

Master and owners of Solar 1 'to face charges'

Inquiry finds evidence of criminal negligence and civil liabilities, writes Marcus Hand in Singapore-
Thursday September 07 2006

THE master and owners of the tanker Solar 1 may face criminal charges after causing the Philippines' worst ever oil spill.

Following completion of initial investigations by the Department of Justice, under-secretary Ernesto Pineda said master Norberto Aguro could face charges including reckless imprudence leading to homicide.

"There is criminal negligence on the part of Captain Aguro and crew members; criminal and civil liability of officers of Sunshine Maritime Development Corporation for torts; and civil liability of the officers of Petron Corp [charterers]," he said.

Contaminated

The 55-year-old, 998 gt tanker sank in heavy weather on August 11, leaking at least 500,000 litres of heavy fuel oil that contaminated 62 km of coastline, and leaving two out of its 20 crew members missing, presumed dead.

The inquiry by the Department of Justice found that the master and the owner appeared to have violated a number of Philippines laws, including the Corporation Code, the Anti-Dummy law, the Clean Water Act, the Domestic Shipping Act, the Revised Penal Code on reckless imprudence resulting in homicide and damage to

property and the National Internal Revenue Code.

Capt Aguro has denied that his actions caused the incident by deciding to sail on heavy weather rather than seeking shelter in port

"According to him, what he did is right. He said the vessel was sinking downward because of the volume of water inside so he pumped it out to balance the vessel," Mr Pineda said.

"But instead of anchoring the ship at the nearest port in Iloilo, the captain decided to proceed with his voyage towards Zamboanga City."

Mr Pineda also highlighted the fact that Capt Aguro admitted that his licence had expired on January 31, 2002, and that it was in fact for chemical tankers, not a bunker tanker.

The vessel was also only allowed a maximum of 16 crew onboard but had 20 at the time of the incident after he allowed four staff from Petron onboard.

While the Solar 1's master, other crew members and owners could face criminal charges, charterer Petron would only face possible civil liability and fines.

"We can't attach any criminal liability on Petron, only to the captain because he is directly involved," Mr Pineda said.

"Petron is merely the charterer and owner of the cargo, but it is liable for negligence in hiring the wrong vessel because it has the

obligation to see to it that the vessel is seaworthy."

The criminalisation of seafarers for pollution incidents has been in the spotlight in recent times. However, the Solar 1 case differs in the sense the Capt Aguro was well aware his certificates had expired several years earlier, and even then were only valid for chemical tanker operation, not a bunker tanker.

The Philippines government is promising much tougher rules for tankers engaged in domestic shipping, including the enforcement of international double-hull regulations and new sea lanes for tankers.

However the Philippines, which has suffered frequent maritime disasters, has a poor record of turning political rhetoric following incidents into legislative action.

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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>ATUL</i>	tug	IND	IR	284	—	1966	Grounded in lat 16 39.31N, long 73 19.99E, Jul 6-7 while assisting tug <i>MLC Nancy 3</i> , which aground. Refloated after a few days.
<i>CAPT. RUSSELL SIMPSON</i>	tug	USA	—	539	—	1974	Grounded about 40 miles south of Helena-West Helena, Mississippi River Aug 24.
<i>CAROLINA P.</i>	trawler	ARG	BV	1,369	1,377	1987	Reported 28 Aug 2006 in tow in lat 44 05S, long 63 12W, bound Puerto Madryn.
<i>CLEOPATRA I</i>	passenger	PAN	—	12,200	2,893	1971	Transmitted distress signals Aug 28 when lost part of engine power. Taken in tow & returned to Jeddah.
<i>ISLAND SEAL</i>	supply	PAN	—	284	—	1963	Capsized by Hog's Valley Point, west of Brandywine Bay lat 18 22.2N, long 64 33.1W, Aug 25. Cargo of containers shifted & started to take on water. Holed in two places. Salvage commenced Aug 26.
<i>JOHN SPENCE</i>	tug/ supply	CAN	LR	718	850	1972	Had starboard main engine crankcase explosion in the St. Clair River near Sarnia Aug 17. Proceeded to dock on one engine.
<i>KOTOBUKI MARU NO. 38</i>	fishing	JPN	—	289	—	1988	Grounded in lat 22 58 09S, long 166 58E, Aug 24. Refloated with assistance Aug 25 and being towed to Noumea for inspection.
<i>LAYAR SENTOSA</i>	general	IDN	KI	6,093	7,058	1979	Reported Aug 30 detained at Kochi by Mercantile Marine department for over 20 days as not seaworthy.
<i>NOBLE C. PARSONAGE</i>	tug	USA	—	545	—	1974	Grounded about 40 miles north of Baton Rouge, Mississippi River, Aug 24. Subsequently freed.
<i>PACIFIC PACKER</i>	fishing	USA	—	108	—	1955	Grounded near Kelsey Bay, BC, lat 50 23.54N, long 125 57.36W, Aug 24. Refloated & towed by sistership to a port in Washington State.
<i>PRINCESS ABA</i>	general	ATG	RI	2,940	4,565	1984	Drifting due rudder failure while navigating Istanbul Strait Aug 23.
<i>PRINCESS OF THE UNIVERSE</i>	passenger/ ro-ro	PHL	BV	11,919	4,260	1983	Grounded south-west of Canigao Island, Leyte, central Philippines Aug 25. Passengers transferred. Salvors waiting for barge, ETA Sep 1, to transfer cargo.
<i>RIO PARA</i>	container/ general	ATG	GL	4,462	5,608	2004	Disabled & adrift in lat 15 36.5N, long 66 57.5W, Aug 25 due fire in engine-room. Fire extinguished. Still drifting about 140 miles south of San Juan, PR, Aug 26. Crew restarted engines & proceeded Aug 27 for Rio Haina.
<i>ROBERT A. KYLE</i>	tug	USA	—	1,302	—	1982	Grounded 15 miles north of Rosedale, Mississippi River, Aug 24.
<i>SHELBY JEAN</i>	tug	USA	—	357	—	1956	Grounded with nine barges about 7 miles from Ohio River's confluence with Mississippi River at Cairo Aug 27. Dredging required to free.
<i>SUN PINE</i>	chem/oil tanker	KOR	NK	4,808	8,416	1990	According to a navigation warning issued Aug 18 adrift in lat 12 14N, long 89 56E, due engine failure.

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The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



ABENA REEFER (Ghana)

Portsmouth, UK, Aug 26 — A report, dateline: Tema, Aug 25, states: "The Tema Railways and Ports Police are investigating the theft of a refrigerated general cargo *Abena Reefer* owned by Legon Fishing Company Limited. Police Chief Inspector Yaw Nketia-Yeboah, Regional Police Public Affairs Officer, who reported this to newsmen in Tema said, the vessel built as far back as 1972, in the city of Vigo, Spain, is 49 metres long and nine metres broad. Narrating the circumstances leading to its disappearance, Chief Inspector Nketia-Yeboah advised that on August 3, 2002, one Mr Paul Watson Ugbomah of Peewee Fisheries Nigeria Limited, expressed an interest in the vessel. He said, as a result, its owners granted the Nigerian company access to enable it to start repair works on it. The Regional Police Public Affairs Officer said in April 3, this year, it was detected that the vessel had sailed out of the Fishing Harbour without permission, adding that, *Abena Reefer* had not subsequently been traced. Chief Inspector Nketia-Yeboah said that anybody, who could help the police to trace and arrest the vessel, which according to him, was suspected to be still within the West African area, especially, Togo, Benin, Gabon and Nigeria, would be "handsomely rewarded". — Correspondent.

AL MAHA (North Korea)

London, Aug 27 — Bulker *Al Maha* was reported passing Istanbul at 0540 hrs, Aug 26, on passage Tartous for Nikolayev.

AL-DANA

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated today, states: A British man who survived after dhow *Al-Dana* capsized in Bahrain killing 58 people is being sued by the boat's owner. Simon Hill, 44, from Southampton, is accused of forcing the reluctant dhow captain to set sail on a pleasure trip organised by his company. Fifteen Britons were among those who died when the vessel, which was carrying around 130 party-goers, capsized in calm waters on Mar 30. Mr Hill has now been barred from leaving Bahrain pending the civil proceedings which have been brought against him by the boat's owner Abdullah al-Kobaisi. The owners and captain are in turn facing criminal charges of "fatal neglect" and "sea transportation deficiency." Mr Hill's company Nass-Murray & Roberts are supporting his civil defence case, which is expected to start in mid-September before the criminal proceedings recommence. Clive Garner, a partner at UK solicitors Irwin Mitchell, is

representing the families of 15 of the deceased and a number of survivors. He said the report accused a number of individuals and organisations of negligence. They include the Commercial Registration Directorate, the Passenger Safety Inspector, the Ministry of Information, the company Island Tours who chartered the boat from Mr al-Kobaisi and Nass-Murray & Roberts who hired the boat from Island Tours.

ALAM SEMPURNA (Malaysia)

London, Aug 30 — Bulker *Alam Sempurna* arrived at Gibraltar at 1240 hrs, Aug 16, departing later the same day, at 2011 hrs, bound for Tripoli, Libya. At 1800 hrs, yesterday, the vessel was reported passing through the Dardanelles on a voyage Tripoli for Novorossiysk.

AMAR (Singapore)

See *Bright Artemis*.

ANANGEL SPLENDOUR (Greece)

London, Aug 28 — Bulker *Anangel Splendour* arrived Rotterdam at 1400, Aug 23, and sailed at 1630, Aug 26, for Ponta da Madeira, Brazil.

ANNA SOPHIE DEDE (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Aug 25 — Container Carrier *Anna Sophie Dede* arrived at Rotterdam at 1810 hrs, Aug 22. It sailed at 0715 hrs, Aug 23, bound for Antwerp, where it arrived at 1515 hrs, Aug 23. It departed at 1615 hrs, Aug 24, bound for Hamburg.

APL ITALY (Liberia)

Freeport, Aug 24 — Container carrier *APL Italy* is currently at Grand Bahama Shipyard, Freeport, and preparations for repairs have commenced. — Lloyd's Agents.

ATLANT TRINA (Croatia)

Rio Janeiro, Aug 28 — General cargo *Atlant Trina* (5799 gt, built 1995) sustained fire at 2100, local time, Aug 25, while berthed at Conceicao Island, Niteroi. Extinguishing the fire took 17 hours. No casualties. — Lloyd's Agents.

ATLANTIC FOREST (U.S.A.)

London, Aug 25 — Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 1524, UTC: The fire on board barge carrier *Atlantic Forest* was extinguished, and no major damage is reported.

ATUL (India)

See *MLC Nancy 3*.

BALTIC SWAN (U.K.)

London, Aug 28 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Container Carrier *Baltic Swan* (9981 gt, built 2004, voyage Hamburg to St Petersburg) passed the Kiel Canal on Aug 28, with an apparent collision damage at the accommodation block on port side, but no further details known.

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

London, Aug 28 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Container Carrier *Baltic Swan* was in collision with general cargo *Nordland 1* (269 gt, built 1962) in the port of Hamburg, while the latter was leaving its berth. *Nordland* was damaged more seriously than *Baltic Swan*.

London, Aug 29 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: The vessel which was in collision with container carrier *Baltic Swan* was general cargo *Nordland 1*, which passed the Kiel Canal on Aug 29 with temporary repairs obviously carried out on its damaged starboard foreship.

BBC KOREA (Cyprus)

London, Aug 30 — Part containerised general car *BBC Korea* was reported arriving La Baie, Canada, on Aug 8. According to LLOYD's MIU AIS, at 0227 hrs, Aug 29, the vessel was reported in lat 43 20N, long 68 36W, course 176 degs, at 15.8 knots. The nearest port was Rockland, USA.

BBC TEXAS (Italy)

London, Aug 28 — General cargo *BBC Texas* arrived at Kobe on Aug 21 and sailed on Aug 22.

BEAUFORT SEA (U.S.A.)

Houston, Aug 25 — Tug *Beaufort Sea* is now at Bollinger Shipyard, Texas City, and is expected to remain in port for some time. — Lloyd's Agents.

BEAUTIFUL QUEEN (Hong Kong)

London, Aug 28 — A press report, dated Aug 27, states: Outbound bulker *Beautiful Queen* (32491 gt, built 2002) struck the Vincent Thomas Bridge in San Pedro today, causing authorities to close the span to traffic while it was inspected for damage. A crane on *Beautiful Queen* struck the bridge around 1645 hrs, said port official Theresa Adams Lopez. Initial reports indicated the crane struck scaffolding under the bridge, Adams Lopez said. The bridge was closed at 1730 hrs, said CHP Officer Vince Ramirez. "Some damage has been found" on the bridge, Ramirez said. A Caltrans crew was inspecting the bridge, which was expected to reopen "fairly soon," Adams Lopez said.

London, Aug 28 — A press report, dated today, states: A crane from outbound bulker *Beautiful Queen* hit the Vincent Thomas Bridge, in Los Angeles Harbor, at about 1700, Aug 27, forcing closure of the bridge for nearly two hours, authorities said. There were no injuries and there was no serious damage to the bridge, which reopened last night, police said. The vessel struck scaffolding under the bridge and California Highway Patrol officer Vince Ramirez said "some damage was found" from the collision.

London, Aug 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Port of Los Angeles operations were back to normal today after a crane on bulker *Beautiful Queen* scraped a catwalk on the Vincent Thomas Bridge. The master of the Pasha Hawaii Transport Lines' vessel departed early and

apparently miscalculated the tide before transiting the suspension bridge that spans the port's main channel, said S. David Freeman, president of the Harbor Commission. The bridge linking San Pedro to Terminal Island was closed to vehicles and port traffic was halted around 1645 today, while the span was inspected for damage. The roadway stands about 185 ft above the channel. California Highway Patrol Officer Vince Ramirez said the inspection team found only minor damage, mostly to a metal catwalk used for painting, and the bridge and channel were reopened just before 1900 hrs. *Beautiful Queen*, which is loaded with steel, remained in port while the U.S. Coast Guard investigated the accident.

BELICIA (Panama)

See *Tirta Niaga I*.

BRIGHT ARTEMIS (Singapore)

London, Aug 29 — A Mitsui O.S.K. Lines press release, dated Tokyo Aug 28, states: Mitsui O.S.K. Lines, Ltd. (MOL, President: Akimitsu Ashida) has conducted a second crude oil spill status survey after the incident involving crude oil tanker *Bright Artemis*. Oil spill control and response experts surveyed the area from a chartered airplane on Aug 24 and observed emulsified oil films, which were not apparent during the first air survey on Aug 16. The spots were in an area 10 miles long and one-half mile wide. The oil was observed about 160 miles west of Andaman and Nicobar Islands within India's exclusive economic zone. As a result, MOL also made a second report to India's Coast Guard. Oil spill control and response experts say the natural neutralization process is under way in which the highly volatile components in the crude oil are vapourising, and the remainder mixes with seawater and becomes further emulsified. MOL continues to monitor the areas, and will take appropriate response as necessary. (Note — According to Lloyd's LMIU AIS *Bright Artemis* was in lat 05 01 58N, long 99 59 09E, at 1505, Aug 24, speed 0.1 knots, course 114 degrees.)

London, Aug 29 — Following notice to mariners broadcast at 0356, UTC, Aug 28: General cargo *Amar* adrift in the vicinity of lat 06 42.9N, long 91 33.7E at 1400, UTC, Aug 24.

BULOU NI CEVA (Fiji)

London, Aug 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Owners of passenger (cruise) *Bulou Ni Ceva* grounded off Rotuma have been given seven days to remove the vessel and the oil and fuel in it, after three Government ministries joined forces to act on the threat of an oil spill in Fiji waters. A team of technicians and a contractor leave for Rotuma tomorrow to extract 13,000 litres of oil from *Bulou ni Ceva*. The vessel has been shipwrecked on Oinafa Reef since June 10. The ministries of Transport, Home Affairs and Provincial Development issued a joint statement

last night, saying Kadavu Shipping Company Limited was notified that failure to comply with the order would warrant legal measures by the Government to recover debts incurred from salving the vessel and pumping fuel out of it. The Government said it was forced to issue the notice against the owners of *Bulou ni Ceva* because of the rising threat of oil spillage and environmental damage because of the delay by the owners to act on the matter. An emergency meeting with the National Disaster Management Council was convened yesterday to determine the appropriate and quickest means of retrieving fuel and oil from the vessel and to remove the risk of oil spillage. The emergency operation includes representatives from the Department of Emergency Management at the Ministry of Home Affairs and the National Disaster Management Office at the Provincial Development Ministry. The Government has hired a contractor to carry out the extraction of fuel and oil from the vessel with a team of technicians.

London, Aug 29 — A press report, dated today, states: The Government has undertaken to siphon all the oil from passenger (cruise) *Bulou Ni Ceva* that is stuck close to the Rotuma shoreline. This was decided after the vessel's owners Kadavu Holdings formally declared to the State that it did not have the funds to remove the fuel from its vessel. Kadavu Holdings manager Ratu Sela Nanovo said he had formally replied to the seven-day notice given by the Government to the company to remove the oil from the stranded ship. "The company does not have any funds to remove the oil but faced with a possible state of emergency, the Government could remove the oil from the ship," Ratu Sela said. He said Kadavu Holdings or Kadavu Shipping would be required to pay the Government back for footing the bill for the essential exercise. "We would be hoping that by then, we would be able to have secured our insurance claim to be able to pay the Government for their help," Ratu Sela said. Ratu Sela still could not confirm when his company would be able to remove *Bulou Ni Ceva* from Rotuma after repeated calls from Rotumans in Fiji. He said their insurance claims were still being processed and he could not confirm the actual date they would remove the ship from the Rotuma reef. "I hope that after our meeting with the insurers that we would be able to know where we stand on the salving issue," Ratu Sela said. The insurers of *Bulou Ni Ceva*, Dominion Insurance had asked for more details from Kadavu Holdings and the Fiji Islands Maritime Safety Authority about maritime procedures and regulations. The Authority's board met yesterday to clarify their answers to the queries before they would be given to the insurers.

London, Aug 31 — A press report, dated today, states: The insurance company for passenger (cruise) *Bulou Ni Ceva* that has been stuck on a

Rotuma reef says there is no liability in the owners' claim. Dominion Insurance Manager Fiji Client Services Vikash Kumar said this was found after its investigations into the *Bulou Ni Ceva* grounding. "According to the investigations we have established that liability does not attach to the claim due to reasons known to the owners of the vessel. The next step available can only be better explained by the owners of the vessel," he said. He said the company did not want to disclose any details of the policy contract to any other parties apart from those bound by the policy contract concerning the *Bulou Ni Ceva*. But last night Kadavu Shipping and Holdings manager Ratu Sela Nanovo said they were still working on who was liable for the costs involved in salvaging of the vessel. "The insurance company has raised some other queries on the issue and we are waiting for the answers from the Fiji Islands Maritime Services Authority, said Mr Nanovo.

C.S.OCEAN (Panama)

London, Aug 25 — General cargo *C.S.Ocean*, which sailed from Portland, Ore, on Aug 9, bound for Kobe, arrived at Kobe on Aug 24.

CAPT. RUSSELL SIMPSON (U.S.A.)

London, Aug 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Tug *Capt. Russell Simpson* (539 gt, built 1974), pushing 25 barges of dry cargo, ran aground about 40 miles south of Helena-West Helena, Mississippi River, at mile-marker 626.1 at 1515, yesterday. The river was closed between mile-marker 623.1 and 628. No injuries or pollution was reported in the accident.

London, Aug 25 — A Coast Guard New Orleans press release, dated today, states: The Coast Guard is working today to reopen parts of the Mississippi River that were closed yesterday after a series of towboat groundings prompted several closures along the river. 1. Tug *Capt. Russell Simpson* ran aground at about 1515 yesterday, about 40 miles south of Helena, Ark., at mile marker 626.1. The tug was pushing 25 barges of dry cargo at the time of the accident. The river is currently open to one-way traffic. Coast Guard investigators are working to determine the cause of the accident. There are currently two north-bound and 10 south-bound vessels awaiting transit through the area. 2. Tug *Robert A. Kyle* (1302 gt, built 1982) ran aground at about 0630 yesterday, about 15 miles north of Rosedale, Miss., at mile marker 595.5. The tug was pushing 32 barges at the time of the grounding. The river was reopened earlier today to one-way traffic, but the river is now closed while salvage operations begin. There are currently two south-bound and eight north-bound vessels awaiting transit through the area. 3. Tug *Noble C. Parsonage* (545 gt, built 1974) ran aground at about 0315 yesterday, approximately 40 miles north of Baton Rouge at mile marker 265.5. At the

time of the accident, the tug was pushing 25 barges loaded with grain and coal. The tug and barges have been freed with no reports of pollution, and the river is open to one-way traffic. A survey conducted by the Army Corps of Engineers has been completed and is currently being reviewed by Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Baton Rouge. The Coast Guard Cutter Greenbrier, homeported in Natchez, Miss., is en route to reset buoys. There are currently six south-bound vessels awaiting transit.

Chicago, Aug 26 — The Mississippi River remained partially closed today due to vessel accidents, a U.S. Coast Guard official said today. Three sections of the river had been closed following separate tow-boat accidents in Mississippi, Arkansas and Louisiana. Two of the sites have been cleared but the section in Louisiana was due to reopen later this afternoon by about 1600, CDT, according to Coast Guard Petty Officer Susan Blake. Officials were still working to clear the area after tug *Noble C. Parsonage* ran aground early on Thursday morning, about 180 miles south of Angola, Louisiana, Blake said. — Reuters.

London, Aug 27 — A Coast Guard New Orleans press release, dated Aug 26, states: The Coast Guard has been working today to reopen parts of the Mississippi that were closed after a series of towboat groundings prompted several closures along the Mississippi River. Due to dredging, a safety zone is still in place from mile marker 263 to 267 for tug *Noble C. Parsonage*. The channel is expected to reopen later today. The Coast Guard lifted its safety zones yesterday for tug *Capt. Russell Simpson* that ran aground at mile marker 626.1 and tug *Robert A. Kyle* that ran aground at mile marker 595.5. Both channels were reopened to normal traffic.

CAROLINA P. (Argentina)

London, Aug 29 — Following navigation warning issued Aug 28: Fishing *Pescapuereta* towing trawler (all types) *Carolina P.* (1369 gt, built 1987) in lat 44 05S, long 63 12W, line length 1,000 metres, speed 6.5 knots, course 270 degrees, bound Puerto Madryn.

CLEOPATRA I (Panama)

London, Aug 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Passenger ro/ro *Cleopatra I* (12200 gt, built 1971), with about a thousand people on board, mostly Muslim pilgrims, began transmitting distress signals yesterday when it lost part of its engine power as it headed for the port of Suez. The ferry was taken in tow and returned to the port of Jeddah from where it had sailed earlier in the day.

CMA CGM AEGEAN (Liberia)

Odessa, Aug 25 — While Container Carrier *CMA CGM Aegean* berthing at No.2 pier, Odessa Sea Port Container Terminal, damaged her low aft part of starboard side shell plating due to

fault of the vessel's administration. Due to above damage, leakage of heavy fuel oil from her tank occurred through the crack, diameter of 150 mm. Quantity of the flow of heavy fuel oil established by the State Ecological Inspection of the Black Sea: 74,453.616 kg. Total square of the oil spill at the port area was about 500 square meters. In accordance with Ukrainian Laws a penalty of 1,190 HRN for the Master of the vessel and the Claim for the pollution of the marine environmental in amount of 24,495,238.680 HRN were put down. She is presently alongside No.23 pier, Odessa Sea Port, under arrest until receiving of the bank payment guarantees and completion of the cleaning of the hull from the oil products. — Lloyd's Agents.

Odessa, Aug 31 — Container Carrier *CMA CGM Aegean*: The "Odessa municipal government Primorskiy regional court of Odesa" allowed the "plaintiff's statement of town council to shipping company Messrs "E.R.Brisbane" Schiffahrtsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG for payment of damages of almost \$24.5 mln". A claim has been made in respect of the August 18 spillage, even though the respondent hasn't pledged the bank guarantee of reparation of the damages. The respondent's only available capital in the Ukraine is the vessel *CMA CGM Aegean*, against which the "compensation for losses is possible". In accordance with the court verdict the vessel is under arrest until the "pronouncement of decision". The vessel will be under arrest until either payment for the damage caused is paid or until the bank guarantee is pledged. The Owner's representative has a period of five days in which to lodge any appeal against the decision of the Primorskiy Court. It is reported that the accident of Aug 18 was caused by the negligent berthing of the vessel. The resultant oil spillage was 74 tons. — Lloyd's Agents.

CONTAZ CARRIER (Ukraine)

London, Aug 30 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: During the morning of Aug 29, while a workshop was performing oils transfer from container carrier *Contaz Carrier* (9548 gt, built 1983) pollution was caused in the sea area between Keratsini and Perama to an extent of 2000 by 50 square metres. Coast Guard antipollution craft 416 completed the antipollution works and the master of *Contaz Carrier* was arrested along with a worker. The owner of the workshop is still being sought.

CORALWATER (Netherlands)

Portsmouth, UK, Aug 28 — The company that operates one of the fish-farms off Marsa Scala, Malta, has filed a writ in Court asking for a warrant inhibiting chemical tanker *Coralwater* (1895 gt, built 1995), which allegedly damaged one of its fish-farms, from leaving the island. Mare Blu Tuna Farm Ltd. filed the writ in the First Hall of the Civil Court, Valletta,

alleging the vessel damaged the cages, ropes, chains and other material used in the fish-farm around four nautical miles off Zonqor Point, during the night of Aug 27. The company is claiming that damages incurred in the incident, also taking into account the quantity of tuna that escaped from the fish-farm, amount to around Lm1million. The writ was signed by Dr. Cedric Mifsud. — Correspondent. (Note — Informa's AIS system reported *Coralwater* in position lat 35 53 7.56N, long 14 40 23.58E at 1415, UTC, Aug 28, 7.6 nautical miles from Marsaxlokk, Malta. Speed one knot, course 278.2 degs..)

Valletta, Aug 28 — A local press report, dated today, states: A court issued a warrant of prohibitory injunction, stopping chemical tanker *Coralwater* from leaving Malta. after Mare Blu Tuna Farm Limited filed an application claiming the vessel had caused some Lm1 million worth of damage, when it collided into a fish farm. The company is claiming that, yesterday, the vessel hit the fish farm, located off Zonqor Point in Marsascala, and caused about Lm1 million worth of damage. — Lloyd's Agents.

COUGAR ACE (Singapore)

London, Aug 26 — A press report, dated today, states: Vehicle carrier *Cougar Ace* is finally upright and headed to Oregon in coming days. Crews are preparing to tow the ship to Portland, Ore, according to the U.S. Coast Guard. *Cougar Ace* could be ready to leave tomorrow or a couple of days after that, said Cmdr. Joe LoSciuto with the Coast Guard. *Cougar Ace* has been moored at Icicle Seafoods' buoys northwest of Dutch Harbor since Aug. 8. Workers finally stood it up straight Thursday (Aug 24) night. The ship was loaded with nearly 5,000 Japanese-built Mazdas sold in the United States. The inventory consisted of subcompacts and SUVs, Miatas and RX-8 sports cars, said Jeremy Barnes, a Mazda spokesman. The vehicles were secured to the ship with a "single point device." Mazda assured the Coast Guard that the system had been tested to hold down vehicles twice as heavy, he said. Mazda will have to examine the cars, Barnes said. "We don't have a car count as to what is salable and what condition they are in. It all depends on what we find when we get in," he said. A small sheen of lubricating oil leaked from the ship's bow thruster area Aug 2, but officials have not been able to determine why. At the mooring on Unalaska Island, crews pumped out water from a cargo deck, where the sea had slowly leaked in from the cargo door ramp, and then used computer models to help determine how to balance the ship by adjusting water in ballast tanks, according to the Coast Guard. Workers from Dutch Harbor-based Magone Marine Service Inc also pumped out oily water from the bilge and shaft alleys. The oily water went into tanks for disposal. The salvage is being

managed by Titan Maritime. Singapore must certify the ship is safe for tow before it leaves port, he said. Under the plan, two tugs will bring it to Portland, where there are facilities for the vehicles and for ship repair, he said. The trip will take about 10 days.

CP VALOUR (Bermuda)

Ponta Delgada, Aug 25 — The operation to remove the cargo of containers from container carrier *CP Valour* has been completed. The present operation consists of removing all the vessel's heavy material, such as generators and machinery, before beginning attempts to refloat the vessel. — Lloyd's Agents.

CRUX AUSTRALIS (Chile)

Santiago, Chile, Aug 25 — Barge *Crux Australis*, Chilean flag, suddenly developed a 40-deg list to port side at 2245, Aug 22, while sailing from Capitan Aracena Island to Punta Arenas. List increased at 0005, Aug 23, when sailing 10 miles east of Cape Froward. When accident happened there was a wind of 12 to 15 knots and waves of 1/2 to 1 metre. Crew managed to launch the ship's equipment and later picked up by launch *Guanilen 117* that happened to be near with no casualties among the members of the crew. Tug *Punta Arenas* arrived at 0300 hrs to take charge as the barge was carrying 15,000 litres of diesel petroleum and 53 tons of salmon in bins; some of which were floating in the sea but later recovered. Ferry *Fueguino* towed the hull to El Aguila Bay north of San Isidro lighthouse where attempts will be made to refloat the barge. Some spillage has been detected and the cause for the list has not yet been announced but it is presumed was caused by cargo shifting. — Lloyd's Agents.

DEWI PARWATI (Panama)

See *Shinfutaba*.

