertiliser, 22 discharging (16 steel products, 1 vehicles, 2 gas, 2 machinery, 1 anhydrous ammonia), 5 loading/discharging (3 steel coils, 1 general cargo, 1 fruit); no vessels outside commercial wharf; no berthing delays at present..
Turkmenistan		
Aladja	10-APR-2006	Oil products: Port open; One vessel in roads to load crude oil.
Okarem	10-APR-2006	Oil products: One vessel in roads to load crude oil
Turkmenbashi	10-APR-2006	Oil products: Three vessels at berth of which 1 completed loading heating oil, 2 discharging crude oil; 1 vessel due 10/4 to load.
Ukraine		
Ilichevsk	10-APR-2006	Ten vessels in port operating of which 7 loading (2 steel products, 1 ferronickel, 1 sunflower oil, 1 ethanol, 2 equipment), 2 discharging ore, 1 discharging/loading containers; no vessels in roads; 18 vessels due of which 9 to load (7 steel products, 1 ore, 1 ferronickel), 9 to discharge/load containers.
Mariupol	10-APR-2006	Fourteen vessels in port operating, all loading (6 steel, 1 fire-clay, 1 wheat, 1 bran, 1 fire-clay/containers, 4 coal); 13 vessels in roads, all to load (11 steel, 2 coal); 51 vessels due of which 45 to load (27 steel, 10 coal, 1 sulphur, 2 coke, 1 pitch, 4 fire-clay), 5 to discharge (1 heavy lifts, 4 equipment), 1 to discharge/load feldspar/fire-clay/kaolin.
Odessa	10-APR-2006	Fifteen vessels in port operating of which 6 loading (3 metal, 1 pig iron, 1 ore, 1 timber), 8 discharging (2 passenger vessels, 1 fertiliser, 1 citrus, 1 baggage, 1 sand, 1 building, 1 general cargo), 1 discharging/loading containers; 3 vessels in roads of which 1 to load metal, 1 to discharge meat, 1 to discharge/load containers; 67 vessels due of which 38 to load (29 metal, 2 pig iron, 1 scrap, 2 ore, 1 timber, 1 wheat, 1 barley, 1 oil), 5 to discharge (1 bananas, 2 sugar, 1 oil, 1 baggage), 24 to load/discharge containers.

Port Conditions

USA		
Beaumont, TX	11-APR-2006	No new restriction in draft (40 ft. 0 ins. FW max. channel draft reported); Louis Dreyfus terminal: no delays expected.
Galveston, TX	11-APR-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: 2-3 days delay expected.
Houston, TX	11-APR-2006	Channel open under normal traffic. (Normal Max channel draft is 45 ft 0 ins. to Shell, 40 ft. 0 ins. above Shell to 610 Bridge area.) LDC Dreyfus terminal: no delays expected; Cargill terminal: 1-2 days delay expected.
Kalama, TX	11-APR-2006	Kalama export terminal: 3 days delay expected; United Harvest terminal: no delays expected.
New Orleans, LA	11-APR-2006	Mississippi River terminal berthing delays: Cenex-Harstates/Myrtle Grove: 1-2 days delay expected. Cargill-Westwego: 1-2 days delay expected. ADM/Ama: 2-3 days delay expected. Bunge/Destrehan: 2 days delay expected. ADM/ Destrehan: 2-3 days delay expected. ADM/Reserve: 2-3 days delay expected. Cargill/Reserve: 1 day's delay expected. ADM/Paulina: 2-3 days delay expected. Zen-Noh/Convent: 1-2 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: 3 days delay expected; Mile 158.0 Myrtle Grove Midstream terminal: 4 days delay expected; Mile 180.0 Cooper (America) - Darrow: 4 days delay expected. Nine-day forecast for Carrolton Gauge/New Orleans: expected to increase to 5.3 ft. by 20/4/06
Portland, OR	11-APR-2006	Columbia Grain terminal: 2 days delay expected; CLD Irving terminal: 2 days delay expected; CLD, O Dock terminals: 4 days delay expected.
Seattle, WA	11-APR-2006	Louis Dreyfus (Pier 86) terminal: 1 day's delay expected.
Tacoma, WA	11-APR-2006	Temco terminal: no delays expected.
Vancouver, WA	11-APR-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.

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ISSN 0047 4908

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