DUYDEN 1 (Turkey)

London, Aug 25 — A notice received by VTS a fire on general cargo *Duyden 1* (1401 gt, built 1978) 20 miles from Istanbul Strait Black Sea entrance at 1144, Aug 16. Patrol ship *Kiyi Emniyeti 3* and tug *Kurtarma 3* sent to the place of incident immediately in order to provide the safety of navigation, life, property and protect of marine environment. Upon receiving a notification from master of vessel that she did not need assistance as of 1225 hrs, tug *Kurtarma 3* came back. (Note — *Duyden 1* arrived Tuzla Aug 19.)

EIFFEL PLANET (Belize)

London, Aug 30 — General cargo *Eiffel Planet* sailed from St. Vincent, Cape Verde Islands, on Aug 20.

ELBE 3 (Germany)

London, Aug 26 — Container Carrier *Delta St.Petersburg* arrived at Rotterdam at 0600 hrs, Aug 24 and sailed at 0720 hrs, Aug 25, destination St. Petersburg.

EUROPEAN MARINER (Bahamas)

London, Aug 25 — Roll On Roll Off *European Mariner* arrived at Dublin on Aug 4 and departed on Aug 10.

FAREAST SUNNY (Hong Kong)

London, Aug 25 — Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 1524, UTC: A Class inspection of bulker *Fareast Sunny* found no damage, and the vessel was permitted to sail.

FELIX AUGUSTO (Argentina)

London, Aug 29 — Following navigation warning issued Aug 28: Fishing (general) *Felix Augusto* (110 gt, built 1985) adrift in lat 44 55.5S, long 64 50W.

London, Aug 29 — Following navigation warning issued today: Fishing (general) *Felix Augusto* in tow of fishing *Anita Alvarez* in lat lat 46 00S, long 64 48W, length of tow 300 metres, speed six knots, course 263 degrees bound Comodoro Rivadavia.

FEROX

London, Aug 28 — Information received from Kiel states: At 1300, Aug 25, the inland container *Ferox*, ex *Estra Hopper*, 63 metres length, seven metres width, sank close to the Dutch Rozenburgsluis, in the Hartelkanaal. The master and his family were rescued by vessel *Nieuwe Maas*. A part of the cargo, 30 containers with cacao, drifted in front of the lock. The cause of the sinking is unknown, maybe the stability got lost due to the way the containers were stored. Smit Salvage is to salve the containers. The wreck, which endangers shipping, is to be raised as soon as possible.

FINNMAID (Finland)

London, Aug 25 — Passenger ro/ro *Finnmaid* arrived at Bremerhaven at 1255 hrs, Aug 24.

London, Aug 29 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Passenger ro/ro *Finnmaid* is scheduled to leave the drydock of Lloyds Yard in Bremerhaven at 1630 hrs, today, after repairs to the rudder.

London, Aug 30 — Passenger ro/ro *Finnmaid* sailed from Bremerhaven at 1705 hrs, Aug 29, bound for Lubeck.

FRONT SUNDA (Marshall Islands)

London, Aug 24 — Following received from the operators of crude oil tanker *Front Sunda*, dated today: *Front Sunda* is still at the anchorage at Batam awaiting repairs.

GAO HE (China)

London, Aug 28 — Container Carrier *Gao He* was reported arriving at Jeddah on/about Aug 22.

GECO SAPPHIRE (Panama)

Gdynia, Aug 25 — Research *Geco Sapphire*, now *EDT Protea*, completed repairs but remains at the Navy shipyard in Gdynia. The owner of the is going to sell the vessel and is waiting presently for the buyer. — Correspondent.

HYUNDAI GARNET (Singapore)

London, Aug 30 — An APL press release, dated Aug 29, states: Container Carrier *Hyundai Garnet* (53519 gt, built 1995), which was carrying APL customers' cargo, experienced a steering malfunction while transiting the Panama Canal under pilotage on Aug 27. The vessel sustained minor damage and is undergoing repairs, which are currently estimated to take around five days to complete. Therefore, the revised departure date from the port of Manzanillo is Sep 2 and the vessel ETA for New York is Sep 7. (Note — *Hyundai Garnet* sailed Kaohsiung Aug 9, and according to Lloyd's MIU AIS was stationary in lat 09 21 58N, long 79 53 08W, at 2210, UTC, today.)

IKAN MEXICO (Panama)

London, Aug 28 — Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 1355, UTC: Bulker *Ikan Mexico* (30681 gt, built 2006), with a draught of 40 feet, grounded at mile 91.9, Lower Mississippi River, at 2042, UTC, Aug 25. She reported, on Aug 26, that she had refloated and was proceeding.

INDIA ROSE (Republic of Ireland)

London, Aug 30 — Fishing (general) *India Rose* was reported passing Skaw at 0609, Aug 26, in a southerly direction.

ISLAND SEAL (Panama)

Portsmouth, UK, Aug 27 — A press report, dateline Tortola, Aug 26, states: A 130-foot barge *Island Seal* (?supply *Island Seal* (284 gt, built 1963)), carrying six containers and 1,500 gallons of diesel capsized by Hog's Valley Point, west of Brandywine Bay yesterday. The BVI Department of Disaster Management responded to a call just after 0700 that a vessel had capsized in the harbour and its containers were spread into the surrounding water, according to DDM Director Sharleen Dabreo. She said her officers arrived on the scene about 0745 hrs and mobilized other emergency response agencies, including the fire department, marine police, maritime services, V.I. Search and Rescue, Customs, Conservation and Fisheries Department, the Ministry of Communications and Works and a local salvaging company. The *Island Seal* is owned and operated by the Chalwell family of the BVI. It was captained by Clyde Chalwell and had five crew members on board. The vessel was transporting four 20-foot and two 40-foot containers filled with general cargo from St. Maarten to Port Purcell. On its way in, the cargo on the barge shifted and the vessel started taking on water. Crew members tried to correct the problem, but as they approached the Brandywine Bay area, the containers and crew were tossed overboard. "When we got there, we initially saw four containers, but were told that two went down with the vessel," Dabreo told the Daily News. "A very thin sheen of fuel was observed on the water on their arrival, but this did not

pose a threat, since it quickly evaporated because of the heat of the sun." She said the Conservation and Fisheries Department and Ports Authority deployed a flotation boom in the area to protect the beach and reef from any more oil that may have spilled and put up warning lights to warn people approaching the area to watch out for the vessel. The DDM sent out notices to the media to inform mariners who were using that area to approach with caution. The area is a frequented navigational path for ferries going to Virgin Gorda and Anegada from Tortola. The Ports Authority helped lift the containers from the water to take them into Port Purcell, but by late evening, one container remained partially submerged. The tip of the bottom of the sunken vessel is also still visible. "The container appears to be trapped within the reef and the salvaging company needed additional equipment to move it because the tide went down and it was causing some problems in trying to pull it out," Dabreo said. She said the crew members were a bit shaken up, but they didn't have to be hospitalised. She said they didn't suffer any injuries. Marine Services, DDM and fire officials remained on the scene until just after 1600 hrs. Conservation and Fisheries Department officials were expected to monitor the scene throughout the night and are prepared to trap any oil that may leak from the vessel. "Our concern now is the 1,500 gallons of diesel still in the barge, and the fact that Tropical Storm "Ernesto" has formed southwest of Puerto Rico," Dabreo said. The National Weather Service has indicated that sea and wind conditions will increase across the Caribbean waters as the storm passes, and a small craft advisory has been issued for the Caribbean and Atlantic waters. "In addition, the vessel needs to be salvaged because it can create navigational problems, so discussions are being held with the owners so government can ensure that the safety of the environment and vessels in the area are addressed," Dabreo said." — Correspondent.

London, Aug 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Director of the BVI Shipping Registry (BVISR) Captain Baboucar Sallah has said efforts are being made to reduce the impact of any environmental hazard, following last Friday's (Aug 25) incident when supply *Island Seal* capsized and ran aground at Brandywine Bay. Captain Sallah said oil may be trapped in the hull of the vessel and chances are, as action is taken to stabilise or remove the ship, some of the contaminants onboard might escape and pose an environmental hazard. "We are working with the owners of the vessel, the vessel's insurers, and a local salvage company to make sure the wreck is removed from the existing site to another location in calmer waters," said Captain Sallah. "By doing this, we will be able to get the ship in its upright position and

continue ameliorative work on it," he said. On the issue of marine safety, Captain Sallah said the BVI Shipping Registry is eager to ensure the grounded vessel does not become a threat to the immediate environment, or to other vessels travelling in the area. "We have installed navigation markers to alert boats moving in the area," said Captain Sallah. "Fortunately, the wreck is close to shore and outside the normal navigation channel, but still the markers would be helpful to small craft that usually hug the shore as they travel along the channel." The Shipping Registry director said officers from the Conservation and Fisheries Department installed a flotation boom along the mouth of Brandywine Bay to prevent any oil which could have spilt from the capsized vessel seeping with the tide onto the beach area. However, he confirmed that, so far, there has been very little sign of spillage. "We have also taken measures to use our available resources to sweep the area to ensure the channel used by cruise ships to enter Road Harbour remains clear of obstruction," he explained. Captain Sallah however remains concerned that two of the seven containers being transported on board the vessel remain lost at sea. The other five have been recovered. *Island Seal* is registered in Panama, but is owned and operated by a BVI-based company. The BVI Shipping Registry has therefore informed authorities in Panama about the accident.

Tortola, Aug 29 — Apparently supply *Island Seal* struck Blonde Rock (submerged) in lat 18 22.2N, long 64 33.1W and holed in two places. Salvage operations, authorised by vessel's insurers, commenced on Saturday, Aug 26, by Husky Maritime Services Ltd., Tortola, B.V.I. Three 20' FCL and one 40' FCL containers now at Port Purcell, Road Town, but resting on the seabed. Attempts being made to raise and place ashore. — Lloyd's Agents.

IVORY (Greece)

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

JINHAIDA 18 (China)

London, Aug 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Two Chinese cargo vessels collided in the Taiwan Strait at midnight on Wednesday (Aug 23), leaving six sailors missing even as two others were rescued, the Shanghai-based Donghai Rescue Bureau reported yesterday. The collision involved general cargo *Jinhaida 18* and a container vessel. *Jinhaida 18* capsized after the collision, sending all its eight crew members into the sea. The container did not sustain much damage, and there were no injuries on board. The Shanghai-based bureau was alerted by maritime officials in Xiamen, Fujian Province 15 minutes after the accident and immediately began rescue operations. A rescue ship arrived at the scene of the accident at about 0200 yesterday, two hours after

the collision. In heavy rain, rescuers managed to spot two rafts by 0638 hrs, on one of which two sailors, Chen Xiangquan and Lin Fei, were discovered. The other raft was empty. Chen, 31, was in good condition physically while his 21-year-old crewmate was suffering from trauma. They said they jumped off together onto the raft at about the same time the vessel went under. A helicopter yesterday spotted extensive floating obstacles within 15 nautical miles of the accident site but there was no trace of the missing crew as of yesterday afternoon.

JOHN SPENCE (Canada)

London, Aug 24 — Anchor handling tug/supply *John Spence* (718 gt, built 1972) sustained a starboard main engine crankcase explosion in the St.Clair River while approaching the Sun Oil Dock near Sarnia, at 2240, Aug 17. The vessel proceeded to dock with one engine.

KOLMANSKOP (Namibia)

London, Aug 31 — A press report, dated Aug 30, states: Neither wind and tides nor human effort have so far been able to move trawler *Kolmanskop* from the place just south of Swakopmund where it ran aground on Aug 15. According to Willie Prosser of Novaship, agents for *Kolmanskop*, the fate of the vessel is now in the hands of the owners, Glomar Fisheries, and their insurance company. Indications from reliable sources in the industry, however, are that *Kolmanskop* will most likely not be salvaged. The ship is tightly wedged between rocks in shallow water, and the rocks have punched holes in the hull.

KOSCIERZYNA (Panama)

London, Aug 25 — General cargo *Koscierzyna* sailed from Ymuiden at 0025 hrs, today, bound for Foynes.

KOTOBUKI MARU NO.38 (Japan)

Noumea, Aug 25 — Fishing (general) *Kotobuki Maru No.38* (289 gt, built 1988) Fiji to Noumea, ran aground in lat 22 58 09S, long 166 58E, south-west of Isle of Pine, last night. The vessel was not in danger of sinking or polluting. This morning, Sorecal tug *Tamanou* will try to pull the vessel from the reef and assist it to Noumea. — Lloyd's Agents.

Noumea, Aug 25 — Sorecal tug *Tamanou* refloated fishing (general) *Kotobuki Maru No.38* from the reef at 0950 hrs and is now towing it to Noumea harbour when it will probably be inspected as soon as possible. — Lloyd's Agents.

KRIOS (Malta)

Montreal, Aug 24 — Bulker *Krios* finished discharging at Windsor, Ont, at 1845, Aug 23, and commenced temporary repairs afloat same day. Repairs ETC Aug 30. — Lloyd's Agents.

KVITEBJOERN

London, Aug 30 — A press report, dated today, states: A fire shut down

the Kvitebjoern offshore natural gas platform, and 73 crew were later evacuated after a fire pump failed, Statoil ASA said today. Company spokesman Kristofer Hetland said the minor fire in an electrical transformer at about 1100, GMT, yesterday was quickly put out by automatic fire extinguishers. Most of the 114 crew went to their lifeboat stations when the alarm sounded as a standard precaution, Hetland said by telephone. A fire on a natural gas platform can lead to catastrophic explosions and fires, far from shore. Kvitebjoern is about 100 kilometres north-west of Bergen, the main city on Norway's west coast. Hetland said one of the platform's two main fire pumps was out of operation for repairs at the time of the fire. At about 1900, GMT, the second pump also failed, he said. "There was nothing dramatic about that, which came later," said Hetland. However, he said 73 of the crew were flown to other platforms by helicopter as a safety measure. He said 41 crew remained on board to fine and repair the faults, and that it was unclear when production would resume.

LAYAR SENTOSA (Indonesia)

London, Aug 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Indonesian general cargo *Layar Sentosa* (6093 gt, built 1979), which had been detained by the mercantile marine department (MMD) for over 20 days on the grounds that it was not sea-worthy, was today cleared for sailing after repairs. The vessel, which arrived at Kochi on Jul 26 with about 6,400 tonnes of copra expeller cake for a company, will sail for Mumbai later this evening en route to Indonesia, P Gopalakrishnan, director of 'cross ocean', the ship's agents, told PTI. The MMD had first inspected the vessel on Aug 2 and recommended certain repairs. After the faults were fixed, they inspected the vessel three more times and said more repairs should be carried out, he said, adding that this resulted in detaining of the vessel for 28 more days. The shipping agents say the MMD officials should have recommended all the repairs during their first inspection itself, which they claimed, had financially hurt the vessel's owners. "Detaining of the vessel for so long at Kochi had cost the ship's owners, P T Bumi laut shipping agency of Indonesia, an additional burden of Rs 60 lakh so far, Gopalakrishna said. "About Rs 20 lakh had been spent on repairs alone and they had to pay Rs 20 lakh by way of berthing charges to the Port," he added. Each time a vessel came to the Port, the Indonesian vessel was pushed to another berth and eight shiftings done so far had cost them about Rs 2.5 lakh, Gopalakrishna rued.

LIBERTY A. (Cyprus)

See "Cyprus" under "Port State Control".

LOUIS S.ST-LAURENT (Canada)

London, Aug 25 — A scientist on board icebreaker *Louis S.St-Laurent*

reports that on Aug 24, the vessel's engineers located and repaired all the blown circuit boards that make up the engine control system. The vessel is now under way and proceeding towards long 150W.

Vancouver, Aug 28 — The Canadian Coast Guard advise that icebreaker *Louis S.St-Laurent* experienced an electronic panel failure and the problem was resolved on board within one day while the crew continued to conduct their science experiments. The vessel has continued on its voyage and no other problems have been reported to date. — Lloyd's Agents.

MAGNUS (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Aug 29 — Information received, dated Kiel Aug 28, states: The new tug *Magnus* (1726 gt, built 2006) sank harbour tug *Erbse* and a pontoon two other ships of the Muetzelfeldt yard in Bremerhaven (? Cuxhaven) while testing the machines on Aug 26. Meanwhile *Erbse* was raised by the sheerlegs *Reebok*. (Note — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS *Magnus* was stationary in lat 53 51 49N, long 08 42 55E (Cuxhaven area) at 2257, Aug 28.)

MAJESTIC UNITY (Marshall Islands)

London, Aug 30 — Crude oil tanker *Majestic Unity* was reported arriving at Dalian on Aug 9. The vessel was next reported arriving back at Dalian on Aug 19. According to Lloyd's MIU AIS, at 1459 hrs, Aug 28, the vessel was reported anchored 14.5 nautical miles off Beiliang, China, in lat 38 52.48N, long 122 01.31E.

MELANIE (Netherlands)

Mannheim, Aug 31 — At the time of collision non specific tanker *Viking* was laden with 1,500 tons of gas oil, consigned from Karlsruhe to Frankfurt/Main. Non specific tanker *Melanie* was laden with 1,700 tons of gas oil, consigned to Ludwigshafen. The port of loading is not known. The *Viking* crashed into *Melanie*, but is it unknown, which vessel, if either, was at fault. The outer shell of *Melanie's* forebody was torn open and it grounded. *Viking* is said to have sustained no (at least no severe) damage and was allowed to continue its voyage without restrictions. The cargo on *Melanie* was lightered into a tanker named *Demis*, which subsequently delivered the gas oil to Ludwigshafen. It was expected that after lightering, *Melanie* would be able to proceed to a shipyard under its own power. However we have been unable to determine what has happened to her. — Lloyd's Agents.

MIDAS (Panama)

Karachi, Aug 29 — Understand from M/s. Indus Divers, that the rescue/repair operation for bulker *Midas* has been hampered for at least one week due to bad weather. Some crews are to be replaced while food and provisions are being arranged. Engine parts to be repaired or

replaced could not be made due to rough sea. — Lloyd List Correspondent.

MILOS (Greece)

Port Said, Aug 28 — While bulker *Milos* (37937 gt, built 1978) was manoeuvring to berth at Port Said harbour, at 1850, Aug 27, she collided with the Suez Canal Authority dry dock, due to rudder engine black out. Both the vessel and the dock sustained damages. S.C.A is investigating the incident. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Aug 29 — A press report, dated Aug 28, states: A Greek freight ship (bulker *Milos*) has struck shipyard at Port Said. According to the port authorities the contact caused substantial damage to the front part of the ship. The Greek vessel was transporting wheat that had to be unloaded at the port. A team of officials at the Suez Canal will assess the damage caused by the incident.

MINERVA

London, Aug 27 — Salvage operations on the sunken inland barge *Minerva* took longer than was expected. The Dutch salvage company GPS did start on Thursday (Aug 24), getting two lifting wires underneath the vessel, but they were not sufficient to lift the sunken vessel out of the water. Therefore another two wires had to be pulled underneath the vessel on Friday. As the body of the missing dockworker still not had been found on a search by divers on Thursday. Thereafter, with the help of the divers, the steel rolls were lifted out of the water at 1700 hrs that day. On Friday, the salvage was started, but in the evening the operation had to be stopped, while the authorities were afraid that in the dark, the missing body of the dockworker might drift away unseen. The vessel was lifted at 0700 yesterday. The dockworker was found in the raised vessel and later identified by his family. The last oil and diesel was pumped out of the vessel by the Civiele Bescherming. The damaged vessel was lifted onto a pontoon. After a further investigation by the authorities, the wreck on the pontoon will be towed to Holland and will be scrapped at a Dutch breakers yard, as the vessel is too heavily damaged to be repaired.

MLC NANCY 3 (Singapore)

London, Aug 31 — Following navigation warning issued at 1003, UTC, Aug 18: Tug *MLC Nancy 3* (250 gt, built 1997) and tug *Atul* (284 gt, built 1966) grounded in lat 16 39.31N, long 73 19.99E and lat 16 39.52N, long 73 19.99E.

London, Aug 31 — Following received from the owners of tug *MLC Nancy 3*, timed Singapore 0420, UTC: *MLC Nancy 3* grounded around July 6/7 and is still aground. It is hoped to refloat the vessel by mid-September when higher tides are expected. Tug *Atul* was attempting to refloat *MLC Nancy 3* when it grounded. *Atul* was aground for a few days before it was refloated.

NAMA (Panama)

London, Aug 31 — Following received from the Piraeus based managers of general cargo *Nama*, dated today: General cargo *Nama* is still anchored off Kakinada. The vessel has successfully completed all required surveys. No damage was found. There was no pollution and no reported injuries. The vessel is now in the process of loading cargo, but currently no ETD is available.

Kakinada, Aug 31 — General cargo *Nama* commenced loading at 0400, Aug 22. About 7,312 tonnes loaded so far at 0600, Aug 31 and balance cargo to be loaded 6,688 tonnes. — Lloyd's Agents.

NOBLE C. PARSONAGE (U.S.A.)

See *Capt. Russell Simpson*.

NORDEUROPA (DIS)

London, Aug 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Combined chemical and oil tank *Nordeuropa*: An investigation into a fire at the Motiva oil terminal at Providence, Rhode Island in July will report in "about the end of September," according to the US Coast Guard. It is believed that a lightning strike may caused an explosion and numerous fires on the dockside while the *Nordeuropa* was discharging. The 2000-built *Nordeuropa* was taken quickly off the berth to safety. There was no fire on the vessel itself but the discharge line parted and some of the cargo caught fire on the dockside. The USCG said yesterday: "The investigation for this incident is still on-going. The investigating team wants to ensure that a thorough investigation has been completed. They expect to be finished about the end of September and plan to have a full investigation report available then."

NORDLAND 1 (Germany)

See *Baltic Swan*.

ODYSSEA VOYAGER (Vanuatu)

London, Aug 31 — A tug *Odyssea* Marine release, dated Aug 28, states: On Aug 11, *Odyssea Voyager*, owned by *Odyssea Marine, Inc.*, and operated by *Odyssea's North Bank Towing Division*, was severely damaged by fire the cause of which is not yet known. Located in West Delta Block 35, *Odyssea Voyager*, in a four-point mooring configuration, was supporting diving operations of Superior Offshore International, Inc., when flames were noticed in a compartment in the bow section of the vessel. As the crew fought the flames, the fire spread and eventually engulfed the main cabin of the vessel. There were 40 people on board, including 26 passengers and 14 crew members, all of whom abandoned ship, and were brought to safety. Two crew members of *Odyssea Marine, Inc.*, diagnosed with smoke inhalation, were flown by US Coast Guard helicopter to West Jefferson Hospital located in Marrero, Louisiana. Both crew members were treated and released that night. Despite the damage to the vessel, there were only

minor injuries. Nearly 30,000 gallons of fuel oil on board at the time of the fire was a cause for concern. The vessel was recovered with no fuel spill and no danger to the environment. The vessel is now safely docked in Amelia, La.

ORSULA (Croatia)

London, Aug 28 — Bulker *Orsula* (20837 gt, built 1996), cargo steel, while proceeding upbound in the St. Lawrence Seaway, sustained loss of main engine, reportedly due to loss of main engine cooling in lat 45 29N, long 73 30.29W, at 1400, Aug 25. Vessel secured below St. Lambert Lock, near Montreal for repairs. (Note — *Orsula* left Santos Aug 8.)

PACIFIC PACKER (U.S.A.)

London, Aug 25 — Fishing (general) *Pacific Packer* (108 gt, built 1955) ran aground near Kelsey Bay, BC, in lat 50 23.54N, long 125 57.36W at 0844, Aug 24.

London, Aug 25 — Following received from Coast Guard Victoria BC RCC, timed 1830, UTC: *Pacific Packer* has been refloated and towed by its sistership to a port in Washington State.

PACIFIC STAR (U.K.)

London, Aug 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Brisbane's new cruise ship terminal has been plagued by problems on its opening day, with frustrated passengers stranded portside for hours. The \$750 million Portside Wharf and Brisbane Cruise Terminal development on the Brisbane River at Hamilton welcomed its first vessel today passenger (cruise) *Pacific Star* (35265 gt, built 1981). The vessel had been due to sail at 1400 hrs, AEST, but when passengers eventually boarded, the delay continued due to a problem with the vessel's holding tank. Tonight, P&O spokesman John Richardson said the vessel could not leave until a minor leak was fixed. "That's expected to be completed tonight and the ship is expected to depart early in the morning or in the early hours after midnight," he said.

PRINCESS (Netherlands)

Duisburg, Aug 25 — The fire on passenger (cruise) *Princess* was caused by a leakage from the fuel pipe and the engine, being on the starboard side, caught fire. All the electrical equipment within the engine room was heavily damaged by the fire. Passengers and crew were immediately evacuated and nobody was injured. The vessel has been moored in Cologne and the owners have invited tenders to repair the vessel. A decision is going to be made next week. — Lloyd's Agents.

PRINCESS ABA (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Aug 25 — General cargo *Princess ABA* (2940 gt, built 1984) begun to drift due to rudder failure during the navigation from South to North, Istanbul Strait, Aug 23. Patrol

ship *Kiyi Emniyeti 5* and tug *Kurtarma 4* sent immediately by Istanbul VTS. (Note — *Princess Aba* passed Istanbul east Aug 25 bound for Odessa.)

PRINCESS OF THE UNIVERSE (Philippines)

Manila, Aug 25 — The Philippine Coast Guard reported that passenger ro/ro *Princess of the Universe* (11919 gt, built 1983) ran aground south-west of Canigao Island, Leyte province in central Philippines at around 0300, local time, Aug 25. The vessel was carrying 735 passengers and 80 crewmembers from Surigao in Mindanao to Cebu in central Philippines when the accident happened. There were no deaths nor injuries. Philippine Coast Guard spokesperson Lt. Cdr. Joseph Coyne Jr. said that the Coast Guard is looking at navigational error as the cause of the grounding. Sulpicio Lines, owner of the *Princess of the Universe*, was reported to have dispatched two tug boats from Cebu. The two tugboats would attempt to free the vessel at the onset of the high tide. There were no reports on the extent of damage to *Princess of the Universe*. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

London, Aug 25 — A press report, dated today, states: More than 700 passengers on board passenger ro/ro *Princess of the Universe* were safely rescued after the vessel ran aground on an island between Surigao and Cebu, ABS-CBN news reported Friday. "The *Princess of the Universe* of the Sulpicio Lines ran aground in Canigao Island," Lt. Commander Joseph Coyne of the Philippine Coast Guard said. Coyne said tug boats were on their way to tow the vessel carrying about 740 Manila-bound passengers from Davao. "No one was hurt and tug boats will arrive around 1100 to tow the ship," Coyne said. Reports said the accident happened while the vessel was sailing between the provinces of Surigao and Cebu. "We will also investigate if the ship's captain is accountable for the accident. Maybe he made a faulty manoeuvre that caused the ship to be grounded," Coyne said.

London, Aug 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Passenger ro/ro *Princess of the Universe* aground early today near an island southeast of Manila, but the 735 passengers and 85 crewmen on board were safe, coast guard officials said. "It was a human error that caused the incident," said Commodore Alejandro Flora, the coast guard chief in the district. Flora said initial reports showed the *Princess of the Universe* was trying to avoid fishing vessels when it ran aground near Canigao Island. Flora said the incident happened at dawn, when the third mate, the most junior officer, was on watch.

Manila, Aug 26 — Malayan Towage and Salvage reported today that passenger ro/ro *Princess of the Universe* was deeply grounded in loose rocks and sand on the shore of Canigao island. Manila-based

Malayan Towage and Salvage has been commissioned to refloat *Princess of the Universe* by its owners, Sulpicio Lines. Malayan dispatched the salvage tugs *Gorio* and *Limay*, which reached the vessel yesterday afternoon. Earlier, Sulpicio Lines had reported that the vessel could be refloated at the onset of the high tide. On closer inspection, however, Malayan Towage salvors said that the vessel was so deeply imbedded in the sand, that passengers and cargo would have to be offloaded first before refloating could take place. The vessel's 735 passengers were transferred to the *Filipina Princess* yesterday and brought to Cebu. Salvors are now waiting for a barge onto which the cargo will be transferred. The barge is expected to arrive in two days. Offloading could take several more days as only the aft ramp of *Princess of the Universe* was accessible. There was no discernable damage to *Princess of the Universe* although this could not be entirely ruled out until an underwater survey is undertaken, salvors said. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, Aug 30 — Passenger ro/ro *Princess of the Universe* is still aground with no salvage operations in progress. — Lloyd's Agents.

Manila, Aug 30 — Passenger ro/ro *Princess of the Universe* is still grounded off Canigao Island, Leyte province. Salvors, Malayan Towage and Salvage, said today that they are still awaiting the arrival of the barge which will offload cargo from the vessel. The barge is scheduled to arrive on site on Sep 1. She needs to be lightened before refloating can take place. Malayan Towage also reported that the vessel appears to have maintained her hull integrity as no water has penetrated the interior of the ship. — Lloyd's Agents.

RADIANCE OF THE SEAS (Bahamas)

London, Aug 28 — Passenger (cruise) *Radiance of the Seas* arrived Juneau at 1230, Aug 21, and sailed at 2000, same day. (See issue of Aug 22.)

RADISSON (Canada)

Quebec City, Aug 25 — Damage to ferry *Radisson* is considered to be very minor. — Lloyd's Sub-agents. (See issue of Aug 25.)

RAMOS III

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

RIO PARA (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Aug 26 — Following received from Coast Guard San Juan, timed 2350, UTC, Aug 25: Part containerised general cargo vessel *Rio Para* (4462 gt, built 2004) is disabled and adrift in lat 15 36.5N, long 66 57.5W, following a fire in engine-room. The fire is now out.

London, Aug 26 — Following received from Coast Guard San Juan, timed 0100, UTC: Part containerised general cargo vessel *Rio Para* is drifting south-west at two knots.

London, Aug 26 — Following received from Coast Guard Miami, timed 0950, UTC: At approximately 2100, UTC, part containerised general car *Rio Para*, with 11 persons onboard, experienced a fire in its engine-room. The crew were able to extinguish the fire, but the vessel is currently disabled, without propulsion, although it does have generator power. The vessel is presently approximately 140 nautical miles south of San Juan, Puerto Rico. It is understood that the vessel's owners and brokers are currently formulating a salvage plan and the intention is to tow the vessel into an, as yet, undesignated port.

London, Aug 26 — Following received from Coast Guard San Juan, timed 1555, UTC: Part containerised general cargo vessel *Rio Para* is still drifting, without power. The crew are confident that they can restart the vessel's engines and attempts to restart the engines are in progress. If however, they are unsuccessful, the vessel will be taken in tow.

London, Aug 26 — Following received from Coast Guard San Juan, timed 2105, UTC: Part containerised general cargo vessel *Rio Para* is still drifting. Its' crew have been unsuccessful in attempting to restart the vessel's engines and its owners are arranging for a tug to attend the vessel.

London, Aug 27 — Following received from Coast Guard San Juan, timed 1315, UTC: A tug from Curacao is now proceeding to part containerised general cargo vessel *Rio Para*, which is still drifting. The tug has an ETA on scene of approximately 0430, UTC, Aug 28.

London, Aug 28 — Following received from Coast Guard San Juan, PR, timed 1200, UTC: The crew of part containerised general cargo *Rio Para* restarted the engines and proceeded at 2305, UTC, Aug 27, bound for Rio Haina. Six electrical panels in the engine-room were destroyed.

RM MARGAUX (France)

Bordeaux, Aug 24 — Tug *RM Margaux* was raised by Mammoet Salvage on Aug 23. The vessel is currently afloat at Bordeaux, waiting to be placed on the slipway. — Lloyd's Agents.

ROBERT A. KYLE (U.S.A.)

See *Capt. Russell Simpson*.

ROTTERDAM (Netherlands)

See *Rotterdam* under "Miscellaneous".

SAMOTHRAKI (Greece)

London, Aug 26 — Passenger ro/ro *Samothraki* was reported arriving at Samos on Aug 17 and sailing later the same day, bound for Chios.

SARA 3 (Panama)

London, Aug 28 — Passenger ro/ro *Sara 3* was reported arriving at Jeddah on Aug 20 and sailing on Aug 21.

SASSY (U.S.A.)

Troy, Michigan, Aug 29 — An American family survived one of Lake Eries notorious storms after their vessel *The Sassy*, a 97-foot pleasure cruiser (? yacht *Sassy* 158 gt, built 2003) started taking on water early Saturday (Aug 26). The family's refusal to follow coast guard instructions set off some concern but may have saved their lives, said officials. The vessel, sailing out of Detroit, was about 24 miles southwest of Long Point at about 0400, Saturday when howling 25-knot winds and three-metre waves helped blast off the vessels deck hatches at the bow. The vessel started taking on water and issued a mayday call, said a spokesperson for the Niagara Regional Police. The cruiser had 11 people on board, including three children, and was intending to travel through the Welland Canal system on its way to Fort Lauderdale, Fla. The U.S. Coast Guard was unable to reach the vessel, and it was ordered to head into port at Erie, Pa. The master refused, fearing a turn would result in the vessel being overwhelmed by the waves and wind, said family spokesman Mark Bolle, of Mount Pleasant, Mich., who spoke to Osprey News Network Sunday. The vessels refusal to follow instructions set off some alarms. The Canadian Coast Guard vessel *Cape Lambton* was dispatched from Port Dover and kept a visual watch over *Sassy*. The American skipper was correct when he decided it would be safer to follow the sea and head for Port Colborne, said Rob Rittner of the Niagara Regional Police marine unit. "If you don't do that, you've got waves hitting you abreast and that could have turned out very badly", said Rittner. "The skipper made a really good decision. You can drop pretty quickly on the downside of waves that size, and that could result in you keeling over, especially when you're taking on water. The craft was bound for Port Colborne anyway, and it was a closer destination", said Rittner. The vessel pulled into Port Colborne at 0813 hrs after four hours and tied up by the harbour masters house on West Street. It was met by officials from Canada Customs, Transport Canada and police. Bolle said the family returned safely home to the U.S. Saturday afternoon to rest and await repairs to the boat, which he estimated could take as long as two weeks. Once the repairs are completed, the family will resume its voyage to Florida, said Bolle. — Great Lakes & Seaway Shipping.

SEA TRADER

London, Aug 29 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: The salvage of the sunken Roll On Roll Off *Sea Trader* in Ghent is to commence today. The ship which sank during scrapping is to be salvaged by B.T.S. using the *Amsterdam* and the tug *Ijsland*.

London, Aug 31 — Work to raise the wreck of Roll On Roll Off *Sea Trader*

commenced on Aug 29. The work is being undertaken by the Dutch salvage company B.T.S. They have started to raise the wreck using with the floating sheerleg crane *Amsterdam*, assisted by the tug *Ijsland*.

SHELBY JEAN (U.S.A.)

London, Aug 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Emergency dredging will start early today after the Paducah tug *Shelby Jean* (357 gt, built 1956) and nine barges ran aground at 1753, Sunday (Aug 27) about seven miles from the Ohio River's confluence with the Mississippi River at Cairo. The Dredge Potter of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' St. Louis District will take three or four days to deepen the channel to a safe-navigation level. The grounding blocked the river until 0845, yesterday, halting numerous barge shipments, said Lt. Wayne Chapman of the U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety office at Paducah. Owned by Cardinal Towing of Paducah, the *Shelby Jean* was pushing eight loaded rock barges and a deck barge with a crane to the Gulf Coast. There were no damages, but the grounding cost the company about \$300 an hour in fuel and other costs for a day and a half, Cardinal office manager Cindy Poole said. The grounding was the first significant incident in this area during the current low-water season, even though the heavily traveled channel has been its shallowest since 1988, said Western Kentucky Navigation President Dave Dewey.

SHINFUTABA (Japan)

Yokohama, Aug 25 — According to information obtained from local agents, general cargo *Shinfutaba* sank in an approximate depth of 1,000 metres and will not be salvaged. However, oil removal operations are now underway. General cargo *Dewi Parwati* has been in Mitsubishi Dock, Yokohama, since last week, for repairs. — Lloyd's Agents.

SHINSEI MARU (Japan)

Manila, Aug 24 — The arrival of Japanese tug/supply *Shinsei Maru* (997 gt, built 2001) in the Philippines will be delayed, the Philippine Coast Guard said today. *Shinsei Maru*, which is to conduct a deep water survey of the sunken tanker *Solar 1*, was scheduled to arrive tomorrow, but due to problems with its onboard crane, the vessel has been forced to return to Okinawa. The vessel is expected to arrive in the Philippines on Tuesday (Aug 29), the Coast Guard said. Environmental group Greenpeace International, however, reported that the real reason for the delay is that Petron and the P&I Club of the *Solar 1* have failed to conclude a contract with Japanese salvor Fukada Salvage and Marine Works, operator of the *Shinsei Maru*. "After checking with Fukada's Tokyo office, we learned that *Shinsei Maru* had never left Okinawa contrary to what Petron Corp. has announced," Greenpeace said. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

SOLAR 1 (Philippines)

London, Aug 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Hundreds of people have fallen sick and one man has died on Guimaras Island since the country's worst oil spill occurred, health officials said Thursday (Aug 24). The Department of Health has sent medical teams to Guimaras, which bore the brunt of the disaster, and where 329 people have complained of a range of symptoms including skin irritation and respiratory problems. Health Secretary Francisco Duque arrived in Iloilo City Thursday to see conditions firsthand following the sinking of non specific tanker *Solar 1*, which has discharged more than 50,000 gallons of industrial oil into pristine waters. Duque said the department would look into the case of Rogelio Dalida, a fisherman from Nueva Valencia town in Guimaras who reportedly died of a heart attack after inhaling oil fumes. Dalida had been suffering from asthma and the fumes could have aggravated his condition, Duque said. Mayor Diosdado Gonzaga of Nueva Valencia confirmed the death of one man in his town last week but said more tests were needed to determine whether his heart attack was brought on by the oil spill or not. Duque said the health department would also look into hundreds of complaints by Guimaras residents of health problems possibly arising from the oil slick. These range from skin irritation and respiratory problems to stomachaches and nausea, Duque said. Two health department toxicologists have been dispatched to look into the possibility of relocating some coastal residents away from the shore. Duque warned residents that exposure to the oil could lead to illnesses and advised them not to eat food taken from the polluted waters. On Wednesday DOTC Secretary Leandro R. Mendoza created the Special Board of Maritime Inquiry to investigate the Guimaras disaster and gave it 72 hours to submit an initial report. "Considering that this is a very serious accident, we have to know if there were violations in maritime rules," he said. Paul Shotwell, Petron's supply, operations and planning manager who attended the NDCC briefing, assured the disaster officials the company "will not leave Guimaras until it is clean." Shotwell said Petron had already cleaned up 28 kilometres of coastlines. An environmental group said on Thursday that Petron must post P10 billion to guarantee the cleanup and rehabilitation of areas affected by the oil spill. Ces Quimpo, spokesman for Kalikasan-People's Network for the Environment, said considering the damage caused by the oil spill in the three municipalities of Guimaras, the P10 billion is not enough. The P100-million bond for the cleanup the Philippine Coast Guard was asking from Petron would last only for seven weeks, Quimpo said. "The P10-billion bond has scientific, moral and legal basis, judging from the environmental holocaust and economic disaster the

oil spill caused to the nation. Petron is entirely to blame for this national tragedy because of the company's great rush for superprofits," she said. With the onset of the southwest monsoon, the oil spill could hit the last of the giant clams in the Sagay Marine Reserve in Sagay City 83 km north of Bacolod City, according to marine biologist Angel Alcalá. "These are the last of the endangered giant clams of the Visayan Sea," Alcalá said. More than 35 years of preservation work at the Sagay Marine Reserve will go down the drain if the oil spill hits it, he said. Alcalá, former environment secretary and director of the Silliman University-Angelo King Center for Research and Environmental Management, said the remaining oil in the sunken tanker off Guimaras should be retrieved before all of it leaked out and caused widespread ecological damage. Corals could take about two decades to recover, he said. As long as the oil stays on top of the water, the fish and other marine life will not have enough oxygen to survive, he said. The giant clams (*Tridacna squamosa*, *Tridacna hippopus hippopus*, *Tridacna crocea*, *Tridacna gigas*, *Tridacna maxima*) are described as being among the largest clams in the world, according to Sagay Marine Reserve superintendent Mayo Antonio Cueva. They grow algae in their bodies as a source of food. It is illegal to catch and sell the giant clams, which are endangered, Cueva said. He said personnel of the marine reserve were preparing bamboo poles to prevent the oil from entering the reserve. In a tie-up with the Silliman University Marine Laboratory, Alcalá began providing technical assistance in the late 70s as part of early efforts at marine conservation by Sagay. The 32,000-ha marine reserve is home to coral reefs, sea grass, algal beds and mangrove forests, according to Cueva. "We have been protecting the Sagay Marine Reserve from poachers for 35 years but we have no way of protecting it from the oil spill," said former Rep. Alfredo Maraon, who started the reserve. Also threatened by the oil spill are the blue crabs in the waters of EB Magalona town, 24 km north of here. EB Magalona Mayor Alfonso Gamboa said residents of his town were harvesting four to five tons of blue crabs a day and selling these at P125 per kilo, which translates to total earnings of between P500,000 and P600,000. The crabs most vulnerable to the spill are those caught through the gill net method. They are caught by people while swimming on the surface, Gamboa said. Even if the crabs survive an oil spill, which is now just 2 km from the shoreline of EB Magalona, people would not buy them, he said. If the oil spill moves any closer, the first casualty would be the fish pens and crab fishing, according to Gamboa. If it reaches the shore, the oyster and mussel beds will be affected. There are 3,200 families directly and indirectly engaged in blue crab fishing in EB Magalona, he said. About 40 percent

or 5,000 families of the town are dependent on marine resources for their livelihood, he said.

Jordan, Philippines, Aug 25 — A Japanese salvage ship hired to help clean up the Philippines' worst oil spill has developed mechanical problems, delaying its scheduled Saturday arrival by at least three days, officials said today. The ship was now expected to arrive on Tuesday (Aug 29) after repairs to its crane, Coast Guard spokesman Lieutenant Joseph Coyne said. Non specific tanker *Solar 1* is believed to be lying 640 metres under water off Guimaras island, beyond the reach of Philippine divers. "We need to determine the exact location and condition of *Solar 1* so we can decide whether to siphon the oil, lift the ship entirely with the remaining fuel or entomb the tanker using cement or sediment," said Carlos Tan, Petron's health, safety and environment manager. The Japanese salvage ship has equipment that provides images of the ocean floor from a remotely operated vehicle. The cost of its mission will be paid by the insurance firm of the tanker's owner, Sunshine Maritime Development Corp. Petron, in which the Philippine government and Saudi state oil firm Saudi Aramco each have a 40 percent stake, has been criticised for the pace of its response to the disaster. But Petron, the country's largest oil refiner, has insisted it is doing everything possible to contain the spill and help the residents of coastal areas cope by hiring them to clean beaches and mangrove trees. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo ordered drop-off centres for human hair and chicken feathers to be set up in response to a call by the Coast Guard yesterday for absorbent material to help soak up the spill. The municipal governments of Concepcion, Ajuy and Barotac Nuevo in Iloilo province put the towns under a "state of calamity" today to speed up the release of funds for the clean-up. Guimaras island had already been declared a "calamity area" due to the effects of the slick on 20 fishing villages, its tourism industry and the mangrove trees and coral reefs of a marine reserve. — Reuters.

London, Aug 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Two weeks after its sinking caused the Philippines' worst oil spill, non specific tanker *Solar 1* has finally been located, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo announced today. Speaking at the National Convention of the National Prosecutors League of the Philippines in Cebu, Arroyo said she received the "good news" that the sunken vessel had been located this morning. The vessel has leaked an estimated 350,000 litres of bunker fuel since it sank, damaging an estimated 220 km of coastline, 450 hectares of mangroves and 116 hectares of seaweed plantations in the province, and has hit neighbouring Iloilo province. It has also affected the livelihood and threatens the health of some 26,000 people, mainly fisherfolk. Task Force Guimaras, which Arroyo

created to address the environmental disaster, and officials of the Philippine Coast Guard have stressed the urgency of locating the vessel so the remaining oil in its holds can be siphoned out.

Manila, Aug 25 — The Philippine Coast Guard will no longer require Petron Corp to post a pesos 100-million (US\$1.9 million) cash bond for the clean-up of the oil spill caused by the sinking of non specific tanker *Solar 1* off Guimaras island. The announcement was made by Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza who said that the partly state-owned Petron Corp was already spending for the clean-up so it was unnecessary to have the company post a bond. He said he had ordered the Coast Guard, which is an attached agency of the Department of Transportation, to withdraw the order. Early this week, the Coast Guard had announced that it would ask Petron to post the bond. Under the country's marine pollution laws, the Coast Guard can only require the owner or operator of a vessel which caused an oil spill to post a cash bond. Petron was just the owner of the vessel's cargo. As such it could not be legally required to post a bond. In the meantime, Malayan Towage and Salvage Company and Harbor Star Shipping Services may be forced to stop the oil spill clean-up operations by its tugs off Guimaras island because of the failure of *Solar 1*'s operator to pay for the use of the tugs. The two salvage companies have deployed three oil spill fighting tugs each and represent the main effort in containing and dispersing the oil spill offshore. Officials from the two salvors said, however, that they can no longer afford to keep their tugboats at sea unless Sunshine Maritime Development Corp, operator of *Solar 1*, pays part of their costs. Sources indicated that Sunshine Maritime should have enough funds to cover the cost of the oil spill clean up as the vessel had a P&I coverage of US\$1.0 billion. The problem lies, however, with the Shipowners' Mutual Protection and Indemnity Association (Luxembourg), the insurance company providing P&I coverage for the vessel, which has not released any funds for the oil spill clean-up. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, Aug 29 — The Special Board of Marine Inquiry in its preliminary report on the sinking of tanker *Solar 1* pointed to "human error" as the cause of the sinking of the coastal oil tanker. In its report, the Board, which is the official body tasked with investigating the marine casualty, said that the master of the vessel should not have continued on its voyage as it was taking on water and listing. These findings were echoed by Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo who said today that the vessel was doomed because its crew insisted on sailing despite bad weather. "Whether or not it was double hull or single hull, double bottom or single bottom, it would really capsizes because it sailed

in rough weather," she said during her visit to Guimaras island. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, Aug 30 — Non specific tanker *Solar 1*: The Japanese salvage vessel *Shinsei Maru*, arrived in the Philippines at around 1600, today after a two day delay. The vessel, however, only left it's home port of Okinawa on Saturday (Aug 26) because of protracted negotiations between the Shipowners' Mutual Protection and Indemnity Association (Luxembourg) and Fukada Salvage and Marine Works on the cost of surveying and possible refloating of the sunken tanker. Shipowner's Mutual and Fukada Salvage were reported to have finally agreed on a US\$20 million contract for the services of the salvage vessel. The *Shinsei Maru* is now at Iloilo International port. The vessel is scheduled to set out tomorrow to determine the exact location of the sunken *Solar 1* which sank in the area of Panay Gulf. Since the vessel and its cargo of 2.0 million liters of bunker fuel sank on August 11, a massive oil spill has ravaged the coastal areas of Guimaras island. The Japanese rescue vessel is equipped with seabed scanners and has an ROV that can determine exact location and condition of the sunken tanker. After this is done, surveyors will decide if the *Solar 1* will be raised or if the remaining oil in its storage tanks will just be retrieved. — Correspondent.

London, Aug 31 — The former name of *Solar 1* has been confirmed as *Newhinase*. This crude oil carrier was built 1989 and is 998 gt.

SORMOVSKIY 32 (Russia)

London, Aug 28 — General cargo *Sormovskiy 32* was reported passing Istanbul at 1630 hrs, Aug 20, in a westerly direction. On Aug 27 the vessel was reported arriving at Venice.

STADT MUNCHEN (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Aug 28 — Container Carrier *Stadt Munchen* arrived at Los Angeles at 1435 hrs, Aug 20 and departed at 2050 hrs, Aug 21.

SUN PINE (South Korea)

London, Aug 31 — Following navigation warning issued at 0950, UTC, Aug 18: Combined chemical and oil tank *Sun Pine* (4808 gt, built 1990) adrift in lat 12 14N, long 89 56E, due to engine failure.

London, Aug 31 — Following received from the managers of Combined chemical and oil tank *Sun Pine*, timed Busan 0500, UTC, today: *Sun Pine* was towed to Port Blair by tug *Britoil 50* where they arrived Aug 20. Repairs were carried out to *Sun Pine* at Port Blair and vessel has now proceeded to Madras (Chennai) under own power.

TIRTA NIAGA I (Indonesia)

Kolkata, Aug 30 — Product tanker *Tirta Niaga I* and product tanker *Belicia* are still under arrest and not yet released from Paradip/ Kolkata port. The disputes between shipowner and the cargo importers not yet resolved. — Lloyd's Agents.

TOPPY 4 (Japan)

London, Aug 26 — A press report, dated today, states: Hydrofoil *Topy 4* involved in an accident in April that left more than 100 people injured struck driftwood, not a whale as initially suspected, according to Japan Coast Guard officials. The Kagoshima office of the coast guard reached the conclusion Thursday (Aug 24) after it detected fragments of wood from a dent in the ferry's hull caused by the accident, in addition to the fact that many logs were floating in the area at that time, they said. In the Apr 9 accident, the high-speed ferry struck an object that the coast guard and ship operator said was possibly a whale off Kagoshima Prefecture.

TUGEN (Luxembourg)

London, Aug 30 — Product tanker *Tugen* sailed from Durban on Aug 26.

UAL TEXAS (Netherlands)

London, Aug 25 — General cargo *UAL Texas* sailed from Tyne on Aug 24 bound for Aberdeen.

UMFOLOZI (Cyprus)

London, Aug 30 — Container carrier *Michael S.* (ex *Umfolozi*) arrived at Iskenderun on Aug 26 from Oran.

VEROX

London, Aug 24 — Understand that inland cargo vessel (*Verox* ex *Extra Hopper*), length 63 metres, built 2003, sank, due to an unknown cause, near the Rozenburgsluis in the Botlek harbour area, Rotterdam, at 1300, local time, today. The vessel was loaded with containers with a cargo of cocoa, of which 30 containers are drifting in the canal. The master and his family were saved from the sinking vessel. The locks, Rozenburgsluis, cannot be used until the sunken vessel and the containers have been removed. Also the shipping traffic between the Hartel canal and the Calandcanal is obstructed. The road traffic across the bridge across the lock is blocked.

London, Aug 24 — Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 1225, UTC: Inland waterways barge *Verox*, ex *Extra Hopper* which was being used as a loading platform sank today in Rotterdam.

London, Aug 24 — Inland cargo vessel *Verox*: The drifting containers are being salvaged now by the salvage company Bergingsbedrijf W. Smit B.V., who believe that it will take all evening before all the containers will be salvaged. The authority, the Havenbedrijf Rotterdam wants vessel raised as soon as possible, while shipping traffic has to make a longer voyage to get to certain harbours. Officials are making inquiries and will investigate this shipping accident.

London, Aug 30 — Unknown *Verox* was raised at about 1800 hrs, yesterday. The vessel capsized and sank on Aug 24 near the entrance of the Rozenburgsluis in the harbour area Botlek, Rotterdam. The cargo of containers were salvaged by the salvage company Bergingsbedrijf W. Smit B.V.

In the afternoon the floating sheerleg crane *Ajax*, from the Dutch salvage company GPS, arrived at the scene and divers put cables under the sunken vessel. At first the ship was righted, because she was lying on her side and working through the night and the next day the vessel was raised, together with the help of the floating sheerleg crane of the salvage company Bergingsbedrijf W. Smit B.V.

VIKING (Netherlands)

See *Melanie*.

YARD NO.203 ODENSE (DIS)

London, Aug 25 — Following received from Kiel, dated today: After the successful completion of trials the initial schedule of container carrier *Yard No.203 Odense*, now named *Emma Maersk*, has been set, thus: Aarhus: Sep 7, Gothenburg: Sep 8, Bremerhaven Sep 11 and Rotterdam Sep 13.

YASAR KAPTAN II (Georgia)

See "Drugs Found On Georgia-Flagged Vessel At Alicante, Spain" under "Miscellaneous".

YM GREEN (Liberia)

London, Aug 25 — A Semco Salvage report states: On Aug 6 Semco was mobilised to deal with a cargo fire on Container Carrier *YM Green*. The vessel had just departed Singapore on its voyage to Egypt and Europe when smoke was noticed coming out of one of its cargo holds, so the master immediately called for assistance, turned back and anchored just outside of Singapore. Semco responded immediately by sending salvage tug *Salvalour* as well as *Salvern* and a salvage team to try and prevent the fire from spreading, while investigations were carried out to find the source of the problem. *YM Green* was also moved to Singapore's Raffles Reserved Anchorage so that major operations could get underway without causing a hazard to other shipping. Eventually the source of the fire was discovered, which turned out to be one of the 40 ft containers in No.4 hold. In total, this hold contained 348 Containers and the heat had spread, causing damage to at least 20 more containers. Fire fighting operations continued with teams entering the smoke filled hold to cut small holes in the burning containers and insert water sprays and slowly but surely the fire was successfully contained. When it was deemed safe enough to do so, the ship was brought into one of Singapore's Container Terminals at Pasir Panjang, so that some of the above-deck containers, some 320 of them, could be off-loaded. This was to make it possible for the deck-level hatch covers to be removed, allowing access to the burned out containers beneath. When the unloading was finished at the Container Terminal, *YM Green* returned to Raffles Reserved Anchorage, to be met by a large offshore barge crane and another flat barge, these for removing the hatch covers and the burned out

containers. This operation was completed on Aug 16 with 25 burned out containers safely removed and transferred to the flat barge, leaving *YM Green* in a completely safe condition, although with quite a few of its containers are missing. (Note — *YM Green* sailed Singapore 0525, Aug 24, for Port Said.)

YONG AN 4 (Panama)

See “Typhoon ‘Prapiroon’” under “Weather & Navigation”.

Port State Control



CYPRUS

Limassol, Aug 31 — General cargo *Liberty A.* is currently still at Limassol, under Port State Control detention. — Lloyd’s Agents.

Seizures & Arrests



EDCO (Egypt)

London, Aug 25 — A press report, dated Aug 24, states: Almost two months after a federal judge ordered Egyptian bulker *Edco* to remain in Charleston, the crew feels trapped on their own vessel. The vessel was ordered not to leave until an international lawsuit involving cargo and the *Edco*’s sister ship is resolved. One outcome could be putting the vessel up for auction. But until the suit and legal bills are resolved, the 29 crew members may not leave the vessel. The vessel had been anchored in Charleston Harbor but last week was moved to a dock in North Charleston. The vessel’s owner, Mir Edco Shipping, has not paid some crew members for as long as nine months. Ellewaa said that he and his shipmates have enough food for now. But he said some have suffered from a skin fungus, likely because the use of fresh water for showers is limited to conserve water. The captain also went to a hospital after suffering a heart attack last week. The captain complained that the Coast Guard requires port police to count crew members every four hours. In other international ports, the crew would be counted only once a day, he said. “We are seamen,” he said. “We should be respected.” Coast Guard Capt. John E. Cameron said the head counts are normal security. Mark Cooke of the Charleston Port & Seafarers’ Society, a local humanitarian group, said residents are helping with supplies, phone calls home and doctor visits.

London, Aug 27 — A press report, dated Aug 26, states: Bulker *Edco* has been ordered to be auctioned in late

September, meaning it could be several weeks before the 29 crew members can head home. U.S. District Judge David Norton set the date yesterday. Proceeds from the sale of the ship will be set aside as security while an international lawsuit over *Edco*’s sister ship plays out. The money from the Sept 21 auction eventually will help pay *Edco*’s creditors, including the cost of resupplying and mooring the vessel in Charleston during the past two months. Starting range for the sale is about dollars two million. The ship’s master has asked the Egyptian Embassy to help break the deadlock that has kept the crew confined onboard since late June.

FISHING VESSELS SEIZED BY RUSSIA

Portsmouth, UK — Four fishing boats, suspected of illegal crab fishing off the coast of the Kamchatka Peninsula, have been escorted to the port of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatski and put on the roadstead in the Avachinsky Bay. “The inspection was started on Monday in connection with the violation of the rules by the boats,” said Andrei Orlov, head of the public relations group of the North Eastern Frontier Guard Department of the FSB Coastal Guard Service. The *Yamason Maru-61*, *Fukushiki Mary* and *Koishu Maru-2*, which belong to the companies registered in Belize, worked in the Russian waters under the flag of Cambodia. The *Garus* (448 gt, built 1985), which belongs to a Sakhalin company, also engaged in fishing in that area. The flotilla was detected by the Vorovsky frontier-guard boat on Aug 23. They tried to escape and started moving in various directions. An aircraft of the Yelizovo Air Regiment of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) helped the frontier guard to arrest the intruders. It was established that the crews of the boats were made up of Russian citizens. The four boats had on board a total of 42 tons of Kamchatka crab, whose fishing is forbidden for the purpose of protecting the crab population. On the same day the Bars frontier-guard boat arrested in the northern part of the Sea of Okhotsk the *Takhhurand* trawler of Russia, which illegally fished eight tons of Alaska Pollack. The trawler was escorted to the port of Magadan. The representative of the North Eastern Frontier Guard Department pointed to the fact that too many fishing boats had been arrested by frontier guards for poaching in August. Some 15 trawlers and schooners are staying on the roadstead in the Avachinsky Bay, near the port of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatski, which violated the rules of fishing. All cases of the violation of the fishing legislation are being investigated. — Correspondent.

GAZIPUR (Bangladesh)

Karachi, Aug 27 — Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) has arrested a lighter vessel *Gazipur*, owned by Sharifuddin and Company, on a charge of excess

loading of goods and violating port regulations, on Aug 25. Port magistrate Mohammed Monir Chowdhury “of a mobile court of port authority” “has found that said vessel at Dimond Cement Company jetty area of the southern bank of the river Karnaphuli and captured the lighter vessel from risky position”. It is claimed that the vessel had been loading clinker from mv *U-King* at the outer anchorage of the port. — Lloyd’s List Correspondent.

GOLDEN TRUST NO.1 (Panama)

Zeebrugge, Aug 29 — At 1241 hrs, Aug 26, the departure of bulker *Golden Trust No.1* from Antwerp was authorised. — Lloyd’s Sub-agents.

INDONESIAN FISHING VESSEL DETAINED BY AUSTRALIA

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated today, states: Eighteen suspected illegal fishermen have been detained in Darwin after being caught allegedly poaching up to 15 tonnes of reef fish from Australian waters. HMAS *Launceston* intercepted the Indonesian-flagged vessel near the Wessel Islands, north-east of Arnhem Land yesterday, after it was spotted by Coastwatch aircraft, the Defence Department said today. The boat, carrying 18 fishermen believed to be Chinese nationals, was escorted to Darwin harbour this morning. A spokeswoman for the Immigration Department tonight said all 18 crew members had been taken to Darwin’s Northern Immigration Detention Facility, where they were being held pending further inquiries. The Australian Fisheries Management Authority said it was investigating whether the crew had been fishing illegally. An estimated 15 tonnes of reef fish were found on the trawler. Defence hailed the operation as a major blow to illegal fishing. The action brought to 244 the number of vessels intercepted this year, the department said. Lieutenant Tracy Bellerby said the crew of the trawler had tried to avoid capture when confronted. The Federal Government says illegal fishing is becoming an increasing problem off Australia’s north coast. Customs Minister Chris Ellison has proposed hiring a private ship to act as a holding facility to detain people caught fishing unlawfully in Australian waters. The crews of illegal fishing boats would be held on the high seas for several days before being transferred to the mainland for processing.

LUCHEGORSK (Russia)

London, Aug 26 — A press report, dated today, states: Guinean authorities have “thrown out” all claims against product tanker *Luchegorsk* and its captain, the ITAR-TASS news agency quoted the Russian Foreign Ministry as saying. The Foreign Ministry’s spokesperson Andrey Krivtsov said charges against the Switzerland-based Addach which chartered the Russian ship are still in force. Our embassy keeps in touch

with the crew and Guinean authorities to help settle the issue, Krivtsov said. The *Luchegorsk* is still in the port of Conarky, with 20 men on board.

ORESTES (Panama)

Bari, Aug 25 — Passenger ro/ro *Orestes* is still under arrest at Bari. According to the harbour-master there are no prospects for her release. — Lloyd's Agents.

OTAPAN (Mexico)

London, Aug 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Turkish NGOs under the umbrella of "Groups against Scrapping of Dangerous Ship" have opened a legal case against the Dutch Environment Ministry, seeking the annulment of export permission for toxic tank barge *Otapan*, which recently arrived off Turkey from Holland. The group, which also consists of Greenpeace members, made an official application to the Dutch High Court. The court is expected to address the issue next month. Turkish Environment and Forestry Minister Osman Pepe declared that the toxic vessel sent from The Netherlands to Turkey for dismantling would not be allowed to enter Turkish territorial waters. The vessel remained anchored off Izmir since it was carrying more toxic materials than officially declared. The controversial vessel was carrying 54 tons of asbestos, instead of the officially-declared one ton. The *Otapan* arrived off the Turkish coast near the port of Aliaga in mid-August after a three-week journey from Amsterdam. The vessel, which was docked for seven years at Amsterdam Port, was sent to Turkey to be scrapped after Dutch companies refused to deal with it due to toxic materials contained in its structure.

PLAVA (Albania)

Bari, Aug 25 — General cargo *Plava* is still under arrest at Bari. According to the harbour-master there are no prospects for her release. — Lloyd's Agents.

RAO HE (China)

London, Aug 26 — General cargo *Rao He* (2612 gt, built 1985), which arrived at Hong Kong at 1322 hrs, Aug 25, is today reported at Western Anchorage No.1, Hong Kong, under Admiralty and High Court arrest.

London, Aug 29 — General cargo *Rao He* sailed Hong Kong at 1352, local time, Aug 29.

ZODIAK (Belize)

Portsmouth, UK, Aug 31 — A press report, dateline Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, today, states: "Fishing (general) *Zodiak*, flying the Belize flag, was arrested in southern part of the Sea of Okhotsk on suspicion of poaching on Aug 30, the head of the public relations department of the Federal Security Service's border guard department, Andrei Orlov, told Itar-Tass today. The vessel was rented by a Japanese fishing company. The detainees are Russian citizens. The *Zodiak* was detained by the Askold

Pynko patrol vessel. The vessel had no fishing allowance and technical control measures. Border guards found 10 tonnes of frozen fish in holds. The vessel is now being towed to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky for investigation." — Correspondent.



DIWANIYA AREA, IRAQ

Diwaniya Area, Aug 29 — An explosion killed at least 15 people who were siphoning petrol from pools formed around a breach in a disused fuel pipeline in central Iraq late yesterday, witnesses said today. A witness at the rural site near Diwaniya, 180 km south of Baghdad, counted 15 charred bodies, including that of a boy. A hospital official said eight bodies had been brought to Diwaniya's morgue. The cause of the blast was still under investigation, officials said. A police source said more than 50 were killed, although that figure could not be confirmed. Witnesses said the blast occurred at 2300 hrs (1900, UTC), while a large group of people were scooping fuel from two large pools. One witness said there were still bodies in the fuel pools that had not yet been recovered. An Oil Ministry official in Baghdad said the pipe was one of many across Iraq that are out of operation due to shortages. Residue left in the pipe could have caused the blast, he said. — Reuters.

PRUDHOE BAY, ALASKA

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated today, states: Oil production at BP's Prudhoe Bay oilfield in Alaska, already running at half capacity due to pipeline corrosion, is being cut by another 90,000 barrels per day for several days due to a technical fault. A company spokesman said yesterday output at the biggest oilfield in the United States had been reduced to 110,000 barrels per day after a natural gas compressor in Gathering Center 2 failed. "We anticipate that fixing the compressor will require several days," said BP (Charts) spokesman Daren Beaudou told wire services. The spokesman said no one was hurt and no oil was spilled in the latest incident, which has added to worries over an oil market strained by reduced Nigerian supply and fearful of potential disruptions in the Middle East. Oil prices initially jumped on the news in premarket trade, but later settled back as the initial shock wore off. BP had originally planned for 400,000 barrels of oil a day to be off line for several months, and as a result had place orders to supply its West Coast refineries, where most of Prudhoe's crude is shipped, with supplies from Asia and other places. Officials have cautioned against

expectations that output would be quickly brought back to normal. Engineers are working on three different bypass lines that could eventually fully restore production.

London, Aug 31 — BP officials are growing increasingly optimistic that Prudhoe Bay oil production may be returned to normal levels earlier than expected, believing a portion of the pipeline idled by corrosion concerns may be useable at least temporarily and that other sections can be bypassed. The flow of oil from Prudhoe Bay has been cut in half to 200,000 barrels a day as BP prepares to replace 16 miles of pipeline after discovering extensive internal corrosion that resulted in spills in March and early August. Oil deliveries resumed earlier this month through the western half of the pipeline system by bypassing the damaged sections of pipe. But the eastern section remains idled as BP conducts extensive tests to determine whether at least some of that pipe can be used. BP officials emphasised that any resumption of oil flow in the closed eastern section will depend upon whether the company can convince the federal Transportation Department that such a move can be made without risk of another spill. In briefings given yesterday to Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne, who is on a three-day tour of North Slope oil facilities, and in separate interviews, BP officials clearly were optimistic that the pipeline system can be returned to normal production of 400,000 barrels a day, using a temporary fix.



EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

See "Israel-Lebanon" under "Pollitical & Civil Unrect."

PUGET SOUND, SEATTLE, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 31 — A press report, dated today, states: A mysterious oil spill that covered as much as 11 acres of Puget Sound near the Edmonds ferry terminal was spotted by chance early yesterday. Efforts to corral it before it dissipated were unsuccessful. A search for the source is likely to prove difficult because investigators didn't arrive until it was too late to get samples of the oil that could be chemically fingerprinted. Although the oil dissipated, "any amount of oil is toxic to the environment. I wouldn't want to minimize that," said Curt Hart, a spokesman for the state Department of Ecology. "This is a spill that should have been prevented." The spill was discovered when a Washington State Patrol airplane pilot on routine patrol saw it about a quarter-mile west of the ferry terminal. The patrol relayed the report at 0640 hrs, said Jeff Pollinger,

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

a Coast Guard petty officer. At the time of the first report, the spill was estimated to be about 1,000 feet by 500 feet, State Patrol Trooper Kirk Rudeen said. That's a little more than 11 acres. The Coast Guard later said the spill was about 1,000 feet by 200 feet. Patches of red algae in the spill area complicated the task of estimating the spill's size. Officials offered no immediate estimate of the number of gallons spilled. Ecology and the Coast Guard sent helicopters up to check out the size of the spill about 0830 hrs, after television news helicopters had photographed it, Hart said, and they notified oil-spill cleanup contractors to start preparing to contain it. By the time an Ecology oil-spill responder got vessel out to the spill at about 0930 hrs, it had spread into an unrecoverable sheen on top of the water that couldn't be collected for chemical fingerprinting. "We got out there just as soon as we could," Hart said. At that point, efforts to corral the oil were called off. Although it will be difficult to identify the spiller, "our educated guess is that it came from a vessel," Hart said.

SHENZHEN, CHINA

London, Aug 29 — Environmental workers have contained an oil spill at a port in southern city of Shenzhen, the local maritime affairs bureau said. The spill occurred on Sunday (Aug 27) at the Yantian port area of the city. The oil had created a 40,000-square-metre slick, said Wang Shengming, a senior official with the Shenzhen Maritime Affairs Bureau. The bureau said it had sent 32 vessels and 220 workers, and used over 10 tons of oil-absorbent materials to contain the spill.

SUBIC BAY, PHILIPPINES

London, Aug 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Authorities yesterday reported an oil spill off Subic Bay polluting 7 km of coastline and beaches fronted by hotels and other tourism establishments. Mayor James Gordon ordered the spill contained, including the sludge that washed up on the coast of Barretto village, the hardest hit. He sought help from the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority to track down the still unidentified vessel that had unloaded used bunker oil off Subic Bay, threatening marine life and Subic's travel industry. The authority's initial investigation showed that the spill covered about 5,000 sqm and was slowly moving out toward Grande Island, threatening its resorts and commercial fishpens. "It appeared to be sludge oil pumped out from the bilge of a passing vessel," said Perfecto Pascual, general manager of the authority's Seaport department. A private firm, Coastal Petroleum, has provided a spill boom to help contain the slick. A local fisherman found ruptured plastic bags floating off Subic Bay near Barretto, and they appeared to have contained the sludge that was released after they burst. The sludge now threatened the beaches, officials said.

Weather & Navigation



AFGHANISTAN

London, Aug 25 — At least 11 people were missing today after their villages in eastern Afghanistan were hit by renewed flooding, brought on by torrential rains. The Integrated Regional Information Networks reports the villages are located in Nangarhar province near the famed Khyber Pass. "Hundreds of families have been affected and need urgent assistance," Mohammad Hashim Ghamsharek, a spokesman for the provincial government, told IRIN. Later reports said a rehabilitation team had been dispatched to the flood-affected area to assess the damage. The whole region has seen much flooding in recent days because of the rains. More than 30 people have so far died and several hundred of acres of farmlands have been affected.

HURRICANE "ILEANA"

London, Aug 25 — Following received from the Meteorological Office: Hurricane "Ileana": Hurricane centre located near lat 21.3N, long 116.7W, at 0900, UTC, Aug 25. Position accurate to within 15 nautical miles. Present movement towards the west-north-west, or 290 deg, at six knots. Maximum sustained winds 75 knots with gusts to 90 knots. Radius of 64-knot winds 30 nautical miles. Radius of 50-knot winds 50 nautical miles north-east quadrant, 45 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 34-knot winds 130 nautical miles north-east quadrant, 110 nautical miles south-east quadrant, 90 nautical miles north-west quadrant and 80 nautical miles south-west quadrant. Radius of 12-foot seas 175 nautical miles east semicircle, 125 nautical miles elsewhere. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Aug 26: Position lat 22.0N, long 118.4W. Present movement towards the west-north-west, or 290 deg, at six knots. Maximum sustained winds 55 knots with gusts to 65 knots. Radius of 50-knot winds 35 nautical miles. Radius of 34-knot winds 90 nautical miles north-east quadrant, 75 nautical miles south-east quadrant, 80 nautical miles north-west quadrant and 65 nautical miles south-west quadrant.

London, Aug 26 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of tropical storm "Ileana" was located near lat 22.5N, long 118.6W. The position is accurate to within 20 nautical miles. The present movement is towards the west-north-west, or 295 deg, at six knots. The estimated central pressure is 990 mb. Maximum sustained winds 55 knots with gusts to 65 knots. Radius of 34-knot winds: 70 nautical miles in the north-east, south-east and south-west quadrants and 60 nautical miles in the north-west

quadrant. At 0600, UTC, Aug 27 the centre is predicted to be near lat 23.1N, long 120.8W, with maximum sustained winds of 40 knots and gusts to 50 knots. Dissipation is anticipated around the 72-96 hour time frame.

HURRICANE "IOKE"

London, Aug 25 — Following received from the Meteorological Office: Hurricane "Ioke": Hurricane centre located near lat 19.2N, long 174.5W, at 0900, UTC, Aug 25. Position accurate to within 15 nautical miles. Present movement towards the west-north-west, or 290 deg, at six knots. Maximum sustained winds 140 knots with gusts to 170 knots. Radius of 64-knot winds 100 nautical miles north semicircle, 50 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 50-knot winds 150 nautical miles north semicircle, 100 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 34-knot winds 200 nautical miles north semicircle, 150 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 12-foot seas 200 nautical miles north semicircle, 150 nautical miles elsewhere. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Aug 26: Position lat 19.5N, long 178.1W. Present movement towards the west-north-west, or 290 deg, at six knots. Maximum sustained winds 140 knots with gusts to 170 knots. Radius of 64-knot winds 100 nautical miles north semicircle, 50 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 50-knot winds 150 nautical miles north semicircle, 100 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 34-knot winds 200 nautical miles north semicircle, 150 nautical miles elsewhere.

London, Aug 26 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of hurricane "Ioke" was located near lat 19.0N, long 176.9W, or about 510 miles west-northwest of Johnston Island and about 635 miles south of Midway Island. "Ioke" is moving toward the west-southwest near nine mph. This motion is expected to continue for the next 36 to 48 hours. The minimum central pressure is 930 mb. Maximum sustained winds 150 knots with higher gusts. Some strengthening is forecast during the next 24 hours.

London, Aug 27 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of hurricane "Ioke" was located near lat 17.4N, long 179.7W, approximately 785 nautical miles east of Wake Island and has tracked west-south-westward, or 240 degs, at 11 knots over the past six hours. The position is accurate to 25 nautical miles and based on the eye being fixed by satellite. Present wind distribution: Maximum sustained winds 140 knots, with gusts to 170 knots. Radius of 64 knot winds: 55 nautical miles in the north-east, south-east and south-west quadrants and 60 nautical miles in the north-west quadrant. Radius of 34 knot winds: 135 nautical miles in the north-east and south-west quadrants and 150 nautical miles in the south-west and north-west quadrants. The maximum significant wave height is 47 feet. At 0600, UTC, Aug 28, the

centre is predicted to be near lat 16.3N, long 176.3E, with maximum sustained winds of 140 knots and gusts to 170 knots.

London, Aug 28 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Super typhoon "Ioke" continues moving west-south-west. No watches or warnings are in effect. At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of super typhoon "Ioke" was located near lat 16.3N, long 176.2E. This is about 665 miles east-south-east of Wake Island, moving west-south-west at 10 mph, with maximum sustained winds of 150 mph. "Ioke" is expected to make a slight turn to the west over the next 24 hours. Typhoon force winds extend outward up to 70 miles from the centre. Tropical storm force winds extend outward up to 160 miles from the centre.

London, Aug 29 — A press report, dated Aug 28, states: The US military evacuated 200 people from Wake Island today before the arrival of typhoon "Ioke," the strongest Central Pacific hurricane in more than decade. Classified as a Category 5 "super typhoon," Ioke is expected to extensively damage the US territory when it hits on Wednesday (Aug 30) with 155-mph winds, said Jeff Powell, lead forecaster for the National Weather Service in Honolulu. "This is going to roll up a storm surge that will probably submerge the island and destroy everything that's not made of concrete," Powell said. The evacuees, mostly American and Thai contractors, were flown to Hickam Air Force Base on the Hawaiian island of Oahu, said Maj Clare Reed, a spokeswoman for the 15th Airlift Wing. The contractors work at a civilian base, Reed said. No other permanent residents live on the tiny island, she said. Ioke had winds of 160 mph and gusts up to 185 mph today, Powell said. The storm was 560 miles south-east of Wake Island and on track for a direct hit, according to the forecast. The storm is expected to strike at 2000, EDT, on Wednesday, or noon Thursday on the island.

Honolulu, Aug 29 — Typhoon "Ioke" is in lat 16.0N, long 174.2E, 480 nautical miles east south-east of Wake Island, and is tracking westward at eight knots with winds at 130 sustained, gusts to 160. The island is under the U.S. Air Force, and all personnel (188) have been evacuated to Honolulu. It is expected to make landfall sometime tomorrow. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Aug 31 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today, states: Typhoon "Ioke" near lat 18.5N, long 168.3E at 0000, UTC, Aug 31. Movement for the past six hours 295 degrees at nine knots. Position accurate to within 25 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds 135 knots, gusts 165 knots Forecast position lat 19.4N, long 166.5E, at 1200, UTC, today. Maximum sustained winds 135 knots, gusts 165 knots.

HURRICANE "JOHN"

London, Aug 29 — A press report, dated Aug 28, states: Tropical storm

"John" formed in the Pacific today and was picking up strength as it churned toward the southern tip of the Baja California Peninsula, prompting Mexico to issue a tropical storm watch. With sustained winds near 65 mph, the storm was expected to become a hurricane by tomorrow, according to the US National Hurricane Centre. It was 270 miles south-east of the resort city of Acapulco and was moving west-north-west at seven mph. Mexico issued a tropical storm watch from Lagunas de Chacahua to the Pacific port city of Lazaro Cardenas. Extended forecasts showed the storm moving adjacent to Mexico's Pacific Coast, but said it could move ashore near the Baja Peninsula resort city of Los Cabos later in the week. In the meantime, the storm was expected to bring heavy rains to a swath of Pacific coastline stretching from Puerto Angel north to Acapulco. The downpours "could cause life-threatening flash floods over regions of mountainous terrain," the hurricane centre said.

London, Aug 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Hurricane "John" threatened Mexican tourist resorts today, with forecasters predicting a trek up the Pacific coast that would rake the mainland with strong winds and rains. While the storm's eye was not expected to hit land, hurricane-force winds were likely to rip across the beaches in some areas, the U.S. National Hurricane Centre in Miami said. The Category 3 hurricane had maximum sustained winds of 115 mph and could grow into a Category 4 storm with winds of more than 130 mph later today, the hurricane center said. "John" was moving northwest, parallel to the Mexican coast, and was not expected to affect the United States. The forecast path would carry the storm out to sea below Los Cabos at the tip of the Baja California Peninsula, but forecasters warned that track could vary. Early today, the hurricane was centered about 130 miles southwest of Acapulco and was moving to the west-northwest at 12 mph. Hurricane force winds extended outward 35 miles. Hurricane watches and warnings covered a more than 400-mile stretch of coast from Tecpan de Galeana, just north of Acapulco, to the southern tip of Banderas Bay further north. Hurricane warnings covering the centre of the area included the industrial town of Lazaro Cardenas and the port of Manzanillo. The storm also brought winds and rain to Puerto Escondido, a beach community popular with surfers in the southern state of Oaxaca. Forecasters warned the hurricane could drop up to eight inches of rain. Authorities warned residents of low-lying areas to be on alert and urged deep-sea fishing expeditions to return to port in Acapulco. But the airport was still open, and there were few signs of preparation for the hurricane.

Manzanillo, Aug 30 — Hurricane "John" "roared past" Mexico's Pacific coast today as a dangerous Category 3 storm, pummeling beach resorts with heavy rain and winds and threatening

flash flooding and mudslides. Residents of the busy port of Manzanillo boarded up doors and windows, and those living by hills were moved to emergency shelters as authorities warned the town would be buffeted by big sea swells and strong winds overnight. The federal government extended a hurricane warning from the southern steel-making port of Lazaro Cardenas up the Pacific coast to the tip of the Baja California Peninsula. Hotels said the few tourists in the town had left early, and others had cancelled bookings. "John" was moving slowly northwest parallel to the coast about 65 miles southwest of Manzanillo. It was about 375 miles south of the tip of Baja California. Earlier today the busy tourist resort of Acapulco had sea surges of up to 10 feet. Seafront roads were ankle-deep in water and people struggled to stay on their feet in 135 mph winds that knocked down trees. All the way up the coast emergency workers were on alert for mudslides and flash floods. Fears grew that "John" could make a direct hit later this week in Baja California. At 2200 hrs (0300, UTC, Aug 31) the Miami-based National Hurricane Centre downgraded "John" one mark to a Category 3 storm but warned that heavy rainfall could cause "life-threatening flash floods" and mud slides in mountainous areas. It said that on its current track, "John" was moving west-northwest and would remain off the coast, but said a small deviation in its path could bring it onshore. "Although the centre of "John" is forecast to remain offshore, winds to hurricane force are expected within the hurricane warning area," it added. — Reuters.

INDIA

London, Aug 27 — A press report, dated today, states: The death toll from monsoon-driven floods in India's northern desert state of Rajasthan topped 100 today even as scores were feared drowned in the swirling floodwaters, local media reported. At least 103 people were killed in incidents of drowning and houses collapsing since Aug 23 when heavy rains started lashing 12 of the state's 32 districts. A majority of the deaths were reported from the state's southern Barmer district, where five villages, Kawas, Malwa, Badka, Batadu and Chokla were submerged under 20 feet of water. Federal Ministers including Junior Home Minister Sriprakash Jaiswal who visited the flood-hit areas described the situation as 'very critical' and estimated that between 150 to 300 people could have died in the heavy rains. The state government, however, confirmed 93 deaths till so far. However, media outlets estimated that the death toll would rise further as Navy divers were searching for more bodies in the inundated towns and villages. The floods caused extensive damage to property and crops in the region that usually struggles with drought every summer. The Indian Army which was

called in for aiding relief operations, used boats and helicopters to evacuate and rescue people whose homes were devastated by the floods. According to state officials, over 130 people have been killed in Rajasthan since heavy rains first hit the state on Aug 18. In all, more than 910 people have died in 15 of India's 28 states and seven federally administered territories in the monsoon season.

SOMALIA

London, Aug 30 — A press report, dated Aug 29, states: Heavy rain has caused severe floods in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, weeks after the worst droughts in decades. Two children are reported to have died and hundreds of people have seen their their makeshift homes washed away. Many of those affected by the flooding are people who sought refuge in the capital during the drought and recent fighting further north. Large areas in the south and centre of the country are being battered by torrential rain. More than 2,000 people have either had their homes destroyed or been forced to abandon them, according to estimates. Public transport came to a halt in parts of the capital. The Islamic courts that have controlled Mogadishu since June this year reportedly appealed for assistance. Years of neglect of infrastructure - including stormwater drains - have been blamed for worsening the effects of the heavy rain.

NEPAL

London, Aug 27 — A press report, dated today, states: At least five persons were killed and over 100 were missing today when floods ravaged the Banke and Bardiya districts in western Nepal, officials said. The floods in the Rapti River triggered by two days of incessant rains inundated many low-lying areas of the two districts located about 400 km west of the capital Kathmandu. The police office in the Banke district said rescue efforts were continuing and that the army, police and Nepal Red Cross were involved in the rescue operations. Local media reports said the floods rendered thousands homeless in the two districts and many people sought safety by climbing trees. The media reports also said that the floods cut off all forms of communications with several villages and the fate of the people there was still unknown. The affected areas are located in the plains of Nepal and are near the border with India. The state radio said hundreds of houses were damaged by the floods and the people were leaving their houses to seek safety. The floods also cut off road links in far west Nepal, according to media reports. Today's damage came after 10 members of a family were killed and four injured in a landslide caused by heavy rains in the Baitadi district, 560 km west of Kathmandu, yesterday.

London, Aug 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Mudslides and flooding caused by monsoons across western Nepal killed at least 22

people, left scores missing and displaced thousands of villagers, officials said today. Eight bodies were recovered from the mountainside village of Khaptad, 345 miles west of the capital, Katmandu, Brig. Gen. Dipak Gurung said today. The slide came down Sunday (Aug 27), destroying 80 houses and leaving dozens missing. A second mudslide last night in the village of Lete, about 250 miles west of Katmandu, killed at least nine people, said Ghanashyam Gautam, a government administrator in the area. Nine road construction workers were asleep in a tent when boulders and mud crushed them, Gautam said. Lower down in the plains, 10 villages were submerged when the Rapti River flooded, killing five people. By yesterday at least 63 people were still missing, a Home Ministry statement said. Several thousand people were rescued, the statement said.

TROPICAL CYCLONE "JIM"

London, Aug 25 — Understand passenger (cruise) *Ramos III* is still on the Ranadi beachfront.

TROPICAL STORM "DEBBY"

London, Aug 25 — Following received from the Meteorological Office: Tropical storm "Debby": Storm centre located near lat 22.9N, long 42.3W, at 0900, UTC, Aug 25. Position accurate to within 30 nautical miles. Present movement towards the west-north-west, or 300 deg, at 15 knots. Maximum sustained winds 45 knots with gusts to 55 knots. Radius of 34-knot winds 45 nautical miles north semicircle, 20 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 12-foot seas 120 nautical miles. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Aug 26: Position lat 25.8N, long 47.3W. Maximum sustained winds 45 knots with gusts to 55 knots. Radius of 34-knot winds 45 nautical miles north semicircle, 20 nautical miles elsewhere.

London, Aug 26 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of tropical depression "Debby" was located near lat 25.3N, long 46.7W, or about 1,450 miles west-southwest of the Azores. The depression is moving toward the west-northwest near 13 mph. A turn to the north-west is expected later today. The minimum central pressure is 1009 mb. Maximum sustained winds 35 knots with gusts to 55 knots.

London, Aug 27 — A press report, dated Aug 26, states: Former Tropical Storm "Debby", now a depression with maximum winds of 30 mph, was expected to stay over the open Atlantic, posing only a threat to ships. At 1700 hrs, the centre of the storm was about 1,410 miles west-southwest of the Azores.

London, Aug 27 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of tropical depression "Debby" was located near lat 28.6N, long 49.3W, approximately 1435 nautical miles west-south-west

of the Azores. The depression is moving toward the northwest near 13 mph and a turn toward the north is expected today. The estimated minimum central pressure is 1012 mb. Present wind distribution: Maximum sustained winds 30 mph, with higher gusts. Little change in strength is forecast during the next 24 hours and "Debby" could lose tropical characteristics today.

TROPICAL STORM "ERNESTO"

San, Juan, Puerto Rico, Aug 26 — Tropical storm Ernesto formed yesterday over the Caribbean, as it moved toward Jamaica and the Cayman Islands and could develop into the first hurricane of the 2006 Atlantic season, the U.S. National Hurricane Centre said. "Ernesto" is projected to reach hurricane strength early next week and enter the Gulf of Mexico on Tuesday (Aug 29) or Wednesday (Aug 30), but it is too soon to predict whether it will hit the U.S., said Robbie Berg, a forecaster with the hurricane centre in Miami. "At this early stage, the message we want to send to people is not to panic but to watch it," said Jamie Rhome, another specialist at the hurricane centre. Jamaica, which stands straight in the storm's path, issued a tropical storm watch and Haiti issued a tropical storm watch for its southern coast. The storm was on a course that would bring it over Jamaica tomorrow afternoon. The Cayman Islands government urged residents to pay close attention to the storm's track. Fears the storm could damage offshore energy facilities in the Gulf of Mexico sent oil and natural gas prices higher. Oil producers said they are prepared to evacuate non-essential staff if needed. — Reuters.

London, Aug 26 — Following received from the Meteorological Office: Tropical storm "Ernesto": A tropical storm warning is in effect for the south coast of Hispaniola from the Haiti-Dominican Republic border westward to the southwestern tip of Haiti. A tropical storm watch is in effect for Jamaica. At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of tropical storm "Ernesto" was located near lat 14.8N, long 70.2W. The position is accurate to within 30 nautical miles. The present movement is towards the west-northwest, or 285 deg, at 14 knots. The estimated central pressure is 999 mb. Maximum sustained winds: 40 knots with gusts to 50 knots. Radius of 34-knot winds: 100 nautical miles in the north-east quadrant and zero nautical miles in the other three quadrants. At 0600, UTC, Aug 27 the centre is predicted to be near lat 16.6N, long 74.8W, with maximum sustained winds of 55 knots and gusts to 65 knots.

London, Aug 27 — A press report, dated Aug 26, states: Tropical storm "Ernesto" gathered strength as it moved through the central Caribbean toward Jamaica today and threatened to enter the Gulf of Mexico as the first hurricane of the 2006 Atlantic season. "Ernesto" could grow into a Category

3 hurricane by Thursday (Aug 31), menacing a broad swath of the Gulf Coast, the U.S. National Hurricane Centre in Miami forecast. "It looks likely that it will hit (the U.S.), but it's way too soon to say where" or how much impact it would have, said John Cangialosi, a meteorologist with the hurricane centre. Standing in the hurricane's path, Jamaica, the Cayman Islands and Cuba issued hurricane watches as the storm's winds grew to near 60 mph late today. It was forecast to become a hurricane as early tomorrow evening while it passes near Jamaica, Cangialosi said. "Ernesto"'s course would bring it over Jamaica by tomorrow afternoon, dropping four to eight inches of rain on the island with up to a foot possible in some areas, the hurricane centre said. Fishermen were warned to return to shore - with tides of up to three feet above normal expected. Similar rainfall and tides were possible for Haiti. Jamaica's Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller put the country's security forces on alert and said at a press conference today that all the island's shelters were open. Jamaica issued advisories by radio and television for residents in low-lying areas across the island to be prepared to evacuate if necessary. The fifth named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season was centered about 125 miles southwest of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. It was moving west-northwest at about 14 mph. Heavy showers hit Kingston this afternoon, causing traffic jams as motorists tried to stores and people waited in long lines at supermarkets. Despite sunny skies in the British territory of the Caymans, people packed gas stations, hardware stores and supermarkets, and formed big lines to withdraw money from cash machines. Businesses also boarded up. In Haiti, emergency officials went on local radio to warn people living in flimsy shantytowns on the southern coast to seek shelter in schools and churches. The hurricane centre said Haiti and the Dominican Republic could get up to 20 inches of rain in some places - which could cause life-threatening flash floods and mud slides. The impoverished nation is 90 percent deforested, increasing vulnerability to deadly flooding and mudslides. Fears that the storm could damage offshore energy facilities in the Gulf of Mexico sent oil and natural gas prices higher. BP PLC said it would evacuate some 800 of its 2,400 workers from the Gulf of Mexico by late today due to the storm. The evacuated workers are not essential staff, most associated with long-term projects that have not begun producing, BP spokesman Hugh DePland told Dow Jones Newswires.

London, Aug 27 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: The latest recon data indicates that tropical storm "Ernesto" is undergoing rapid intensification. An eye is forming and maximum 850 mb flight-level winds of 78 knots were recently observed in

the northeast quadrant, which equals about 62 knot surface winds, so "Ernesto" is very near hurricane strength. The eye is so small, however, that the flight crew have been unable to properly assess the minimum surface pressure. The satellite appearance has become quite impressive with little or no vertical shear noted on the system now and cirrus outflow expanding outward in all quadrants. A hurricane warning has been issued for southwestern Haiti. At 0900, UTC, today, the centre was located near lat 17.0N, long 73.1W, with sustained winds of 60 knots. At 0600, UTC, Aug 28, the centre is predicted to be near lat 19.3N, long 76.3W, with sustained winds of 85 knots.

Havana, Aug 28 - Tropical Storm "Ernesto" drenched south-eastern Cuba today and stayed on a path toward the Florida Straits, where it could regain hurricane strength and hit Florida's most populous region. "Ernesto", which briefly became the Atlantic season's first hurricane yesterday, killed two people in impoverished Haiti. It then faded to a mass of thunderstorms with 40 mph winds as it moved over Cuba. Forecasters said it still could be a Category 1 hurricane by the time it neared the Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach area. The U.S. National Hurricane Center said "Ernesto" made landfall earlier today near the south-east Cuban town of Guantanamo. It brought more than 6 inches of rain in eight hours as it moved inland but few wind gusts. Cuba had evacuated more than 600,000 people, many in buses and trucks. Cattle and crops were protected and domestic flights to eastern Cuba suspended. Ernesto's center was 15 miles east-southeast of Holguin, Cuba, at 2 p.m. EDT (1800 GMT), and moving northwest at 10 mph, the Miami-based hurricane center said. It was expected to regain 80 mph winds after moving off the northern Cuban coast. "It's really uncertain how well organized the system is going to be and how strong it's going to be," hurricane forecaster Richard Knabb said. "Ernesto" was downgraded to a tropical storm after pounding Haiti, where it killed at least two people, one of them near Gonaives. — Reuters.

Miami, Aug 29 — Tropical storm "Ernesto" began intensifying today as it left Cuba and headed over open water towards south Florida where forecasters said there was a chance it could come ashore at hurricane strength. A state of emergency was in effect in Florida as the storm approached. Residents stocked up on supplies, tourists were ordered out of the Florida Keys and courts and schools were closed. At 0500 hrs (0900, UTC), the storm's maximum sustained winds had strengthened to 45 mph over the warm waters of the Florida Straits from 40 mph several hours earlier when it was still over Cuba. The US National Hurricane Centre said "Ernesto" was expected to come ashore along the middle to

upper Florida Keys and heavily populated south Florida in 18-24 hours. "Now that 'Ernesto' has moved back over water at least some steady intensification is expected," the hurricane centre said, adding there was a chance the storm "could become a hurricane before reaching Florida." It added "Ernesto" could later re-emerge over the Atlantic off north-east Florida and make a second landfall near the South Carolina/North Carolina coasts in 60-72 hours, also near hurricane intensity. The storm was briefly the year's first hurricane on Sunday (Aug 27) when its top winds reached 75 mph before it weakened over the mountains of Haiti. The storm killed two people in Haiti before striking Cuba, where it dropped up to seven inches of rain before fading into showers and thunderstorms. Forecasters said the storm could dump five to 10 inches of rain over parts of east and south Florida and the Keys through tomorrow. The storm made landfall in Cuba earlier yesterday near Guantanamo Bay. Many of the 600,000 Cubans who were evacuated returned home after the storm passed and there were no initial reports of deaths or serious damage. At 0500 hrs, the centre of Ernesto was 230 miles south-east of Key West and about 235 miles south-south-east of Miami. The storm was moving north-west at 14 mph, the hurricane centre said. — Reuters.

London, Aug 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Tropical Storm "Ernesto" confounded forecasters by "coming ashore" in South Florida early today without the hurricane-strength winds that had once been feared. "Ernesto" lost much of its punch crossing mountainous eastern Cuba. It made landfall late yesterday on Plantation Key with 45-mph winds, far from the 74-mph threshold for a hurricane that "Ernesto" briefly met Sunday (Aug 27). Forecasters said "Ernesto" could weaken to a tropical depression later today, but rainbands could drop as much as 10 inches of rain in some parts along Florida's east coast. "Ernesto" was forecast to move up the middle of Florida and exit on the northeast coast by early tomorrow before hitting the mainland again in Georgia or the Carolinas. "How much strengthening occurs after "Ernesto" emerges into the Atlantic depends on how much of a cyclone is left," said senior hurricane specialist James Franklin. A tropical storm warning was in effect from Bonita Beach, on Florida's west coast, around the peninsula and Keys and up the entire eastern length of Florida to Altamaha Sound, Ga., about halfway up that state's coast. A hurricane watch was in effect from the Savannah River, Ga., northward to Cape Fear, N.C. At 0500 hrs, the centre of the storm was about 45 miles west-southwest of Miami and moving north-northwest near 8 mph. "Ernesto" still had top sustained winds of 45 mph. Accidents on rain-slickened expressways killed at least

two people in Florida yesterday. A Miami woman died after the car in which she was riding hydroplaned and struck a palm tree, and a motorcyclist was killed near Boca Raton after losing control and being struck by two other vehicles.

London, Aug 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Tropical Storm "Ernesto" may weaken to a depression while crossing the Florida peninsula today before hitting the open waters of the Atlantic, where it will get stronger as it heads for the Carolinas. The center was over eastern Collier County, about 50 miles east-southeast of Naples as of 0800 hrs, the National Hurricane Centre said. The system was moving north at about eight miles per hour, the Centre said. The storm crossed Florida's Upper Keys before coming ashore in southwestern Miami-Dade County before 0200, local time. As much as 10 inches of rain is possible today near the track of the storm, and rain could reach as far north as Delaware by tomorrow, the Centre said. South Carolina officials began mobilising National Guard members to be ready to help with any storm damage, as flooding will be a concern in the state, as well as in North Carolina and Georgia. A hurricane watch issued yesterday along the coast of Georgia was downgraded to a tropical-storm warning, the center said. That warning was in place from north of Altamaha Sound to south of the Savannah River. A hurricane watch remained in place from the river northward to Cape Fear, North Carolina. Tropical storm warnings remain in place for parts of Florida. About 250 members of the National Guard in South Carolina were mobilised yesterday to respond to possible damage along the coast, according to Adam Myrick of the South Carolina Emergency Operations Centre in Columbia, the state capital.

Raleigh, N.C., Aug 30 — North and South Carolina readied hundreds of National Guardsmen as the rainy remnants of Tropical Storm "Ernesto" approached, prompting fears of severe flooding. Forecasters said "Ernesto" could drench the eastern half of North Carolina with as much as seven inches of rain tomorrow and Friday (Sep 1). A separate storm system arriving ahead of "Ernesto" also threatened to soak the region. "Ernesto" weakened to a tropical depression while crawling north through Florida. Its winds were less a concern to emergency officials than the prospect of downpours. "Ernesto" moved off the Florida coast late today and could regain tropical storm strength. Forecasters predicted the storm's centre would be near the South Carolina coast late tomorrow. From there, it was forecast to cut across the state's easternmost corner, then move into central North Carolina. A tropical storm warning remained in effect from Cocoa Beach, Fla., to the Wilmington area of southeastern North Carolina. North Carolina Gov. Mike Easley activated

150 National Guardsmen and ordered the State Emergency Response Team to prepare for flooding and power outages. Guard troops in South Carolina were on standby, Lt. Col. Pete Brooks said. At about 2300 hrs, "Ernesto" was centered just north of Cape Canaveral, Fla., moving north at near 14 mph. The depression had winds near 35 mph, or about four mph below tropical storm strength. As the storm passed over the Kennedy Space Center this evening, NASA reported no problems. The storm initially prompted NASA to start moving the space shuttle to its assembly building for protection, but the agency later reversed course and sent it back to the launch pad. Little storm damage was reported in Florida, where "Ernesto" came ashore yesterday night with a lot of rain but winds of only 45 mph. — Reuters.

London, Aug 31 — Following received from Meteorological Office, dated today, states: Tropical storm "Ernesto" centre located near lat 30.0N, long 80.2W at 0900, UTC, today. Position accurate within 15 nautical miles. Present movement toward the north or 10 degrees at 13 knots. Estimated minimum central pressure 998 MB. Maximum sustained winds 45 knots with gusts to 55 knots. Forecast position lat 32.1N, long 79.5W at 1800, UTC, Aug 31. Maximum wind 50 knots, gusts 60 knots. Forecast position lat 34.6N, long 78.6W at 0600, Sep 1.

TROPICAL STORM "ERNESTO".

London, Aug 28 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Position at 0900, UTC, Aug 28: Lat 19.6N, long 75.4W. Satellite imagery indicates a convective bursting pattern has developed over the centre of tropical storm "Ernesto". Reconnaissance aircraft investing the cyclone has measured a central pressure of 1004 mb, but with surface winds of 35 knots, therefore the central pressure is conservatively estimated at 1002 mb. Maximum 850 mb flight-level winds have been 48 knots so far. Initial motion is estimated at 325deg. Radar data from Cuba also indicates that the convection has become more consolidated, so a more general north-westward motion should become established shortly. The National Hurricane Center model guidance has come into better agreement on a possible landfall along the southern peninsula of Florida in about 48 hours. Forecast for 1800, UTC, Lat 20.8N, long 76.3W, with maximum winds of 45 knots. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Aug 28: Lat 22.2N, long 78.2W, with maximum winds of 55 knots. Forecast for 1800, UTC, Aug 29: Lat 23.7N, long 80.0W, with maximum winds of 65 knots.

TYPHOON "PRAPIROON"

London, Aug 31 — Bulker *Yong An 4* was reported arriving at Hong Kong at 1412 hrs, Aug 29 (in tow of salvage tug *De Yue*) and today was reported at Yiu Lian Dock in Hong Kong.

Earthquakes



ARGENTINA

London, Aug 25 — A press report, dated Aug 24, states: There was a strong quake in a remote, mountainous area of northern Argentina late yesterday and was felt in northern Chile, but no injuries or serious damages were immediately reported. The 6.4-magnitude quake was centered about 70 miles west of San Salvador de Jujuy, capital of the northernmost Argentine province of Jujuy, according to the U.S. Geological Survey in Golden, Colo., which monitor seismic activity worldwide. It said the quake occurred at 2144 hrs, and the epicentre zone was about 850 miles northwest of Buenos Aires and near the mountainous border with northern Chile. There were no immediate reports of injuries or damages reported by emergency services in either country. Chile's government-run National Emergency Bureau told The Associated Press the quake was felt across three northern regions, including such cities as Antofagasta, Calama, Iquique, Calama and Copiapo.

CHINA

London, Aug 25 — A press report, dated today, states: A moderate earthquake jolted south-west China today, killing two people and destroying homes in an area still recovering from damage caused by a temblor last month, the official Xinhua News Agency said. The magnitude-5.1 quake struck Yanjin county in Yunnan province shortly before 1400 hrs, Xinhua said. "The quake was strongly felt," Cheng Lianyuan, a local official, was quoted as saying. "Some big rocks from the mountains rolled down and destroyed many parts of the road." Provincial officials and earthquake experts have been dispatched to Yanjin to direct relief efforts, the report said. Some 400 tents were being sent to the quake zone, the agency said, citing Yin Liyuan, vice director of the Yunnan Civil Affairs Bureau. Chen Tieniu, deputy director of Yunnan's seismological bureau, said one person died in the town of Zonghe after being hit by falling rocks. He said another 11 people in the town were injured. Several houses in the nearby town of Dousha also collapsed, he said. Tremors could be felt in towns 25 miles away and even in Chengdu, the capital of neighbouring Sichuan province, it said.

INDONESIA

London, Aug 26 — A press report, dated today, states: A moderate undersea earthquake struck off Indonesia's Java island today, but there were no reports of damage or

casualties. The 5.8-magnitude quake was centered beneath the Indian Ocean about 990 kilometres south of capital Jakarta, according to local meteorological and geophysics agency.

London, Aug 29 — A moderate earthquake rocked parts of southeastern Indonesia today. There were no immediate reports of damage or casualties, and experts said there was no risk of a tsunami. The U.S. Geological Survey in Denver said it was a 5.8 magnitude quake. Indonesia's Meteorology and Geophysics Agency said it was a 6.4 magnitude quake. The earthquake was centred 20 miles beneath the Arafura Sea, about 90 miles south-west of Tual, the agency said.

Jakarta, Aug 31 — A 6.0 magnitude undersea earthquake shook northern parts of Sulawesi island today, but there was no risk of a tsunami, the country's meteorology agency said. The quake struck at 0808, GMT, and was centred 180 km south-east of Manado, the capital of North Sulawesi province, said Yuli Fitria, an official at the Meteorology and Geophysics Agency. It was at a depth of 78 km. — Reuters.

TAIWAN

London, Aug 29 — A press report, dated today, states: A strong earthquake struck off Taiwan's east coast yesterday, the Central Weather Bureau said. No damage or injuries were immediately reported. The magnitude-6.1 quake was centred under the Pacific Ocean 80 miles east of Suao in northeastern Taiwan, the weather bureau said. Suao is a coastal city about 75 miles south-east of the capital of Taipei. The quake, which struck before dawn, was felt across the island but did not appear to cause major damage because of its distance, the bureau said.



AFGHANISTAN

Kabul, Aug 26 — Two French soldiers have been killed in an ambush in Afghanistan, the French Defense Ministry said today. A ministry official said the soldiers were on patrol with special forces when a bomb exploded and "extremists" opened fire with light weapons. The ambush took place 38 km from Mihtarlam, capital of the eastern province of Laghman. The U.S.-led coalition initially said the two were killed today, but a force spokesman later said it had happened yesterday. Two other French soldiers from the force were wounded. They were in stable condition. — Reuters.

Kabul, Aug 27 — A British soldier was killed in an insurgent attack in Afghanistan today, the British Defense Ministry said. "The Ministry of Defense can confirm the death of a British soldier during contact with

insurgent forces in northern Helmand," a ministry spokeswoman said in London, referring to the southern province of Helmand. Separately, six Afghan government troops and a NATO soldier were wounded in a mortar attack on their base in southern Kandahar province, NATO said. In neighbouring Zabul province, heavy fighting between Taliban and Afghan and foreign forces erupted on the main highway to the capital, Kabul, witnesses said. There was no word on casualties. — Reuters.

Kabul, Aug 29 — At least one Afghan civilian was killed in a suicide bomb attack on a NATO convoy in the country's volatile south today, the latest incident in the worst upsurge of violence since the Taliban were ousted five years ago. Police said the car bomber attacked the convoy between Kandahar airport, a major foreign military base, and the city. At least three civilians were wounded. In Kabul, a roadside bomb exploded early today as a French military patrol passed, but there were no casualties, police said. The latest attacks came a day after a suicide bomber killed at least 17 civilians, including several children, in a crowded bazaar in the southern province of Helmand, neighboring Kandahar and Afghanistan's main drug growing area. The violence is a mix of opposition to Afghan authorities and foreign forces, the drugs trade, tribe wars and crime. NATO said in a statement today one of its soldiers had been killed in a gunbattle with suspected insurgents in Helmand on Sunday (Aug 27) morning. It did not give the victim's nationality. — Reuters.

BANGLADESH

Dhaka, Aug 27 — A half-day general strike paralysed part of Bangladesh's northern region today after six people died, apparently shot by security forces, during violent protests the previous day over a coal mine planned by a British company. Officials and witnesses said more than 100 people were also wounded during clashes lasting several hours yesterday, when police and paramilitary troops fired hundreds of gun shots and at least 50 teargas shells to disperse about 20,000 demonstrators. The protesters had laid siege to the offices of Asia Energy Plc at Phulbari, where the mine is being developed, demanding its immediate closure. Police said the violence had erupted when the protesters, some armed with bows and arrows, tried to storm the office. The Communist Party of Bangladesh, which backs the protesters, said eight people had been killed and local media said seven. At least 60 people, including eight policemen, were reported to have been treated in hospital. Asia Energy wants to develop open pit mining at Phulbari in Dinajpur district, 350 km northwest of the capital, Dhaka, but local residents and rights groups have objected, saying the mine would displace hundreds of families and damage the environment. Following yesterday's fatal clashes, they called

for a half-day strike in districts of Dinajpur, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh, with a full-day shutdown at Phulbari. As tension continued to build, the authorities imposed a ban on rallies and protests at the mine site, but police said they feared protesters would defy it. Gary Lye, chief executive of Asia Energy Corporation (Bangladesh) Pty Ltd, issued a statement yesterday denying the Phulbari project would harm the environment and saying it would benefit local people. In another statement today, Lye said that Asia Energy deeply regretted what had happened and sent its sympathies to the families of the dead and injured. — Reuters.

London, Aug 30 — A press report, dated today, states: A strike paralysed Bangladesh as a police officer was killed amid new violent protests over the shooting deaths of five demonstrators against a British firm's plan to construct a coal mine. Shops, schools and businesses in all major towns and cities were closed for the strike called by the main opposition to protest the Asia Energy Plc project north of the capital. In Dhaka, activists hurled rocks and clashed with security forces, after 10,000 police and paramilitary officers fanned out across the city to try to contain the situation. More than 3,000 protestors took to the streets in the northern town of Phulbari where Asia Energy plans to invest 1.4 billion dollars to build the open-pit mine. Plans to construct the mine, some 350 kilometres north of Dhaka, have stirred huge protests by farmers and locals who say it will damage the environment and displace over 100,000 people. Awami League, a 14-party opposition alliance that called the strike, accused security forces of being "trigger happy". Asia Energy says 40,000 people will be displaced over three decades and says those affected would get compensation and help to resume their livelihoods elsewhere. In Bangladesh's second city of Chittagong, police said they deployed 4,000 officers in case of protests. No violence was reported but deliveries at the main port were suspended. Asia Energy said today it would continue to develop the mine although it had "temporarily suspended its field operations in and around Phulbari."

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

London, Aug 24 — Twenty-three people were killed in clashes this week between forces loyal to outgoing Democratic Republic of Congo President Joseph Kabila and his election challenger, Interior Minister Theophile Mbemba Fundu said today. "The toll at the moment indicates 23 deaths and 43 persons injured during the events," Mr Mbemba said on UN-sponsored Okapi radio. He said 12 police officers were among those who had died in the fighting between pro-Kabila forces and those loyal to Jean-Pierre Bemba, the runner-up

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according to official results in the first round of presidential elections last month.

London, Aug 25 — A press report, dated today, states: The number of ship calls at the DRC port of Boma is to be restricted until such time as port congestion has begun to lift. According to the West African shipping operator OTAL a restriction has also been placed on the number of containers that may be discharged at the port for the same reason. The congestion is in part a result of the political unrest facing the country which is in the midst of electing a new president. With unrest rampant in Kinshasa in recent days (an uneasy truce is now in force and holding) this has impacted severely on cargo working between Kinshasa and other centres, notably the two coastal ports. With the next round of elections taking place on Oct 29 delays with cargo working are possible for some time.

IRAQ

Baghdad, Aug 27 — A car bomb blasted a state-run newspaper today as police reported finding 20 bodies in Baghdad, one day after Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki again called on ethnically and religiously divided Iraqis to unite. A bomb on a minibus killed nine people in central Baghdad, sending clouds of thick smoke billowing into the sky, while a bomb planted inside a food market in a town north of Baghdad killed at least five and wounded 15, police said. The blasts occurred despite a major security operation by thousands of American and Iraqi troops to restore order to the capital, where sectarian and Sunni insurgent violence claimed the lives of more than 3,000 Iraqis in July alone. Police said 20 bodies had been found in various districts of Baghdad on Saturday. Some bore signs of torture and most had been killed by gunshots to the head. Maliki, whose government has struggled to contain the bloodshed, called on tribal leaders gathered in the capital yesterday to use their influence to unite "Iraq's sons" to end violence that has raised fears of all-out civil war. The meeting gave their support for Maliki's national unity plan and pledged to use their authority to end the bloodletting, but it is unclear how effective they can be among Iraqis increasingly turning to religious leaders for guidance. Crucially no major Sunni rebel group has signed up to the plan and Maliki has said he will not offer amnesty to anyone with Iraqi blood on their hands. The car bomb exploded in the parking lot of al-Sabah daily in Baghdad's Waziriya district, killing a guard and another employee, wounding 18 and causing extensive damage to the building. The blast demolished the facade of the newspaper's production department. Two cars were blown through one wall by the force of the huge explosion, which left a score of vehicles crumpled, blackened wrecks. Meanwhile, an Iraqi MP kidnapped nearly two months ago has been freed,

officials and state television reported yesterday. Tayseer al-Mashhadani, a member of the Sunni National Concord Front, was seized in Baghdad on July 1. Ms Mashhadani said her captors had treated her well, AP news agency said. Seven of Ms Mashhadani's bodyguards were seized with her. Two had already been freed, but there was no immediate word on the fate of the others. Iraqi television said her release came after direct intervention by the government. — Reuters.

London, Aug 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Calm returned to a southern Iraqi city today after Shiite militiamen loyal to an anti-US cleric reached an agreement with Iraqi government forces to end a 12-hour street battle that killed 40 people. Also today, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, a key architect of US policy on the treatment of prisoners and the rule of law in Iraq, arrived in Baghdad. Gonzales, a former White House counsel, was holding meetings in the heavily fortified Green Zone, which houses Iraq's government and the US Embassy, US Embassy spokeswoman Elizabeth Colton said. Meetings would include Deputy Prime Minister Barham Saleh and US Justice Department officials working in Iraq. Meanwhile, Iraqi police found the bullet-riddled bodies of 11 people with their hands and legs bound, police 1st Lt. Mutaz Salahiddin said. He said they were found near a school in the Shiite-dominated southern neighbourhood of Maalif and appeared to have been tortured. In yesterday's fighting in Diwaniyah, 80 miles south of Baghdad, at least 25 Iraqi soldiers, 10 civilians and five militiamen were killed and 75 people were wounded. The fighting was some of the worst in recent months between the Iraqi army and Shiite militiamen loyal to the firebrand cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. "Life is back to normal, the shops are open and Iraqi police and soldiers are deployed everywhere in Diwaniyah," said police Lt Raid Jabir. Leaders of the tribes to which the dead combatants belonged held reconciliation talks today to prevent retaliatory attacks, Jabir said. The violence ended yesterday afternoon after the provincial governor, accompanied by eight provincial council members, travelled to the holy city of Najaf, west of Diwaniyah, to meet with al-Sadr. Officials said the parties reached an agreement to restore security to the province. In the town of Baqouba, 35 miles north-east of Baghdad, three mortars, two rocket-propelled grenades and a bomb exploded at an al-Sadr office almost simultaneously, killing two guards and destroying the building, the Diyala Province police in the city said. Baqouba is ethnically mixed but with a majority of Sunnis. It was not immediately clear whether the violence was connected to that in Diwaniyah. The fighting occurred as at least 19 people died in two suicide car bombings in Baghdad yesterday, one outside the Interior Ministry and

one on a line of cars waiting for fuel at a gas station. Meanwhile, the US military said today that nine US soldiers were killed on Sunday (Aug 27), eight of them in and around Baghdad and one in fighting in Anbar province west of Baghdad. A 10th soldier died yesterday of wounds sustained in a vehicle accident in Balad north of Baghdad.

London, Aug 30 — A press report, dated today, states: A bomb exploded at a busy Baghdad market at about 1000 hrs (0600, UTC), police said, killing 24 people and injuring more than 35, Iraqi police say. Witnesses said body parts and debris were strewn across the Shurja market, a scene of frequent attacks. Also today, a petrol station in the capital was bombed, leaving at least two people dead. Just hours earlier, at about 0800 hrs (0400, UTC), a crowd had gathered outside an army recruitment centre in Hilla when a bomb exploded, killing 12 people. A police spokesman said it was believed the bomb was attached to a bicycle or motorcycle.

ISRAEL-LEBANON

London, Aug 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Israeli aircraft attacked two buildings in the Gaza Strip early today, wounding at least nine people, Palestinian officials said. The first airstrike targeted the home of a local militant leader in the northern town of Jabaliya. Relatives of Salim Thabet, an activist of the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades in the northern town of Jabaliya, said the army told him to evacuate the home about 15 minutes before the airstrike. The relatives said they were told to remain out of the area because more attacks were possible. The second airstrike hit a two-story home in Gaza City, setting it on fire and causing heavy damage. Several nearby homes were damaged, and four people were moderately wounded, officials said. Security officials said one missile fired at the home did not explode, and a bomb squad was called in to dismantle it. The army said both airstrikes had targeted weapons-storage facilities, and that it warned occupants to leave the areas before the attacks. The army, which carried out similar attacks earlier this week, says the warnings are meant to avoid civilian casualties.

Naqoura, Aug 25 — Around 150 French soldiers arrived in Lebanon by ship today, the second contingent to join a U.N. peacekeeping force that is being increased to maintain a truce between Israel and Hizbollah guerrillas. The troops are part of France's initial pledge of 200 soldiers to join UNIFIL, but French President Jacques Chirac yesterday boosted his country's offer by 1,600 more troops. Around 50 French troops arrived last week, also at the southern port of Naqoura, to join the force. European Union foreign ministers will hold emergency talks today on troop contributions amid growing pressure on their countries to raise commitments. The United Nations is

trying to boost UNIFIL, which now comprises about 2,000 troops, to 15,000 who will help the Lebanese army assert its authority in southern Lebanon. U.N. officials say the force is urgently needed to preserve the truce which came into effect on August 14. They want an advance contingent of around 3,500 soldiers in place in early September but have had difficulty attracting contributors with some countries seeking more clarification on the force's mandate. France had disappointed its allies by offering 200 troops initially but said it would increase its deployment after winning assurances that they would be able to defend themselves robustly. Italy has offered up to 3,000 troops. Both Italy and France have offered to lead the force. — Reuters.

Beirut, Aug 26 — A local press release, dated today, states: "European nations pledged up to 7,000 troops yesterday to an expanded peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, as Israel said that only nations that have diplomatic ties with it should be allowed to contribute to the force. Meanwhile, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said yesterday that Syria was sending signals which were unhelpful in resolving the conflict between Israel and Hizbullah. The EU pledges account for more than half the extra soldiers needed to bring the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) up to a maximum mandated strength of 15,000, from its current count 2,000. UN chief Kofi Annan, speaking after an emergency meeting of the 25 European Union states in Brussels, hailed the conference "a success." "We may have a unique opportunity to transform the cessation of hostilities into a durable cease-fire," he added. He said he had "firm commitments" for troops from Malaysia, Indonesia and Bangladesh - all Muslim countries that do not have ties with Israel. "The Israeli position has been communicated to the UN that we believe that countries being part of the international force should be countries that have diplomatic relations with Israel," Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Mark Regev said. French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy stressed the importance of enlisting Muslim countries into the force. He also said Annan had given guarantees for the safety of European troops and on rules of engagement, and that France wanted an arms-free "exclusion zone" in Southern Lebanon. Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Douste-Blazy said: "We think the best solution for disarming Hizbullah is to make an exclusion zone with the retreat of the Israeli Army on one side and the deployment of the Lebanese Army on the other, reinforced by the UN troops." But he added that military force was not the answer. "The only solution is to have a political solution." Annan said he asked France to lead the force until February 2007. The command of the troops will be reviewed in six months. Diplomats said Italy would take over in February. Permanent Security

Council members will also send troops to participate in the force. Annan said he hoped the force would be able to deploy in days, not weeks. The UN chief is expected in Lebanon today, in a major Middle East tour that will include stops in Israel, Qatar, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, and also likely Syria and Iran. In Lebanon, Annan is expected to discuss Hizbullah's disarmament and the disputed Shebaa Farms with Lebanese officials. According to a diplomatic source, Annan will ask the Lebanese officials not to use the farms as a bargaining ship in return for Hizbullah's disarmament. Annan said Shebaa should not be given as a consolation prize to Hizbullah. Lebanese governmental forces said they expected that with the arrival of the international forces to the South, Annan will work on lifting Israel's air and sea siege. French President Jacques Chirac late Thursday (Aug 24) announced he would send 1,600 more French troops to Lebanon, increasing the total French contingent there to 2,000, but Chirac, speaking yesterday in Paris after meeting Merkel, suggested UNIFIL would operate with far fewer than the 15,000 troops originally sought. "My feeling is that the figure talked about at the start of the debate of 15,000 soldiers for a reinforced UNIFIL was a totally excessive figure," he said. "It doesn't really make sense. So what is the right number, 4,000, 5,000 or 6,000? I don't know," Chirac said. French officials speaking on condition of anonymity have advanced a total force strength of 8,000 to 9,000 troops. Lebanese Premier Fouad Siniora said it "will help speed up the formation of the international force, which along with the Lebanese Army, will protect civilians and achieve security and stability." Chirac said he had swiftly doubled French troops in Lebanon to 400 but would have been attacked as a "mad dog" had he authorized higher numbers without first gaining clear assurances about their mission and right to self-defense. During the news conference, Merkel said that on the long term Syria should be included in any political process to resolve the crisis, while praising the Syrian leadership for issuing "very unconstructive signals." Syria is concerned at the deployment of foreign troops in Lebanon and has cut power supplies to its neighbor and warned it may close the border. Syria threatened a day earlier to close the border if UN troops were sent there. Reports emerged yesterday that the Masnaa checkpoint on the Syrian-Lebanese border had been closed but Lebanon's Interior Ministry denied the claims. Lebanon's Information Minister Ghazi Aridi said Friday that Lebanon is against the deployment of the forces along its border with Syria. "Only the Lebanese Army is in charge of controlling the borders with Syria and it is out of the question to deploy UNIFIL." "These are ideas put forward by Israel and the US. Lebanon does not take orders from anyone,

neither the US, nor Israel, nor Syria, nor Iran," he said. "The Lebanese government only asked for technical assistance to control the border with Syria, and Germany has also offered some help," he said. Belgium and Spain said they will be contributing to the force. Britain's Europe Minister Geoff Hoon said that while his country's military was too stretched to send ground troops, it might supply "specialized" units. — Lloyd's Agents.

Nablus, Aug 26 — Israeli soldiers shot and wounded five Palestinians, including one seriously, during an operation in the West Bank town of Nablus today, Palestinian medics said. Witnesses said soldiers fired on Palestinians throwing stones at them, wounding a 15-year-old boy seriously and four others lightly. They said the protesters threw stones after the army surrounded a building where two wanted militants were believed to be holed up. The Israeli army said it would not comment because the operation had not ended. Israeli troops also detained four Palestinians in the Gaza Strip near the southern town of Rafah, residents said, adding those taken away had not been involved in militancy. An army spokeswoman said two militants from the governing Hamas movement had been detained. Residents said two Palestinians had been wounded by gunfire in that operation. — Reuters.

Gaza, Aug 27 — Israeli forces killed two gunmen overnight in Gaza and wounded seven Palestinians, including two journalists in an air strike on a Reuters vehicle that the army said it failed to identify, residents said today. The army said its incursion into the Shijaiya neighbourhood, a militant stronghold, was aimed at seeking out tunnels and explosives that could be used in attacks. Two gunmen from the governing Hamas Islamist group were killed during the incursion, which began yesterday. The army said that both were targeted in air strikes, one because he was carrying an anti-tank rocket. Among seven Palestinians wounded were two journalists caught in the missile strike on the Reuters vehicle. The Israeli army said the vehicle was hit because it was acting suspiciously in an area of combat and had not been identified as belonging to the media. Army spokeswoman Captain Noa Meir said "This car was not identified by the army as a press vehicle. If journalists were hurt, we regret it." The missile struck the vehicle after dark. The armoured car was clearly labeled as a media vehicle, with signs on all sides, including the roof. — Reuters.

London, Aug 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Two foreign journalists kidnapped in Gaza City have been released after nearly two weeks in captivity. American Steve Centanni and New Zealander Olaf Wiig of US organisation Fox News were dropped off at a Gaza City beach-front hotel. Mr Centanni said they were forced at gunpoint to convert to Islam. They stated their conversion in a video released before they were set

free. The captors had called for the release of "Muslim prisoners" in the US. The US had rejected the demands. The pair were seized from their vehicle near the Palestinian security services' headquarters on August 14, and held by a previously unknown group calling themselves the Holy Jihad Brigades. A deadline set by the kidnappers for their demands to be met expired at midday (0900, UTC) yesterday. Over the past two years, a number of foreigners have been kidnapped in Gaza. All have been freed unharmed. The pair were held longer than any other journalists abducted in the Gaza Strip.

London, Aug 28 — A World Conservation Union mission to Lebanon assessing the environmental impact of the oil spill finds alarming damage to endangered species and fragile coastal ecosystems report, dated Beirut Aug 25, states: Toxic oil covering the sea-bed, black oil-covered beaches where endangered loggerhead turtles nest, dead algae on rocky shores normally feeding fish and other organisms - these are some of the first findings of a mission led by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) to assess the impact of the Lebanese oil spill on species and coastal ecosystems. The oil spill followed the bombing of a power plant south of Beirut in mid July. The IUCN mission found that the coastal and marine environment along the Lebanese shoreline is heavily affected by the oil spill. The mission was called by the Lebanese Ministry of Environment and involved IUCN expert commissions and members. Examinations of mousse slicks and sheen taken from the shoreline north of the Jiyeh power plant have found toxic substances such as poly-nuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH). "This is a particular risk to marine organisms," says Rick Steiner, an oil expert and member of the IUCN Commission on Environmental and Economic Social Policy. Steiner explained that PAHs provoke cancer, they can accumulate in the species' organs and cause long term impacts such as the sudden collapse of fish populations years after contamination. A significant amount of oil was also deposited on rock and pebble shorelines, which are more difficult to clean than sand beaches and will therefore have a more lasting impact on species and ecosystems. Sea-birds and early migrant species such as curlews and plovers contaminated by oil have been observed over the past few weeks. On Palm Islands Nature Reserve, located off the coast of Tripoli, the oil covering its rocky coasts has killed algae and other organisms that fish and turtles feed on. The reserve counts 156 species of birds, including many migratory birds depending on direct contact with the now contaminated water. The reserve's polluted environment is also putting endangered loggerhead turtles at risk. Threats come from the oil film on the water, when they come up to the surface to breathe and from the contaminated beaches where they

nest. Migratory birds are also at risk: having just started their annual migration, many birds pass through the contaminated site, which is one of Lebanon's most important staging areas for migrant birds and protected under the RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands. Rare monk seals, which have been observed in the past in the reserve's waters, might be affected as well. They are listed as critically endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. "Palm Islands Nature Reserve is a micro sample representing the overall situation of the country's marine environment," says Ghassan Jaradi, ornithologist and head of the reserve's management committee. On Palm Islands Nature Reserve, the IUCN mission helped start clean-up operations and biodiversity monitoring, by providing technical advice and locating resources. Around 15,000 tons of fuel oil spilled into the sea following the Israeli bombing of the Jiyeh power plant fuel tanks south of Beirut on July 13 and 15. The spill spread northwards contaminating 150 km of the Lebanese seashore, reaching the southern Syrian coast. Affected areas are around Beirut, Tabarja, the historic town of Byblos, in Anfeh and the Palm Islands Nature Reserve off Tripoli. The ongoing flight embargo prevented the IUCN team from assessing offshore contamination, but judging from information available, there are still large amounts of oil drifting in the sea, on shore, and sinking to the sea bed. Significant amounts of oil have been sinking to the seabed. "This means that even species living at the bottom of the sea have not escaped contamination, and innovative techniques will have to be developed to address the removal of oil in this context," says Rick Steiner. So far, the Lebanese government and private initiatives have only been able to remove approximately one per cent of the oil. The results of the mission, compiled in close collaboration with local official and scientific authorities as well as international agencies, will contribute to a Natural Resource Damage Assessment, outlining the full extent of the environmental damage caused by the spill, and support a clean-up operational plan. The spill response plan will support the Lebanese Ministry of Environment in producing guidelines for cleaning the shoreline and dealing with the impacts on ecosystems and species.

Beirut, Aug 29 — A press report, dated Damascus, Aug 29, states: Thousands of shipping containers filled with vital imports have been turned away from Beirut Port by the Israeli blockade, causing commercial cargo bound for Lebanon to flow through Syrian ports. Containers destined for Lebanon have started arriving over the last few weeks at the Syrian ports of Lattakia and Tartous, where they are being loaded onto trucks and moved to Lebanon on roads bombed by Israel in the recent war, port officials told said. "We hope the

Israeli blockade does not last but the number of containers for Lebanon is bound to rise if it does," said Bassam Fedda, head of traffic at Lattakia, Syria's main port. "We have been under instructions from the Prime Minister to accelerate the clearing of cargo." Fedda said around 2,000, six-metre long containers originally destined for Beirut had arrived in Lattakia in the past weeks. A lesser number went through Tartous, which is not as well equipped to handle containers. Lattakia handled 42,573 containers in July and 30,927 containers so far this month. Most of the cargo bound for Lebanon was diverted at the beginning of the war to Egypt, Malta and Cyprus. It has largely stayed there, with Beirut Port still closed to commercial traffic, although a cease-fire took effect on Aug 14. Shipping agents said suppliers had realised it could be a long wait before Beirut Port opens, making Syria a logical alternative especially now Israeli bombing of roads between Lebanon and Syria had stopped. Cargo transported via Syria has been so far mostly foodstuffs, they said. "Lebanon badly needs to import other goods and material for reconstruction, but it will be too expensive to move them through Syria," one shipper said. "Importers are likely to wait for political uncertainty to ease before they place their orders and they will prefer to ship through Beirut," he said. Syria has acted as a conduit for humanitarian aid since the war started on Jul 12. Israel accuses it of also arming Hizbullah. The Syrian government, however, recently threatened to close its borders with Lebanon if UN forces were deployed on the frontier to stop Hizbullah from rearming itself. Israel says it will not lift its six-week-old sea and air blockade of Lebanon unless a UN force helps the Lebanese Army control the borders with Syria. The United Nations has been pressuring Israel to lift its blockade, saying it is vital to Lebanon's economic recovery. Elie Zakhour, president of the International Chamber of Navigation, said 18,000 containers that should have arrived in the Lebanese capital have been unloaded instead in Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Malta and Syria. Over the past week, three ships loaded with vital gasoline supplies were also turned away, the president of the Society of Petroleum Importers, Bahige Abu Hamze, added. Factories that survived Israeli bombing during the 34-day war are unable to operate at full capacity partly because of escalating fuel costs, said Ghazi Koreitem, president of the Beirut Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture. The factories "are operating at 20 percent of capacity because of a loss of manpower and petrol price increases," Koreitem said. Lebanon imports approximately 85 percent of its consumer goods. — Lloyd's Agents.

Jerusalem, Aug 30 — Israel rejected a call from U.N. Secretary-General

Kofi Annan today to lift its air and sea blockade of Lebanon, saying it would only end the seven-week-old siege once all elements of a ceasefire were in place. During an hour of talks with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Annan said he pressed for a lifting of the embargo, imposed after the start of the war against Lebanon's Hizbollah guerrilla group on July 12, mainly on economic grounds. At a news conference after their meeting, Olmert rebuffed Annan, saying any relaxation of pressure on Lebanon's ports and airspace depended on the full implementation of U.N. resolution 1701, which governs the ceasefire with Hizbollah. Olmert was equally firm when it came to suggestions from Annan that Israel should withdraw all its troops from southern Lebanon within "days or weeks", once up to 5,000 U.N.-backed peacekeepers are on the ground. In the talks, Olmert also reiterated his call for the U.N. force to be deployed not just in southern Lebanon but along the border with Syria, a deployment that the U.N. resolution makes dependent on a request from the Lebanese government. The secretary-general said he hoped to double to 5,000 the number of U.N. troops in Lebanon soon and urged Israel and Hizbollah to end swiftly disputes blocking a lasting ceasefire. Yesterday, Israeli Defence Minister Amir Peretz said Israel would pull out thousands of troops once a "reasonable" number of U.N. soldiers had been deployed, but did not give a figure. Resolution 1701 calls for a deployment of 15,000 U.N. peacekeepers by November 4, alongside Lebanese army forces. Annan said the Lebanese saw the blockade as a "humiliation and infringement of their sovereignty". But he also urged Beirut to exert control over its borders to stop arms smuggling. On a visit to southern Lebanon yesterday, Annan said "serious irritants" to the truce were also the fate of abducted Israeli soldiers and that of Lebanese prisoners held in Israel. U.S. civil rights leader Jesse Jackson, on a visit to the region to try to mediate a prisoner exchange, told Israeli Army Radio he had been informed by a Hizbollah leader that the two soldiers seized by the guerrilla group were alive. He said that during a visit to Damascus on Monday (Aug 28), "a Hamas leader told me ... that the Israeli soldier captured by Hamas is alive". Palestinian militants abducted Corporal Gilad Shalit in a cross-border raid from Gaza in June. Italy's first contingent of 800 troops, out of an eventual 3,000 pledged, set sail yesterday on what Rome said would be a "long and risky" mission. The aircraft carrier *Garibaldi* and four other naval ships were due to reach Lebanon by Friday (Sep 1). France promised to send a 900-strong battalion before the middle of September, with a second battalion to follow. The UN is hoping Muslim nations will send troops to balance the 7,000 or so pledged by European

countries. The Turkish government said it wanted parliament to meet on September 5 to approve a troop contribution to the U.N. force, after agreeing in principle to send soldiers. Other Muslim contributors could include Indonesia, Malaysia and Bangladesh, although Israel has objected to their taking part because they have no diplomatic ties with the Jewish state. — Reuters.

London, Aug 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Israeli forces killed four Palestinian gunmen and four civilians, pressing on with an offensive in an Islamic militant stronghold in Gaza City, medics and witnesses said. The latest casualties in the Shijaia neighbourhood raised to 14 the number of Palestinians killed over the past 24 hours in Israeli attacks on militants in the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank. An Israeli army spokeswoman said soldiers shot four gunmen in Shijaia, including two who had fired anti-tank missiles at them. Medics said four militants and four civilians were killed by Israeli fire in the district, including a 14-year-old Palestinian boy who they said was shot in the head. A 28-year-old man, who residents said was a civilian, was also shot in the head, doctors said. In response to the report of the youth who was killed, an Israeli military source said troops operating in the area identified a Palestinian on the ground tampering with wires and fired at him.

Beirut, Aug 31 — A local press report, dated today, states: "Public Works and Transport Minister Mohammad Safadi said yesterday that despite the impending restoration of a second runway at Beirut's Rafik Hariri International Airport, no date had been set to open the facility up to international carriers. "This will be a government decision to declare that the airport is open for all flights," Safadi told "The Daily Star". "We have advised all international carriers not to make plans for now." Safadi, accompanied by MPs Mohammad Qabbani, Salim Aoun and Qassem Hashem, visited the airport to inspect repairs. The second of the airport's three runways will be fixed by Saturday (Sep 2). The third will be done within two months. "There are also problems with the taxi-ways," Safadi said. "There are tunnels underneath that collapsed and construction on these has not started." Qabbani, who heads the Parliament's Public Works and Transport Committee, confirmed that the opening of the airport beyond the Beirut-Amman corridor required a political decision and no date had been set". — Lloyd's Agents.

Beirut, Aug 31 — A local press report, dated today, states: "The electricity and water sectors in Lebanon suffered close to \$200 million in losses as a result of the Israeli offensive, Energy and Water Minister Mohammad Fneish said on Wednesday. "We have not completed the survey of the damage caused by

the Israeli attacks but we estimate the total cost in the electricity and water sectors at around \$200 million," Fneish told a news conference. The minister said that the ministry may either borrow more money to repair damage or seek financial assistance from the donor states. Lebanon hopes to obtain \$500 million in aid from a donor conference that will be held in Stockholm at the end of this month. It is not clear if any of this money will then be used to repair electricity lines and water networks. The 34 days of relentless Israeli attacks targeted power plants, high-voltage cables and fuel-oil reservoirs in the South and North of the country, but surprisingly the Israelis spared the major electricity plants in the country. All of the fuel-oil reservoirs at Jiyeh on the southern coast were set ablaze by Israeli warships in an attempt to apply pressure on both the government and residents of the South. The Jiyeh attack caused Lebanon's worst oil spill, which spread along most of the coast, prompting the government to call for international assistance to help contain it. As a result of these attacks, Electricite du Liban was forced to increase electricity rationing to most areas of Lebanon. The Israelis also prevented tankers loaded with gasoline and fuel oil from unloading in Lebanon during the first weeks of the war. The UN and the US put pressure on Israel to ease the blockade and three tankers finally delivered more than 50,000 tons of fuel oil and gasoline."Despite the severe power rationing we were able to provide electricity during the entire war," Fneish said. He added that Beirut was getting around 16 hours of electricity per day during the war while the rest of the country got less. The minister said it will take at least six months to rebuild the oil reservoirs in Jiyeh, adding that the ministry is considering placing mobile generators along the coast to produce electricity until repairs are completed. He added that thanks to contracts signed with Kuwaiti and Algerian companies, the ministry was able to build up a fuel-oil reserve that can last between a month and 45 days, depending on the extent of rationing. Fneish said that EDL had sent repair teams to Southern villages and managed to connect the high-voltage cables. "There are at least 20 villages in the South that were destroyed during the war and for this reason the ministry may install temporary generators." Fneish said that Syria, Iran, Egypt and Kuwait have all pledged to help repair damage to the electricity sector". — Lloyd's Agents.

Nablus, West Bank, Aug 31 — Israeli troops killed a top commander of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades militant group during a raid into Nablus today, Palestinian security sources said. They said Fadi Khafisha, who was known for helping to prepare suicide bombings in Israel, was shot dead in the Old City at the heart of Nablus. Another senior militant was among five people wounded in the fighting.

An army spokeswoman said there had been an exchange of fire in Nablus and that the gunmen opened fire first. "The forces returned fire and identified hitting the armed men," she said. She did not confirm that Khafisha had been killed. — Reuters.

MEXICO

Oaxaca, Aug 29 — Stores, restaurants and other businesses in this popular tourist city went on a 24-hour strike today to demand an end to violent clashes as the government tried to kick start negotiations to restore order. Three months of demonstrations aimed at toppling Oaxaca state Gov. Ulises Ruiz spiraled out of control when gunmen believed to be off-duty police opened fire on protesters twice last week, killing one person. Five people have been killed this month. In response to the deteriorating crisis, the city's main business leaders placed white flags over the locked doors of supermarkets, banks and restaurants today, and called on President Vicente Fox to intervene. "We demand security for our economic and social activities, without which Oaxaca will not return to the path of growth," they said in national newspaper ads, complaining the protests were costing jobs and sales and shutting thousands of schools. The one-day strike involves 20,000 workers and a loss of nearly \$6 million in revenue, according to Eduardo Garcia Moreno, head of Oaxaca's chamber of commerce. In Mexico City, federal government mediators met with leaders of the Oaxacan People's Popular Assembly and the teachers union, and separately with representatives of Ruiz's state government to try to broker an end to the crisis. Fox's spokesman, Ruben Aguilar, said the talks would include discussion of demands that Ruiz step down. The protests began as a peaceful sit-in strike by about 40,000 teachers demanding higher pay, but have escalated in recent weeks with anti-Ruiz demonstrators seizing local radio stations, barricading roads and burning buses. The violence has heightened tensions as Mexico is already embroiled in a crisis over fraud allegations in last month's presidential election. — Reuters.

PAKISTAN

Quetta, Aug 27 — Authorities in the city of Quetta imposed an indefinite curfew and called in troops today after violent protests followed the killing of a Baluch nationalist rebel leader. Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, 79, was killed in fighting with security forces yesterday in what appeared to be one of the biggest battles in years in Baluchistan province. Politicians and analysts said the death of Bugti, a former chief minister of Baluchistan, was likely to inflame opposition to the government in Pakistan's biggest but poorest province. As news of Bugti's death spread late yesterday, protesters took to the streets of Quetta, the provincial capital. More than a dozen

vehicles were burned and at least three banks and a petrol station were torched, residents said. There were no reports of casualties in the protests but about 100 people, most of them students, were arrested, police said. "We've imposed a curfew at 0600 hrs (0100, UTC). All shops are closed and the army have been called and they're taking positions," said senior Quetta police official Zahid Afaq. Security was increased in other Pakistani cities. Baluch rebels have been blamed for recent bomb attacks in Punjab province. Baluchistan, the most thinly populated of Pakistan's four provinces, has the country's main natural gas reserves as well as deposits of copper and uranium. Baluch nationalists have long complained the province does not get a fair share of the profits from resources and they have been agitating for autonomy for years. Government officials involved with security said more than 20 members of the security forces and nearly 40 rebels had been killed in the fighting in which Bugti was killed. The military only confirmed the death of four officers and one soldier in the fighting in the province's Kohlu district. Bugti was a former chief minister of the province of deserts and mountains. He was for years one of Pakistan's most distinctive politicians, and was well respected in Baluchistan. He went underground early this year, joining rebels who have stepped up attacks on infrastructure, including gas pipelines, as well as security posts over the past year. Security forces have responded with a series of offensives although many Baluchis and other Pakistanis, including rights activists and politicians, have deplored the violence and called for talks. Bugti's death was only likely to stir anger, political leaders and analysts said. — Reuters.

London, Aug 28 — A press report, dated today, states: A strike, called to protest against the killing of a nationalist rebel leader, crippled the Pakistani city of Quetta today, with transport off the streets and shops closed, police and residents said. Political parties in the province of Baluchistan called the strike to protest against the killing, on Aug 26, of Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti. "Most shops are closed but things are peaceful. No incidents of violence have been reported today," said deputy provincial police chief Salman Saeed. At least three people were killed, yesterday, as violent protests spread from Quetta to other parts of the province.

London, Aug 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Protesters are blocking key roads in Pakistan's Baluchistan province as unrest continues over the army's killing of tribal leader Akbar Bugti. Police say road links from Quetta south to Karachi and west to Iran have been severed. They are in talks with the demonstrators to try to reopen them. Provincial police chief Chaudhry Mohammed Yaqoob told the Associated

Press news agency that "scores of protesters" were now blocking the Karachi and Iran roads from the Balochistan capital, Quetta. The road from Gwadar on the Arabian Sea coast to Karachi was also blocked, he said. Mr Yaqoob said between 650 and 700 people had been detained during the violence which has swept the province and sparked protests as far away as Karachi. Bugti supporter Habib Jalib put the number of arrests higher, at 850. There were no immediate reports of fresh violence from Balochistan today. A day earlier, security forces clashed with mourners attending a memorial for Mr Bugti in Quetta. Gunfire and explosions were reported after some 10,000 people packed a city stadium to attend prayers. Police used tear gas and gunfire to disperse the crowd after mourners attacked nearby shops and offices. At least two people have died in rioting across the province since Saturday (Aug 26). Five others were killed in a bomb blast thought to be linked to the unrest in the Baloch town of Hab yesterday. Mr Bugti was tracked down to his mountain cave hideout on Saturday and died in a ground and air assault by Pakistani security forces. The authorities say his body is still trapped in rubble and that they do not know what caused the cave to collapse. "It could have been a mine incident, it could have been another explosion, it could have been a fire from inside," military spokesman Maj-Gen Shaukat Sultan said yesterday.

PHILIPPINES

Manila, Aug 26 — A Philippine soldier and three communist rebels were killed in fresh fighting on the troubled southern island of Mindanao, an army spokesman said today. Lieutenant-Colonel Bartolome Bacarro said heavy fighting erupted yesterday when about 30 rebels ambushed an army convoy, detonating land mines and firing with automatic rifles at soldiers in Agusan del Sur province. "Our troops fought back and chased them when reinforcements rushed to the area," Bacarro told reporters, adding a soldier was killed in the blast and three rebels were killed in the battle. "We're pouring more troops to prevent more rebel raids and ambushes. We're not allowing them to seize the initiative. We knew their plans to step up an offensive and make their presence felt in the countryside." Cesar Renerio, a spokesman for the communist New People's Army (NPA) rebels, claimed five soldiers were killed in the ambush set up to seize weapons from government troops returning to an army base. Renerio said the rebels were stepping up attacks on military convoys and bases to acquire more weapons and ammunition, refuting government statements that it was winning the war and could defeat the insurgency in two years. — Reuters.

RUSSIA

Makhachkala, Aug 26 — Security forces killed four people accused of

extremist activity and gunmen shot dead three Russian soldiers today, officials said, in new violence gripping areas near Chechnya. The two incidents — in areas adjacent to the volatile region — occurred a day after a top intelligence official said violence was spreading throughout the Northern Caucasus region. Chechnya's pro-Moscow president acknowledged that separatist rebels still posed a problem in the region despite the killing last month of the most prominent guerrilla, Shamil Basayev. Officials in Dagestan, on Chechnya's eastern border, said police and other troops had surrounded a house overnight after observation suggested it was a centre for extremist activity. The occupants refused to surrender and, after children were allowed to leave, a gunbattle erupted, lasting until after dawn. Four men were killed and three women were taken into custody in the regional capital, Makhachkala. In Ingushetia, to the west of Chechnya, Interfax news agency said rebels had opened fire with machine guns on a car carrying Russian servicemen, killing three of them. The agency, quoting prosecutors, said a number of soldiers had been injured. Chechen President Alu Alkhanov, addressing security officials in southern Russia, said authorities must remain on guard against separatists waging an insurgency since 1994. "We realise that we are dealing with a powerful network of international terrorism, including Al-Qaeda," he said, restating Russian allegations that separatists secure funding from that and other radical groups abroad. "Basayev's removal makes our fight against armed fighters easier, but does not solve the problem entirely." But separatist ranks, he said, were fewer than 500-strong. Yesterday, Nikolai Patrushev, head of the FSB counter-intelligence agency, told the same gathering that Islamist separatists intended to hit targets in nearby regions. "Terrorists have shifted the accent of their activities to the territory of the republics bordering Chechnya," he said. — Reuters.

SRI LANKA

Colombo, Aug 25 — The first aid ship to break a two week siege of Sri Lanka's northern Jaffna peninsula prepared to unload today, while another Red Cross-flagged vessel left port to evacuate foreign nationals. The aid ship is carrying over 1,000 tonnes of rice, lentils and some tinned food from the government and the United Nations World Food Programme. "The ship anchored 15 miles off the coast last night because they did not want to go into the harbour at night," said International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) spokesman Davide Vignati. "This morning the plan is to come in and unload." Most shops on the Jaffna peninsula have run out of food and some of its half a million people are down to one meal a day. For the last few days, the military has relaxed a curfew and allowed people

out for five hours a day. Another small ferry flying the Red Cross flag sailed from the northeastern port of Trincomalee this morning to evacuate the first 150 of an estimated 500 expatriates from Jaffna — mainly ethnic Jaffna Tamils with British or Canadian passports. The ferry will also carry Jaffna's cancer specialist, trapped away from the town by the fighting, back to treat his 1,000 or so patients in the besieged area. Aid workers hoped fighting would be subdued on Friday to allow aid in. But artillery fire continued from Jaffna and the government said air force jets had again bombed rebel targets south of Jaffna. A clash in the east killed one police Special Task Force trooper and one rebel, police said. The Red Cross said that with security guarantees from both sides, they were confident their neutrality would be respected. — Reuters.

Jaffna, Aug 26 — The Red Cross evacuated foreigners from Sri Lanka's northern Jaffna peninsula and delivered aid there today after a two-week siege, but the army said a bomb left by withdrawing rebels killed six soldiers. A Red Cross-flagged cargo ship that arrived off Jaffna on Thursday (Aug 24) night was unloading around 1,500 metric tons of food. The food will be distributed free from co-operative shops to the poorest and sold to the rest at fixed prices mainly from Monday (Aug 28). A ferry also bearing the Red Cross flag was due to evacuate the first 150 of an estimated 500 people, mostly aid staff and those trapped in Jaffna with foreign passports. The Red Cross said evacuees would be taken out to the ferry by small boats. The ferry will sail from Jaffna tonight and arrive in the northeastern port of Trincomalee early tomorrow. Intermittent artillery fire was heard in Jaffna overnight. The military said rebels had withdrawn from some previously captured army positions but had left an improvised bomb. The troops were consolidating the position and checking," said army spokesman Brigadier Prasad Samarsinghe. "A soldier just put his foot on it and it exploded. Six are dead, four wounded." In the capital, Colombo, police Special Task Force troopers raided houses near the airport today, seizing fragmentation mines, assault rifles and detonators that they suspected the Tigers planned to use for attacks. Sixteen men and two women were arrested. In what appeared to be a rare sign of flexibility, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) agreed to release a policeman held prisoner since September 2005 after a request from unarmed Nordic ceasefire monitors. Outgoing Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) chief Major General Ulf Henricsson and his replacement, Norwegian Major General Lars Johan Solvberg, met Tiger political leader S.P. Thamilselvan yesterday. "It was a request from the two of them and they went for it," said SLMM spokesman Thorfinnur Omarsson. "We've been

asking for his release for months and we are very satisfied." — Reuters.

London, Aug 27 — A press report, dated today, states: A Red Cross ferry carrying foreign nationals trapped by fighting in northern Sri Lanka has arrived in the eastern port of Trincomalee, after a journey of more than 12 hours from Point Pedro on the Jaffna peninsula. More than 150 people, most of them foreign aid workers or Tamils from abroad with Canadian, UK or other passports, took the ship from Jaffna. Several hundred more foreign nationals are still awaiting evacuation. Even as the ferry arrived, fighting could be heard near the port between government forces and the rebels. Earlier, the army said six soldiers died when a booby-trap bunker abandoned by the rebels exploded.

Colombo, Aug 29 — Sri Lankan troops battled Tamil Tiger rebels today in a new offensive, jeopardising the evacuation of foreign nationals from the besieged north in a move diplomats feared could further escalate the conflict. The government says the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam must vacate their positions around Sampur on the southern edge of Trincomalee harbour, from where they have launched attacks on military shipping and shelled the naval base. "It's a major operation," a military source in the capital Colombo said. "We want to capture Sampur." August has been by far the most violent month since a 2002 ceasefire halted two decades of civil war. Hundreds of fighters and civilians have been killed and more than 200,000 people have fled their homes. "There is a big offensive going on from the Sri Lankan armed forces," said S. Puleedevan, the head of the Tiger peace secretariat. "They are trying to break through our forward defence lines." Trincomalee is the strategic port used by the military to resupply the northern Jaffna peninsula, which is cut off from the rest of the island by the rebels and is now under siege. It was also the port used by the International Committee of the Red Cross to evacuate about 160 foreign nationals from Jaffna last weekend (Aug 26-27). The ICRC wants to send a vessel to pick up the several hundred foreign nationals, mainly ethnic Sri Lankan Tamils trapped while visiting families. The Tigers said the rescue mission looked very unlikely while the army continued its offensive. "We are discussing with the ICRC but the Sri Lankan Army offensive is jeopardising this," said Puleedevan. "We are firing mortars and artillery at the harbour so it is not safe." Some diplomats say they believe the current army operation south of Trincomalee is limited in scope and that ultimately the army lacks the capacity to take Sampur, but truce monitors are worried any new push could further escalate the conflict. "It looks as though they are going for Sampur, which could have serious consequences," said Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission spokesman

Thorfinnur Omarsson. The army said 13 soldiers had been killed and about 70 wounded in the first two days of the battle. At least 66 rebel fighters had also been killed, the army said. The Tigers say 20 civilians are dead, along with 10 Tigers and 50 soldiers. "They are attacking our positions and we are simply retaliating," said military spokesman Brigadier Prasad Samarasinghe. The government says the rebels' artillery must be neutralised to allow tens of thousands of residents to go home. However, after a month of fighting, front lines are almost exactly where they were and the unarmed Nordic truce monitors say nothing has been achieved except massive human suffering. "The Tigers are not just going to give up Sampur," said a Western diplomat. "There are going to be landmines, defensive positions and the avenues of approach are already going to be dialled in to their artillery." — Reuters.

Colombo, Aug 30 — International ceasefire monitors blamed Sri Lankan troops today for the killing of 17 aid workers during fighting with Tamil tiger rebels earlier in the month. The victims were working on tsunami relief projects for international aid group Action Contre La Faim in the northeastern town of Mutur, the scene of several days of fighting between troops and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The government has denied troops were involved in the execution style killings and promised an investigation. The victims, all but one of them ethnic Tamils, were found with gunshot wounds, lying face down in the compound of their office. The SLMM statement came only days before outgoing Swedish mission head Major General Ulf Henricsson steps down because of demands from the Tigers that all European Union monitors quit. That demand came after the EU declared the Tigers a terrorist organisation. Monitors from non-EU members Norway and Iceland will remain in Sri Lanka. SLMM also ruled that a June fragmentation mine attack on a civilian bus that killed almost 70 people was a breach of the ceasefire by the rebels, while blaming the government for a string of similar attacks in rebel areas from April onwards. The army said 13 soldiers have been killed in action and 79 wounded in fierce artillery and mortar fire since a new eastern offensive towards the town of Sampur began on Monday (Aug 28). Both sides claim to have killed dozens of foes. Sampur sits on the southern lip of Trincomalee harbour, 145 miles northeast of the capital Colombo, and puts the Tigers in artillery range of a naval base and maritime supply route to the besieged army-held Jaffna peninsula in the far north. "The troops are moving towards Sampur. The main thing of this operation is to capture it to secure Trincomalee harbour and nearby civilian areas," said a military spokesman. The Tigers, who want a separate ethnic Tamil homeland in the north and east, vow they will never relinquish Sampur. The army

launched its heaviest artillery barrage for days towards rebel territory south of Jaffna early today, but some schools in the town opened for the first time since the siege began two and a half weeks ago. Violence also erupted elsewhere on the island overnight when Tiger rebels attacked an army camp in the eastern district of Batticaloa with mortar fire, injuring three soldiers. In Colombo, a Tamil journalist abducted earlier in the week was released blindfolded, but unharmed. There was no word who could be responsible. — Reuters.

THAILAND

London, Aug 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Police explosive experts yesterday defused a bomb hidden in a car near the residence of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and charged an army lieutenant over an alleged plot against the Thai leader. Mr Thaksin said he escaped the assassination attempt only because he left his house earlier than normal. He said he knew who was behind the plot but that he wouldn't name the planners publicly. The Prime Minister sacked a military general who was deputy head of a key intelligence agency and who police said employed the suspect as his driver. Police last night confirmed they had found 2.2kg of TNT, 10 bags of fertiliser mix with gasoline and three sticks of C4 explosives in the boot of the car.

Bangkok, Aug 31 — Suspected militants set off small bombs inside and outside at least 21 banks in predominantly Muslim southern Thailand today, killing at least one person and wounding more than 20, police and witnesses said. The bombs were stashed in rubbish bins, hollowed out books and public telephone booths at the banks in Yala province near the Malaysian border, they said. A retired civil servant was killed by an explosion in the provincial capital of Yala in a rash of explosions similar to one across the three Muslim-majority provinces of the far south in June which killed at least two people. An anonymous caller warned one bank it had been targeted, prompting people to flee minutes before an explosion, police said in a region where more than 1,100 people have been killed in secessionist violence since January 2004. Many of today's bombs were set off by mobile telephone and at least one was defused before it could go off, police said. Regional army commander Lieutenant-General Ongkorn Thongprasom said two suspects were held for questioning and the authorities believed most of the devices were planted by students. — Reuters.

TURKEY

London, Aug 28 — The BBC reported today: Ten Britons are among at least 21 people injured after three bomb blasts hit Marmaris holiday resort in Turkey. The main explosion went off on a local minibus, as it travelled through the centre of Marmaris, close

to midnight. The explosion appeared to come from the bottom or from outside the bus. The injured Britons are in hospital, with four in a serious condition. None has life-threatening injuries. Eleven Turks were also injured. Six Turkish nationals were also injured in Istanbul after a bomb exploded late last night, local reports said. Turkish police in Marmaris said only one device apparently detonated properly, on the minibus which was travelling down a busy main street. The whole area has now been cordoned off by police. The other two devices reportedly went off in rubbish bins, but no-one is said to have been injured from these explosions. There is no indication, as yet, of who carried out the attacks.

London, Aug 28 — A press report, dated today, states: At least three people have died and several others have been injured in a blast at a popular resort in southern Turkey, reports say. The explosion happened close to restaurants in the centre of the city of Antalya. This blast came hours after three bombs hit another coastal resort, Marmaris, injuring at least 21 people. The Turkish economy is heavily reliant on tourism, which Kurdish separatists have repeatedly threatened to target. No one has claimed responsibility for carrying out the attack in Antalya, but a Kurdish militant group is purported to have said it was behind yesterday's blasts in Marmaris and Istanbul. The Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (Tak), which has links to the banned separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), claimed responsibility on its website. The claims have not yet been verified. The latest blast occurred near to a building housing local restaurants, a spokeswoman for the governor's office in Antalya said. The explosion happened just before 1700, local time. Local police were quoted as saying two people had died. Turkish NTV television reported that a third person had died in hospital from their injuries. CNN-Turk television reported that 20 people had been injured. Most of those injured in Marmaris - including 10 Britons - were on a minibus ferrying local people and holidaymakers along the main street. Istanbul was also hit by a bomb attack on last night, when a roadside device exploded injuring six Turkish nationals.

Istanbul, Aug 30 — A home-made bomb wounded a 20-year-old woman in Turkey's Mediterranean port city of Mersin today, security officials said, the latest in a series of attacks on coastal areas and tourist resorts. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the bombing, which damaged an electricity substation and smashed windows in nearby cars and houses. Yesterday, a shadowy Kurdish rebel group threatened to turn Turkey "into hell" after claiming responsibility for a two-day bombing spree that killed three people and wounded dozens, including European holiday-makers, at popular tourist resorts. The Kurdish Liberation

Hawks (TAK) warned foreign tourists to stay away from Turkey. The Mersin bomb exploded in a rubbish container and officials said police had detained one person dressed as a dustman. — Reuters.

UGANDA

London, Aug 26 — A press report, dated today, states: Uganda and the rebel Lord's Resistance Army have signed a truce aimed at ending a 20-year war. The agreement, reached during peace talks held in Juba, southern Sudan, is expected to take effect on Tuesday (Aug 29). Thousands have died during the conflict in northern Uganda and more than one million have fled their homes. Uganda had earlier agreed to a conditional cessation of hostilities, but had said a more comprehensive peace plan must precede a ceasefire. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has set a September 12 deadline for a final peace deal. The LRA had already called a ceasefire, but Uganda had insisted that a comprehensive agreement - with the rebels providing details of their forces and deployment - needed to be in place before a ceasefire could be agreed. The government also wanted a guarantee the LRA would not use the halt in fighting to reinforce its positions. The International Criminal Court (ICC) wants the LRA's top officials - including leader Joseph Kony - to face charges including murder, rape and forcibly enlisting children. Against the wishes of the ICC, Uganda has offered amnesty to LRA leaders in exchange for peace talks.



NIGERIA

Port Harcourt, Aug 24 — Unidentified gunmen kidnapped an Italian oil worker and killed a soldier protecting him in Port Harcourt today, industry sources said. It is the eighth abduction in Africa's top oil producer this month, which analysts say has been encouraged by ransom payments by state governments and oil companies. "An Italian has been kidnapped and his security orderly, an army sergeant, was killed," said an industry source, asking not to be named because he is not permitted to talk to the media. The employee of contractor Saipem, a unit of Italy's ENI, was abducted from his car outside the gates of the company compound on the outskirts of the city. Another industry source confirmed the information and said a second soldier was injured, while residents in the area were fleeing, fearing a military reprisal. "The attackers came in two vehicles, blocked them, shot the army sergeant and took the Italian hostage," the first source added. — Reuters.

London, Aug 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Nigerian kidnappers have released an Italian oil worker abducted last week in the oil-rich south of the country. Oil multinational Shell has meanwhile announced that one of its Nigerian employees was killed after abduction by militants in the same region. There have been at least 19 kidnappings this month. President Olusegun Obasanjo has ordered troops to root out militants in the volatile region. A government spokesman said the Italian, Mario Pavesi, had been handed over to officials. A Lebanese worker who was abducted two weeks ago has still to be released. Mr Pavesi said he had been treated well while in captivity, as he appeared before reporters looking pale and unshaven in wet clothes. A statement from Shell announced that Nelson Ujeya, a community liaison officer for the company in Bayelsa State, had been killed in a "security incident" on August 20, after being abducted from the town of Letugbene. "His was one of the bodies recovered from Letugbene last night, August 28," the statement said. Local leaders and oil companies are said to be concerned that the government's new get tough policy - which has seen several raids by soldiers on local communities - is increasing tensions further. Another 15 arrests are being reported by government soldiers although dozens of those arrested in recent weeks have been released. A few days ago, Nigerian soldiers burnt hundreds of slum houses near where a soldier was killed during the kidnapping of foreign oil workers. Residents in the city of Port Harcourt say the troops became angry when they learned one of their colleagues had been killed in a shootout. Nigerian oil production has been cut by more than 20% since the beginning of the year.



BRAZIL

London, Aug 30 — A press report, dated Aug 29, states: Workers at Volkswagen's largest and oldest factory in Brazil went on strike today after the company sent pink slips to 1,800 employees as part of a restructuring plan. The strike, called after an assembly of union workers, will last indefinitely and is a "direct response to the firings," said Francisco Eduardo de Lima, vice president of the regional metalworkers union. The factory employs 12,000 workers.

CHILE

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated today, states: Copper rose in London after miners at BHP Billiton's Escondida mine, the world's biggest copper deposit, said they are prepared

to extend a strike by six weeks. Miners at Escondida in Chile, who have been on strike since Aug 7, are ready to hold out for 30 to 60 days after lowering their wage and bonus demands on Aug. 22, Luis Troncoso Munoz, president of the mine workers' union, said yesterday in an interview in Antofagasta. Copper for delivery in three months on the London Metal Exchange rose \$52, or 0.7 percent, to \$7,662 a metric ton as of 1207 hrs in London. The metal has gained 74 percent this year, and traded at a record \$8,800 on May 11. Escondida's concentrators, which process ore for shipment to smelters, were working at half their capacity, the company said yesterday.

Santiago, Aug 25 — The 19-day strike at Escondida, the world's largest copper mine, is hurting the Chilean economy, majority shareholder BHP Billiton said today. Under normal conditions, Escondida's production is equal to about 8 percent of world copper output. Chile is the world's No. 1 producer of copper, which accounts for over half its exports. Surging prices for the metal have fueled economic growth, and pushed trade surpluses to record levels. "Without a doubt, the complete or partial paralysis of Escondida is going to affect the Chilean economy. Escondida represents about 2.5 percent of Chile's GDP and is Chile's main private tax payer," Diego Hernandez, president of BHP Billiton in Chile, said in an interview published today in local newspaper El Mercurio. "Only during the first half of this year, Escondida paid more than \$1 billion in income tax. The conflict is not benefiting anybody, not the workers, nor the company, nor the country," Hernandez said. The strike has reduced Escondida's copper output by about one half. BHP Billiton said this morning the mine had reestablished 10 percent of its normal cathode production. — Reuters.

London, Aug 30 — A press report, dated Aug 29, states: A strike over pay at the world's largest privately-owned copper mine is showing no sign of ending as it enters its fourth week. Owners of the Escondida site in Chile said talks with workers have been frozen, denying union claims of informal discussions. Workers last week turned down an offer of up to \$32,000 (£17,000) in bonuses and a four percent pay rise over three years. The union is demanding bigger bonuses to reflect an upturn in profits. But management at the mine, in which Anglo-Australian firm BHP Billiton has the majority stake, says it needs to protect itself against downturns in the copper price. "The union says too many things," said mine spokesman Pedro Correa on reports that negotiations over pay and bonuses were continuing. "We are not talking."

London, Aug 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Workers at BHP Billiton Ltd.'s Escondida copper mine are set to vote today in Chile on a new labour contract, ending a 25-day strike

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that's disrupted supply. BHP agreed to increase wages by 5 percentage points above inflation and pay a 9 million Chilean peso bonus, company spokesman Mauro Valdes said yesterday from Santiago. Workers may return as early as tomorrow, he said. The offer was "acceptable," union President Luis Troncoso said yesterday after presenting it to his members. The price of copper, used in wires and pipes, has more than doubled in London in the past year on demand from China, prompting unions to seek a larger share of company profits. An accord with BHP may set a precedent for talks expected this year at other mines in Chile, the largest supplier of the metal.

MEXICO

See under "Political & Civil Unrest".

NEPAL

Karachi, Aug 27 — The Nepal Tea Estate Workers' Association, the Nepal Tea Estate Workers' Association and the Nepal Independent Tea Workers' Union have ended their two-week long strike, in support of the implementation of 21 points. It said over 25,000 tea plantation workers in Nepal returned to their work today after agreement was reached with the tea producers. According to local reports, the workers and tea estate owners reached their agreement following an 18-hour long meeting, which was also attended by the joint secretary at the Ministry of Labour, Bishnu Prasad Lamsal, other officials and trade union representatives. Earlier, the Nepal government had formed a task force headed by Lamsal to end the stalemate in the tea sector. It has been agreed that employers will raise the wage of tea workers to Rs. 95 per day. The labour unions had been demanding Rs. 100 per day. Those working on monthly salaries will now draw Rs 2,660 per month. The employers also agreed most of the 21-point demands put forward by the trade unions. All the tea estates and processing units closed two weeks ago after representatives of associations presented their 21-point demand and tea plantation owners refused to meet those demands. The strike affected 32 tea estates and 37 tea processing units. According to reports, an estimated 500,000 kg of tea leaves "went into wastage" each day in Jhapa district alone, due to the strike. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.,

SOUTH KOREA

London, Aug 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Thousands of workers at major hospitals went on strike yesterday after wage talks with management failed. However, no major disruptions were reported, with fewer workers than expected taking part. The Korean Health and Medical Workers' Union launched sit-in protests at seven large medical institutions across the nation. The union represents about 32,000 nurses, pharmacists, engineers and other hospital workers, excluding doctors.

According to the union, some 3,500 workers, a mere 15 percent of the union's members, at 62 hospitals took part in the strike. The government said, however, 1,500 members at 31 hospitals participated in the rally. Affected hospitals are the Korea University Hospital, Hanyang University Hospital in Seoul and Chonbuk National University Hospital in North Jeolla Province. "The union began to stage sit-in protests as both sides failed to iron out the differences on a salary increase yesterday," said an official of the union. The impact of the planned strikes will not be serious as labour unions at major hospitals are unlikely to participate. The labour group also said that it would try to minimize disruptions at hospitals should strikes occur by dispatching necessary staff members to emergency, delivery and intensive care centres. At the last-ditch talks held on Wednesday afternoon (Aug 23) through Thursday, the federation of hospital unions demanded a 4 percent salary raise, and additional increases depending on the result of negotiations at each workplace. But the management brushed off the request and expressed concerns over causing conflicts at separate hospitals by holding talks in smaller units. Hospital management have been vehemently opposed to industrial level negotiations, saying that they would give greater leverage to the labor side while allowing repeated negotiations with management at upper and lower levels. The two sides resumed talks yesterday afternoon, but reportedly made little headway during the marathon session. Meanwhile, the state-run labor panel said it is considering whether to impose a compulsory compromise order as the union broke its promise to solve the dispute through negotiations. But officials say that the panel is likely to keep its eye on the union's move for the time being. On Monday, the National Labour Relations Commission postponed intervening in the dispute to allow more time for the two sides to settle the matter through talks. If the panel invokes its right to state arbitration, any collective action is banned for a 15-day cooling-off period. The union, however, affirmed its will to continue the strikes. "We will continue even if the government invokes its intervention right," a union official said.

London, Aug 29 — The union at South Korea's Chinese-controlled Ssangyong Motor has vowed to continue on strike after members voted down a tentative accord with management to end the industrial action last week. "The strike is still underway. It will continue until a new agreement is reached," a Ssangyong union leader said from the firm's main auto plant in Pyeongtaek, south of Seoul. Hundreds of union members armed with steel pipes were blocking management officials from entering the Ssangyong plant yesterday while sealing off the main gate with large containers and a fire engine, Yonhap

news agency reported. On Friday (Aug 25), the union had agreed to freeze its salary demands after management decided to scrap a lay-off plan. The union also agreed on "flexibly positioning workers on production lines according to market conditions" while the firm promised to invest 1.2 trillion won (1.25 billion dollars) by 2009 to develop new models and engines. However, workers voted down the agreement later Friday, with more than 60 percent of the union's 5,386 members casting ballots against it. In response, management said it would push ahead with plans to lay off 554 workers while the union occupied the company offices and blocked managers from going to work. The strike began on August 11 after weeks of work disruptions. Ssangyong, the country's fourth largest automaker which specializes in sport utility vehicles and passenger sedans, was hit by sporadic strikes that began on July 14. The carmaker said the industrial action has caused lost production of more than 15,000 vehicles worth 330 billion won ((340 million dollars).

London, Aug 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Labour and management at Ssangyong Motor yesterday reached an agreement on the job security of employees, ending a 48-day-long strike. Union leaders and management settled on a tentative pact to end the walkout in the afternoon and union members voted to accept the proposal from management involving its majority shareholder, Shanghai Automotive Industry Corp. (SAIC) Motor, in the evening. Of the 4,867 voters, the ratio of pros came to 58.4 percent. The agreement includes SAIC Motors scrapping of its plan to dismiss about 1,000 workers, establishing ways to secure steady employment, its quick fulfillment of promise on investment, and development of a new auto model by 2009.

UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 29 — Thousands of rail passengers faced a chaotic return to work today as a strike crippled some of London's busiest commuter lines. South West Trains warned people not to travel on its network after hundreds of drivers walked out in a growing row between unions and managers. There were no trains on many routes into London's Waterloo station from across southern England, forcing commuters to find another route to work after the long Bank Holiday weekend. "Our advice is: do not travel unless you absolutely have to," an SWT spokeswoman said. About 900 members of the Aslef rail union walked out in a dispute with SWT over the provision of taxis for staff working anti-social shifts. The row escalated when managers were drafted in to drive trains during a previous strike. Aslef said it was sorry that passengers would suffer during the strike, but blamed SWT bosses for "trying to score points over the union". SWT, which operates busy commuter routes into Waterloo from across southwest

England, said it had asked managers to drive trains to try to run a normal service for passengers. SWT said services would resume tomorrow. More strikes are planned for Sep 8 and 11. SWT is owned by bus and rail operator Stagecoach Group Plc. — Reuters.

Awards & Settlements



ASBESTOS-RELATED ILLNESS, JAPAN

London, Aug 25 — A press report, dated Aug 24, states: A building materials manufacturing company will pay 25 million yen to the wife of a former employee who died of mesothelioma after exposure to asbestos, company officials said Wednesday. A&A Material Corp. determined that it cannot deny a causal relationship between asbestos and the death last November of the 61-year-old man, the officials said. He had worked at the firm's factory in Tsurumi Ward, Yokohama, producing insulating material containing asbestos from 1963 to 1968. He developed mesothelioma, a rare form of cancer widely believed to be linked to asbestos, in Sep 2003 after leaving the company. He qualified for workers' compensation in October 2004. The firm will also pay 14 million yen for lost work to a former male employee, 71, who was diagnosed with lung asbestosis and qualified for workers' compensation last August, the officials said. In addition, it will pay a settlement of 2 million yen to a 64-year-old man who used to work for the manufacturer and has been diagnosed with pleural plaque, a condition often caused by asbestos in which a thickened patch develops on the chest wall membrane covering the lungs, they said. A group supporting relatives of people who have died of asbestos-related illnesses said it is of "great significance" that someone suffering pleural plaque was able to win compensation. "This company has factories in many locations, and it should fully shed light on the extent of damage and also take the step of compensating residents near the factories," a group member said. A&A Material produced building materials containing asbestos until Sep 2004. It has said that at least 27 of its employees have died of illnesses believed to be caused by asbestos, including lung cancer and mesothelioma.

CLASS-ACTION SETTLEMENT, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 30 — A press report, dated Aug 30, states: West Coast marine terminal operators have agreed to pay \$12.9 million to settle a class-action lawsuit brought by longshore workers over unpaid wages. The settlement received preliminary approval from Los Angeles County

Superior Court Judge Victoria G. Chaney earlier this month and notices of the deal were sent out today to the estimated 12,000-member class, said Patrick Carreon, lead counsel for the plaintiffs. The case stems from a 2003 lawsuit filed by dockworker Mark Wisniewski against the Pacific Maritime Association, which represents marine terminal operators. The lawsuit claimed the terminal operators were shortchanging pay from so-called casual, or temporary, dockworkers either by docking them time worked or not paying them for travel time to work as required by law, Carreon said. The PMA noted there was no judicial ruling on the plaintiffs' claims, only a settlement. "The PMA is pleased to have reached an equitable, fair settlement," the association said in a statement. "With an increase in the size of the registered work force and the addition of new casual workers, the PMA is confident that work on the waterfront will continue to run smoothly." Potential class members have the option to file a claim for a portion of the settlement, they can object to the terms or opt to pursue a separate claim against the terminal operators. The settlement agreement applies to California dockworkers employed as casual workers - not full-time, union-covered longshore workers - between April 1999 and June 16, 2006.

MEDICAL MALPRACTICE, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated today, states: A jury has awarded a Lee County woman \$8.25 million after she lost both her breasts in an alleged botched plastic surgery, her attorney said. Christy Allis was awarded the money this week as part of a medical malpractice lawsuit, according to her attorney Jeff Garvin. LocalLinks Allis was 28 when she had a breast lift and augmentation in 2003 by Naples surgeon Dr. Luciano Boemi. During the surgery at the Bonita Bay Surgical Center in Bonita Springs, blood supply to Allis was cut off, resulting in her breasts turning black and forming a hard, dry tissue, Garvin said. Thirteen surgeries were needed to repair open wounds and try to reshape some of the remaining tissue, he said. The amount of the award was appropriate "given the amount of suffering Christy has endured," Garvin said.

ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 26 — A press report, dated Aug 23, states: A Tarrant County jury has returned a \$5.2 million verdict against Omaha, Neb.-based Union Pacific Railroad Company and a Mesquite woman in a negligence lawsuit over a 2002 tractor trailer accident that left a Waco man permanently paralysed. The jury placed blame on both the Union Pacific truck driver and the driver of the car that the truck hit, and found them liable for damages to the plaintiff, Curtis Woods. The verdict

follows eight days of trial in Judge Ken Curry's 153rd District Court in Fort Worth. In the 2002 accident, Mr. Woods was a passenger in a car driven by Crystal Lowder. Ms. Lowder was trying to enter traffic on I-30 eastbound from Loop 820 in Fort Worth when she lost control of her car, possibly due to a problem with one of the tyres. Her 1992 Chevrolet went across all three lanes of traffic, hit a concrete barrier, then travelled back across all three lanes again, coming to a stop in the right-hand lane. All of the other vehicles on the road managed to slow down and stop or pull over, including the car immediately in front of the Union Pacific truck. But instead of slowing down, the truck went around the car in front of it and hit Ms. Lowder's car broadside. Mr. Woods, who was 19 years old at the time of the accident, was sitting in the back seat. He suffered a break at the C6 vertebrae of his spine and was left a quadriplegic.

WRONGFUL DEATH, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 30 — A press report, dated today, states: A wrongful death claim on behalf of bicyclist Josie Johnson, who was struck and killed by a car two years ago while riding in Big Cottonwood Canyon, has been settled for \$2.5 million in insurance money, Johnson's family and their attorneys announced yesterday. "We're very happy about the outcome," said Salt Lake City attorney Colin King. The attorney noted that the amount of the settlement was unusually high, considering Josie was only 25 and had no dependents. The settlement was possible because the motorist, 67-year-old Elizabeth DeSeelhorst, was driving a car belonging to Solitude Ski Resort, which is owned by her family, King said. "You don't see insurance at that level on individuals," King noted. "It was Solitude's liability insurance, which included coverage of their cars." But King said the settlement was also "commensurate with the very serious injuries inflicted on (Josie's) family. She had three siblings and parents who loved her dearly. And, it is reflective of the extremely impressive life that was lost here." At the time of her death, Josie was a second-year graduate student pursuing a doctorate in molecular biology at the University of Utah. Josie was killed Sep 18, 2004, when she was hit from behind by DeSeelhorst's Jeep Cherokee about 12 miles up Big Cottonwood Canyon. Convicted by a 3rd District Court jury of class A misdemeanor negligent homicide, DeSeelhorst was sentenced to probation, six months home confinement, 320 hours of community service and fined \$4,625. Trial evidence showed Johnson was riding up the canyon, just left of the right-hand fog line, when she was struck by DeSeelhorst. Gouge marks in the asphalt showed the Jeep was straddling the fog line, with its right wheels in the gravel, at the moment of impact. DeSeelhorst testified she never saw the cyclist and said her first

recollection of the fatal crash was the sound of Josie's body smashing into her car. Defense attorneys claimed DeSeelhorst, who was found to have a history of strokes, had experienced a "mini stroke," which caused a brief lapse of consciousness. Josie's death sparked the passage of a Utah law requiring motorists to give three feet of space to bicycles, as well as numerous "Share the Road" signs, a video on bicycle safety circulated in the public schools, consideration in the planning of road construction for the needs of bicyclists and an annual memorial bicycle ride in the Salt Lake area, scheduled this year for Oct. 7.

Railway Accidents



CO NAG LAKE AREA, TIBET

London, Aug 30 — A press report, dated today, states: The world's highest railway which runs from China to Tibet has suffered a blow to its credibility with the derailment of one of its new trains causing delays that affected thousands of passengers. Hong Kong's Beijing-backed Ta Kung Pao newspaper said: "Six trains were delayed along the line, affecting more than 4,000 passengers." The daily Beijing News reported that the 16-carriage train from the southwestern city of Chongqing derailed near Co Nag Lake today, about 400km north-east of the Tibetan capital, Lhasa. Only the dining carriage came off the tracks. An equipment failure involved switches and signals, but trains were running normally five hours later and no one was injured, the report said.

HIGHGROVE, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 27 — A press report, dated Aug 26, states: A train operated by Burlington Northern Santa Fe, derailed this afternoon when more than 10 double decker box cars went off the tracks in Highgrove near the Riverside-San Bernardino county line, authorities said. Roads were blocked for several hours while repair crews were trying to fix the tracks. Other rail traffic was not affected. There were no injuries reported.

KAURA RAILWAY STATION AREA, LUCKNOW, INDIA

London, Aug 30 — A press report, dated Aug 29, states: An express train from Guwahati to Amritsar ran off the track, but there are no immediate reports of casualties. The train derailed near Kaura railway station at 2100, IST, about 60 km from Lucknow. A relief train has arrived at the scene of the accident.

REDLANDS, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 27 — A press report, dated Aug 26, states: A Union Pacific

train derailed shortly after 2115 hrs, today, in Redlands in San Bernardino County. The locomotive was heading from Tucson to Colton, said Union Pacific spokesman Mark Davis. Seven train cars turned over, leaking diesel fuel that sparked a fire, Davis said. No injuries were reported. The cause of the derailment is under investigation.

Robberies & Thefts



JEWELLERY, TRADE FAIR, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Police are reviewing security camera footage in their investigation of the theft of more than 500 jewels from a trade fair in Sydney. Officers believe the uncut diamonds, worth more than Aus\$1.5 million, were stolen before the Australian Jewellery Fair, which opened on the weekend. Police are investigating whether the precious stones disappeared en route to the fair or from an exhibition centre at Darling Harbour in central Sydney.

Miscellaneous



DRUGS FOUND ON TURKISH VESSEL AT ALICANTE, SPAIN

London, Aug 28 — General cargo *Yasar Kaptan II* was reported arriving at Porto Vesme, Italy, on Aug 19 and sailing on Aug 21, reportedly bound for Poti, Georgia.

OUTBREAK OF VIRUS ON GREEK FLAG VESSEL

London, Aug 30 — Approximately 20 passengers aboard passenger (cruise) *Ivory* (12609 gt, built 1957) that was sailing the Greek islands were hospitalised today, suffering from food poisoning, the Athens News Agency (ANA) said. The passengers, 14 children and six adults, were sailing on board the Cypriot cruise-ship *Ivory* belonging to Louis Cruise Lines when they started to feel ill. The children, aged between 3 and 13, along with their parents were admitted to a hospital on the northern Aegean island of Mytilini today. Another 80 passengers with symptoms of food poisoning, including nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramping and diarrhea, were being treated by the ship's doctor. The vessel, which set sail from the Cypriot port of Limassol on Sunday (Aug 27) and was carrying 618 passengers and 150 crew, had docked on the holiday island of Santorini, the port of Pireaus and Tinos. The passengers said they began to feel ill a little before the vessel docked on Mytilini. Maria Lazou, the director of

the hospital on Mytilini, said the cause of the food poisoning was likely to be salmonella.

ROTTERDAM (NETHERLANDS)

London, Aug 30 — Passenger (cruise) *Rotterdam* sailed from Gdansk at 1300 hrs, Aug 25, bound for Wilhelmshaven.

Fires & Explosions



BUILDING, LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 29 — Firefighters are tackling a major blaze at a Royal Academy of Arts building in central London. The fire took hold at Burlington Gardens in Piccadilly - one of London's most prestigious shopping areas - creating huge amounts of smoke. The Royal Academy said the building, formerly the Museum of Mankind, is currently empty and describes it as a "separate site". Sixty firefighters are at the scene, trying to bring it under control. Eight crews were first called to the fire, another four were sent later. Nearby buildings have been evacuated and the area has been cordoned off. The smoke can be seen across central London Piccadilly has been closed to cars from Hyde Park Corner to St James's Street eastbound. A fire brigade spokesman said there was significant damage to the roof of the building.

BUILDING, NAIROBI, KENYA

Nairobi, Aug 30 — Rwanda said today it was not ruling out arson as the cause of a fire in a central Nairobi building that destroyed its embassy in Kenya. Early police reports said the fire at the International Life House started because of an electrical fault within the offices of the embassy, but investigations were ongoing today to determine the exact cause. Police said no one sustained major injuries in the incident, but two people had to be rescued from the sixth and eighth floors of the building. The cost of damages caused by the wreckage was not yet known. — Reuters.

CATHEDRAL, ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA

St Petersburg, Aug 25 — A fire gutted a 19th century cathedral in the heart of Russia's second city today, destroying its famous azure domes which attract thousands of tourists every year. As flames leapt from the main dome of the Troitsky (Trinity) Cathedral — one of the largest wooden domes in Europe — passers-by helped to rescue priceless artefacts from its renowned art and religious icon collection. "The fire services don't have long enough ladders to reach the top of the dome. They have been aiming their water guns at the middle section," Reuters photographer Alexander Demyanchuk said by telephone from outside the cathedral.

The cathedral had been covered by wooden scaffolding during reconstruction work when the fire started. "The main dome has been destroyed but we could not stop the fire because it was so high and now other domes are in flames," a spokesman for Russia's emergencies ministry told Interfax news agency. Emergency services said there had been no casualties. The Troitsky Cathedral, built overlooking one of central St Petersburg's canals, is big enough to hold 3,000 worshippers and also housed the military uniforms of Russian 19th century tsars. — Reuters.

CHEMICAL FACTORY, DHAKA, BANGLADESH

Karachi, Aug 29 — A huge fire broke out in a privately owned chemical products factory, Bengal Adhesive and Chemical Products Ltd (BACPL), in Ashulia on the outskirts of the Dhaka, Bangladesh, at 0500, local time, yesterday, before the factory workers arrived for work. The inferno, as high as 30 to 35 feet, had turned everything, raw materials, machinery and finished goods, into rubble by the time firefighters reached the scene at around 0600 and put out the blaze after struggling for almost four hours. "Nothing is left," said Jashim Uddin, vice-chairman of Bengal Group of Industries to media. "The entire plant has been collapsed and destroyed in the fire, causing a loss of about Tk 100 to 120 million (US\$1.71 million)." "The fire might have originated from an electrical short circuit, but an investigation is required to unearth the cause of the fire" he added. BACPL was established in an area of 35,000 square feet at Zirabo in Ashulia and employs about 150 workers. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

CHEMICAL PLANT, TERNEUZEN, NETHERLANDS

Amsterdam, Aug 28 — Dutch firefighters have brought under control a fire at a Dow Chemical Co. plant in the port town of Terneuzen, the company said today. Dow Chemical said in a statement that the fire started at one of its two ethylenebenzene factories due to the leak of a flammable gas. As soon as pipes are emptied of the gas, the fire should die down, the company said. Production at other parts of the plant were not affected and repeated measurements showed that no dangerous substance had been released in the blaze, Dow Chemical said.

FACTORY, SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 26 — A press report, dated today, states: It will cost millions to repair the damage at the Planters Peanuts plant in Suffolk after a fire yesterday morning, fire officials said. The fire alarm went off about 0700 hrs, at the plant's Treenut section, a stand-alone building, when a nut roaster caught fire, said Capt. James Judkins with the Suffolk

Department of Fire and Rescue. All employees were evacuated, and no one was injured, Judkins said. Firefighters later found that a mechanical problem might have caused a conveyor belt to fail, which left macadamia nuts in the roaster too long, said Cathy Pernu, a spokeswoman with Kraft Foods. The nuts contain a lot of oil and are very flammable. They ignited, Pernu said. The fire severely damaged machinery. The damaged 22,000-square-foot section of the plant will be shut down for a while, officials said.

FOREST, SPAIN

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated today, states: The government of Spain's northwestern Galicia region estimated at 100 million euros the damage caused by the recent wave of forest fires which destroyed up to 80,000 hectares. Spanish police have arrested 41 people on suspicion of deliberately starting the fires, which burned from August 4 to 15 and claimed five lives. The head of the Socialist regional administration, Emilio Perez Tourino, said the authorities would foot the clean-up bill. "We will certainly cover all the damages directly caused (by the fires) and are going to launch a programme exceeding 100 million" euros, Tourino said. The cost of the damage to forestry is estimated at some 66 million euros. A total of 13 million euros has been allocated to inhabitants whose property was affected and to the victims, with the remainder going to rebuilding infrastructure. The Galician agricultural union Unions Agrarias last week estimated the overall damage to the agricultural sector, which is of vital importance to the mainly rural region, at some 245 million euros.

FOREST, TURKEY

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated today, states: A forest fire that broke last Friday (Aug 18) in the Kas district of the southern Turkish province of Antalya is still continuing while another big fire which ravaged hundreds of acres in the Bodrum district of Mugla has been contained. Firefighting efforts in Kas are continuing with six fire-fighting helicopters and numerous personnel, said Ahmet Gedikagaoglu, the Regional Forestry Director, in a statement made late yesterday. Reinforcement units have arrived from the neighbouring cities of Ankara, Bursa, Eskisehir, Mersin, Mugla, Isparta and Burdur. Steep cliffs and undulating lands in the mountainous area make it difficult to fight the fire. Meanwhile, another forest fire in the mountainous area near the tourist resort of Bodrum was finally brought under control late yesterday. Power lines are suspected to have sparked the fire. Around 700 hectares of forest was ravaged in the three-day fire. A fire, began in the Nazilli district of the western province of Aydin aided by strong winds destroyed nearly 50 hectares of forestland, said Aydin

governor Mustafa Malay. Malay added that the fire had been put out and that efforts were continuing to ensure that it did not start up again.

MUNITIONS PLANT, LOUISIANA, UNITED STATES

Houston, Aug 24 — A series of explosions rocked a military bomb recycling plant at a National Guard base in northwestern Louisiana today and more than 1,000 people were evacuated from surrounding areas. Officials said a fire broke out at the plant on 15,000-acre Camp Minden, which appeared to have set off at least 10 explosions of munitions that included 10-ton bombs. There were no significant injuries and everyone in the plant, had been accounted for, they said. Webster Parish Fire Department chief Jimmy Bell told Reuters by telephone that the explosions occurred at Explo Systems Inc. plant, which defuses unused military munitions and recycles them. "Some of the explosions have had more force than others," he said. They rocked buildings 12 miles away from the facility, he said. Louisiana Army National Guard Lt. Col. Carl Thompson, assistant commander of Camp Minden, told CNN that all emergency personnel had been pulled back from the plant and would allow the fire to burn itself out. The evacuees included residents of the town of Doyline, 35 miles (55 km) east of Shreveport, Louisiana, students from nearby schools and inmates at a prison located on the base, officials said. — Reuters.

SCHOOL, COACHELLA, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 30 — A press report, dated Aug 29, states: An arsonist was suspected of setting a fire at a junior high school today that caused an estimated \$1 million in damages, authorities said. The fire was reported about 0330 hrs, at Bobby G. Duke Jr. High School in Coachella, Cheri Patterson of the Riverside County Fire Department said. The school had been closed for renovations, she said. Nearly 50 firefighters battled the blaze, which took about one hour to contain. Administrative offices were badly damaged in the blaze, but no one was injured in the fire, Patterson said.

WAREHOUSE, NAPA, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 26 — A press report, dated Aug 25, states: A 7,000-square-foot warehouse in Napa sustained more than \$1 million in damage in a three-alarm fire that broke out early this morning, officials reported today. The building, at 2285 Clay St., contains five different storage spaces and housed paint and other possible hazardous materials, according to the city of Napa. The structure was very seriously damaged, Napa Fire Department Battalion Chief Steve Stuart said. Firefighters brought the blaze under control around 0300 hrs, about an hour after it was reported, he said. Hours after the Fire Department

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first responded, crews remained at the warehouse cleaning up hazardous materials and investigating the blaze, Stuart said. The fire also led to a minor hazardous discharge of water, paint materials and other unknown substances into Napa Creek that has since been contained by sand bags and berms, according to Napa city officials. No injuries were reported in the fire. Firefighter and hazardous materials specialist Bob Frappia said the fire appears to be accidental.

WAREHOUSES, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

London, Aug 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Two warehouses are on fire and are sending huge plumes of smoke over inner-city Sydney. About 40 firefighters have been sent to the blazes in Bourke Street, Alexandria, NSW Fire Brigades spokesman Inspector Gordon Boath said. The first Triple-0 calls were received at 1500, AEST, he said. Macquarie Radio said staff were being evacuated from surrounding businesses. Thick smoke is blanketing the area adjacent to Sydney airport. A spokesman for Sydney Airport Corp said the smoke was having no affect on the airport's operations.

WILDFIRES, AUSTRALIA

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated today, states: Queensland firefighters are continuing to battle bushfires tonight in the state's south-east. Three of the blazes are located near Gympie. There are also two blazes still burning in rugged terrain near Warwick - at Dalveen and in the Condamine Gorge - which have been burning since the weekend. Andrew Berkman says a blaze that flared up at Torbanlea, north of Gympie, late today has been extinguished. "We've had two reasonably-sized fires burning in the east of Gympie and south-west of Gympie for a couple of days now," he said. "The one we're most focussed on is near the gympie Muster. "There's also been one at Wolvi - about 22 kilometres east of Gympie, and just this afternoon, firefighters have been battling a blaze north of Gympie at Torbanlea."

London, Aug 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Queensland firefighters have had another busy day battling nine major bush and grass fires between Rockhampton and Stanthorpe. In the north, there is a wild fire in rugged terrain near Rockhampton and another north of Maryborough. In the south, two fires are still burning near Gympie, while four near Warwick and Stanthorpe have been contained. Andrew Berkman from the Queensland Fire Service says there have also been numerous smaller fires. "We've certainly had a lot of concern today on the Sunshine Coast. There's been a couple of fires around Gympie," he said. We've also had quite serious fires at Coolum which has blocked off a major road in that area. Brisbane region had a couple of small fires which caused quite a lot of smoke,

causing probably a bit of traffic hazard on the Gateway and also on the Ipswich motorway.

WILDFIRES, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 25 — A press report, dated Aug 24, states: Firefighters from Arizona, Oregon and New Mexico joined the fight against a group of fast-growing wildfires in south-eastern Washington today, and officials said they still need more help. "The call has gone out," said Louise Day, fire information officer at the Columbia County fires. "The growth potential for the fires is still extreme." Two hundred buildings were threatened by the fires, which covered nearly 100 square miles near Dayton today, up from 53 square miles yesterday. Two homes had been destroyed, 35 outbuildings had been damaged and about 300 people had been urged to evacuate. More than 500 firefighters were battling the blazes. The state Department of Natural Resources generally keeps several firefighting teams free for initial attack on new blazes, but those teams have been busy for weeks, and the state has nearly exhausted its resources, said Public Lands Commissioner Doug Sutherland. Sutherland today ordered up a DC-10 jet capable of dropping as much as eight times more retardant than the usual air tanker. The giant aircraft, which is owned by a private contractor, costs \$26,000 an hour, with a minimum of three hours a day. Sutherland said he expects to use the aircraft, which can drop a line of retardant 50 feet wide and more than a mile long, for two days, or about six hours, including travel time from Southern California. "It's not inexpensive, but depending on how you use it, it could very well be less expensive than using other resources that are currently not even available," he said. Governor Chris Gregoire declared a state of emergency yesterday, allowing state agencies to send money and resources to help local jurisdictions battle the blazes. Conditions were better for firefighting today, with lower winds and temperatures. However, forecasts predicted higher temperatures and dry conditions over the weekend (Aug 26-27) and into next week. In Walla Walla County, in south-eastern Washington, some residents along Coppei Creek were urged to evacuate as three fires burned nearby. In eastern Oregon, wildfires burned through tens of thousands of acres of grass, sagebrush and juniper. Most of the fires were started by lightning. "It's been hectic," said Tara Wilson, spokeswoman for firefighting agencies south of Burns. "We are getting tired, and our crews are getting tired. Things are stretched pretty thin. We've just had too much of the high winds, and the fires are pretty erratic in their behaviour. It's going to be a long fight." In Montana, firefighters continued to battle a blaze in a subdivision east of Billings that had burned nearly 3,900 acres, or roughly six square miles. It was 85% contained by this evening. More than

seven million acres, about 11,000 square miles, have burned across the US this year, well above the average of about 4.4 million acres by this time of year, according to the National Interagency Fire Centre.

London, Aug 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Calmer wind and cooler temperatures helped crews gain on a wildfire burning in a subdivision east of Billings. The Emerald Hills Fire was estimated at close to 3,900 acres and 85% contained yesterday evening. Fire officials attributed the decrease in acreage to improved mapping, and the increase in containment to better weather. An evacuation order for nearly 200 homes in the Emerald Hills subdivision was lifted at 1930 hrs. Fire officials and law enforcement officers told residents they could return home during a public meeting at the Lockwood Middle School gym. More than 200 people were assigned to help fight the fire. A team trained to manage especially dangerous fires and fires that threaten a large number of homes took command of the blaze Wednesday (Aug 23) evening. The cause of the fire remained under investigation. It was reported Tuesday morning and was burning in grass and timber. Meanwhile, strong winds and low humidity caused the Derby Mountain south of Big Timber to blow up. The fire grew from 3,000 acres yesterday morning to 12,100 acres in the afternoon, fire officials said. Stillwater County Disaster and Emergency Services placed about 170 homes in the area on "fire alert," according to a news release from the Gallatin National Forest. Fifteen miles south of Dillon, the Clark Canyon Fire was reported at 10,000 acres, or more than 15 square miles, and 20% contained yesterday. The fire started Wednesday and grew to nearly 6,000 acres in four hours. Fire officials think it was ignited by a piece of heavy equipment being used in the area. The fire was burning in grass, sagebrush and timber on private, state and U.S. Bureau of Land Management land just east of Interstate 15. No buildings had been lost; however, some structures were potentially threatened northeast of the fire area, fire officials said. At least one building was wrapped with fire resistant material as a precaution.

London, Aug 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters battled large wildfires in eastern Washington that burned a railroad trestle and grain elevator, and a rural mayor was arrested after trying to get through a barricade to protect his farm. Amid predictions of hotter, drier conditions into next week, state officials ordered reinforcements, including a DC-10 jetliner capable of dropping as much as eight times more retardant than the usual air tanker. A fire apparently started by a wheat combine blackened about six square miles in the Palouse River canyon near Colfax, destroying a trestle and a grain elevator, officials said. The blaze was about 60% contained with 120 firefighters on the lines, Colfax Fire

Chief Ralph Walter said late yesterday. About three dozen miles to the south-west, in Columbia County, firefighters from Arizona, Oregon and New Mexico joined the battle against fires covering more than 100 square miles near Dayton. Two homes have been destroyed and hundreds of other structures remain threatened, and more than 300 people have been evacuated, authorities said. More than 500 firefighters were assigned to those fires, and a plea was issued yesterday for more firefighters from other states in the region. Starbuck Mayor Don Jackson was cited for obstruction of law enforcement officers and released after trying to get through barricades to protect his home, authorities said yesterday. When deputies refused to let him pass a roadblock Tuesday, the mayor said the only way they could stop him would be to arrest him, so they did. State Lands Commissioner Doug Sutherland arranged for the DC-10, owned by a private contractor, to drop retardant on large fires. It can drop a line of retardant 50 feet wide and more than a mile long, he said. The DC-10 will be based in Moses Lake, between the southeast Washington fires and the largest burn, a 200-square-mile complex of fires in north-central Washington. Nearly 3,000 firefighters were assigned to the fires, which were burning between Winthrop and Conconully and were 45% contained.

London, Aug 29 — A press report, dated today, states: After battling Washington wildfires in high temperatures, winds and low humidity, firefighters were hoping that cooler weather would bring much-needed relief. However, the weather change expected today might be a mixed blessing, as it could be accompanied by high winds and lightning, which could drive existing fires and spark new ones, fire spokesmen said. A cold front is expected to drop temperatures 10-15 deg Fahrenheit from current highs in the 90s in some areas, National Weather Service meteorologist Jonathan Fox said. Evacuation orders remained in effect for some homes and vacation cabins in several areas. Two homes and several dozen small structures burned last week in massive fires in south-eastern Washington. The fires have burned across more than 64,171 acres and were reported 20% contained yesterday. The fires were started by lightning strikes on Aug 21. The fires were being fought by about 735 firefighters from at least 10 states, as well as ground crews from British Columbia and Alberta, Canada, said fire information officer Virgil Mink. In the north-central part of the state, crews were pulled off wildfires at midday yesterday when temperature, humidity and wind speed combined to trigger a safety alert, spokeswoman Diane Bedell said. The fires had blackened more than 139,568 acres of timber and brush. They were started by lightning in July and were about 50% contained.



AIRCRAFT GROUNDED, NEW ZEALAND

London, Aug 24 — Passengers were hauled off an aircraft minutes before takeoff tonight after Air New Zealand was told to inspect several of its aircrafts. Four flights were cancelled around the country, disrupting the plans of some 400 passengers, after the airline was told by Seattle plane maker Boeing to inspect a part of the rudder assembly of eight of its 14 Boeing 737s. Air NZ said it was trying to put the passengers on alternative flights this evening. Spokesman David Morgan said the inspections would take less than two hours.

C-FBYI

London, Aug 29 — Stearman A75N1, C-FBYI, took off from Procter's Field, a private strip near Vernon, BC for the Vernon Regional airport at 1520, Aug 28. Upon levelling out at 3,000 feet asl, the oil pressure then dropped to zero. The pilot shut down the engine and attempted a forced landing at his departure strip. However, he was unable to make the strip and flew into trees short of the strip. The pilot suffered minor injuries. There was no fire but the aircraft was substantially damaged.

C-FTHH

London, Aug 25 — Bell 206L-3, C-FTHH, operated by Highland Helicopters, was conducting oil field operations 40 nautical miles north-east of Lac La Biche, AB, 1100, Aug 20. During departure from an oil well site, the engine lost power. The pilot entered autorotation and the helicopter struck the ground at a high rate of descent. The main rotor severed the tail boom at impact and the pilot sustained serious injuries. The wreckage is being recovered to the TSB Pacific Region compound and the engine will be examined at a local engine overhaul facility.

C-FYRI

London, Aug 25 — Cessna 180, C-FYRI, collided with the embankment of a privately-owned man-made water runway during take-off at the Tofino airport at 1500, Aug 24. The aircraft was departing westbound from the 1400 x 80 foot wide water runway. The wind was from 210 M at 5 knots. The water rudders were retracted for the take-off run. The pilot lost directional control and collided with the embankment on the left side. There were no injuries. There was substantial damage to the aircraft.

C-GDJE

London, Aug 29 — Cessna A185E, C-GDJE, was departing from Chaunigan

Lake, BC to Williams Lake, BC for refuelling. The pilot had attempted two previous takeoffs with a passenger on board, but was unable to get airborne. The passenger disembarked and as the aircraft was taxiing out for another takeoff attempt the left float compartment began to take on water at 1400, Aug 25. The pilot attempted to taxi to shore but the aircraft nosed over, engine running, in about six feet of water. The pilot had a flotation device available but was not wearing it. He was rescued uninjured from the water. Reportedly the floats had been pumped out that morning.

C-GEDD

London, Aug 30 — While attempting to land on runway 16 at Leoville, SK, the pilot of Cherokee PA28-180, C-GEDD, encountered stronger-than-expected winds at 1440, Aug 28. As the aircraft descended below the height of trees bordering the runway the aircraft suddenly veered to the right. The pilot aborted the landing and attempted a go-around but the aircraft stalled and crashed beside the runway. There were no injuries; however the aircraft was substantially damaged.

C-GTNY

London, Aug 30 — Trans North Helicopters Bell 206B, C-GTNY, descended into a tree during a long line operation, while manoeuvring to pick up a load at 1800, Aug 26. Both main rotor blades sustained substantial damage and will have to be replaced prior to a maintenance ferry flight. There were no injuries.

CRASH INTO LAKE ONTARIO, CANADA

London, Aug 25 — A press report, dated today, states: A pilot and his two passengers, who took off from London yesterday, are "extremely lucky to be alive" after their Cessna 172 lost power and plunged into Lake Ontario. The three men were sightseeing over Lake Ontario during a flight to Buttonville airport from London, when their Cessna 172 had "undetermined difficulties" and lost power at 1530hrs, said Staff Sgt. John Badowski of Toronto's police marine unit. Rescuers found them treading water in Humber Bay, four to five kilometres off the Ontario Place amusement park, just minutes after a distress call to Toronto's island airport. Boats sent from the marine unit's headquarters arrived at the crash site seven minutes later. The first boat at the scene found three men clinging to the sinking aircraft and pulled them from the water. The crash occurred about 1.6 km south of the Toronto shore. The aircraft is believed to be submerged in about 26 metres of water. Transport Canada has been called in to investigate the cause of the crash.

CRASH, BREATHITT COUNTY, KENTUCKY, UNITED STATES

See N408JC.

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CRASH, INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 29 — A press report, dated Aug 28, states: A small aircraft narrowly missed homes as it crashed in an Indianapolis subdivision's retention pond today, killing the pilot, but residents rescued the three passengers as the aircraft filled with water. The residents pulled out all four people in the single-engine aircraft, but the pilot, Indianapolis oral surgeon Robert Edesess, died at a hospital. A co-owner of the aircraft said Edesess might have suffered a stroke. The rescuers "jumped in and got them out of the aircraft and dragged them over to the side," said Gene Konzen, chief of the Wayne Township Fire Department. Elizabeth Isham Corey of the Federal Aviation Administration said the Edesess' aircraft had just taken off today from the Eagle Creek Airport on the city's northwest side en route to Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, when it reportedly turned around and crashed into the pond, missing homes clustered around it. Witnesses said they watched the aircraft coming in, with its parachute — a safety feature on some smaller aircraft — deployed behind it. "He was sputtering, and the engine cut off, and the parachute came out, when we heard a big 'poof,'" said resident Julie Burck. Bruce Kehoe, an Indianapolis attorney who owned the aircraft with Edesess, said hospital personnel told him his friend had become incapacitated by a stroke or similar medical problem while flying. The survivors were in hospital, but their injuries were not considered life-threatening. Corey said federal investigators arrived at the crash site today.

CRASH, LAMON BAY, QUEZON PROVINCE, PHILIPPINES

London, Aug 25 — A press report, dated today, states: The wreckage of a light aircraft that had apparently crashed some time ago was discovered by fishermen this morning under some 30 meters of water Lamon Bay fronting Mauban town in Quezon province, some 150 km from Manila. Citing reports from the fishermen, Mauban Mayor Fernando Llamas said the aircraft was found between Cagbalete and Balesin islands inside the territorial jurisdiction of his town in the mid-eastern coast of Quezon province. He recalled that a light aircraft with two passengers onboard and loaded with fish fingerlings from Palawan was reported missing in the area last year. It was never found despite the massive search. Llamas said he immediately ordered the police to cordon off the area.

CRASH, MADHA AREA, OMAN

Karachi, Aug 31 — The pilot of a training aircraft belonging to the Emirates Flying School was killed when his aircraft crashed in a mountainous area in Oman on Tuesday (Aug 29), according to a local media report. The remains of the Asian male pilot were found in the Madha area of Oman on Tuesday morning during a second search by the search and rescue teams of the Dubai

Police Air wing. The pilot's body was also recovered and brought back to Dubai for repatriation. The pilot was flying a Piper Cherokee 28 aircraft rented from the Emirates Flying School when it disappeared from the radar of Fujairah Airport's Air Traffic Control and lost radio contact. Police said the Dubai Police Operations Room received a call at 2030, Tuesday that a training aircraft had lost contact with the control tower and disappeared from the radar screen. Police also received a report from Oman Police saying that they had received a report of an aircraft that had crashed into a mountain in the Madha region. Dubai Police's rescue and Difficult Missions team reached the area and searched until 0130 hrs, but found nothing. Yesterday morning, three helicopters from Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Oman Police scanned the area and found the crash site. The UAE's General Civil Aviation Authority is investigating the crash in co-operation with Dubai Civil Aviation. The authorities are trying to establish details about the pilot. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

CRASH, MOORABBIN AIRPORT, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

London, Aug 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Two pilots have walked away without a scratch after a crash landing in which their aircraft skidded along the runway after the nose wheel collapsed. The two men, who are both licensed pilots, were flying over Port Phillip Bay in the twin-engine light aircraft when an alarm on the aircraft sounded at 1000 hrs. The pair, who were thought to have been taking part in an advanced flying lesson, alerted air traffic controllers at Moorabbin Airport to the alarm. The controllers then asked an aircraft flying nearby to get closer to the light aircraft to assess the damage, discovering the nose wheel of the smaller aircraft had not fully extended. The two pilots headed back to Moorabbin Airport in Melbourne's south, where they completed a dramatic crash landing just after 1100 hrs. Airport general manager Phil McConnell said the front landing wheel collapsed on impact and the aircraft skidded about 20 m before stopping. The aircraft has been towed away. Civil Aviation Safety Authority spokesman Peter Gibson said CASA was seeking a full report from the flying school, General Flying Services. "One of their engineers will strip it down, work out what happened, and give us a report," he said. "The nosewheel collapse left the pilot with no choice but to land as gently as possible on the nose. But, as I understand it, it didn't do a hell of a lot of damage to the aircraft, so it must have been a nice smooth landing," Mr Gibson said.

CRASH, ROTHERHAM AREA, SOUTH YORKSHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 26 — A press report, dated today, states: Two men who were

killed when their plane crashed near a motorway junction in South Yorkshire have been named. Terence Whitfield, 69, of Askern near Doncaster, and Brian Yoxall, 44, of Wakefield, died when the single-engined plane came down near Rotherham. Police said Mr Yoxall was believed to have been the pilot. Witnesses described the plane circling fields before making a steep descent and crashing near Micklebrink close to junction 1 of the M18. The wreckage of the plane, which caught fire on impact, was removed today as air accident investigators continued to examine the scene.

EMERGENCY LANDING, BANDAR ABBAS, IRAN

London, Aug 29 — IRNA-An Iran Air Boeing 747 passenger aircraft en route to Malaysia from Tehran today made an emergency landing at Bandar Abbas airport for technical reasons. The passengers said that the airlines officials told them the airplane carrying some 400 passengers needs a spare part which should be brought from either Tehran or Shiraz. Airport officials said that the aircraft will head for Malaysia this afternoon after fixing the spare part.

EMERGENCY LANDING, KEFLAVIK, ICELAND

London, Aug 26 — A press report, dated today, states: A British Airways flight has made an emergency landing at an airport in Iceland after smoke poured from a galley oven. The flight from London was en route to Denver when the smoke appeared, forcing a landing at Keflavik Airport. All 268 passenger disembarked the Boeing 777 flight safely and officials ruled out any link to terrorism. Emergency crews were on standby at the airport, which is 30 miles from the capital Reykjavik. A spokeswoman from the Iceland Civil Aviation Administration said there was no terrorist threat. "They were 50 miles from Keflavik when it was thought there was a fire. But it turned out to be only smoke," she said. A British Airways spokesman said the plane had landed safely and that passengers had disembarked as normal. The flight was likely to complete its journey to the US tomorrow with passengers being put up in a hotel overnight, he added.

N171MA

London, Aug 26 — A press report, dated today, states: A twin-engine plane en route from Indiana to the Bahamas crashed yesterday in a densely wooded area of Flagler County, killing two people on board, authorities said. The plane was reported missing around 1315 hrs, when it disappeared from a U.S. Coast Guard radar screen, said Debra Johnson, a spokeswoman for the Flagler County Sheriff's Office. The Federal Aviation Administration said the plane was registered to Drug and Laboratory Disposal Inc. of Plainwell, Mich. It went down about five miles northwest of Ormond Beach. The wreckage was found by rescue workers

shortly before 1600 hrs, at the Relay State Wildlife Management Area, inside a densely wooded and muddy area. The crash site is three miles from State Road 11. The impact caused the plane to be buried in the muck, Johnson said. FAA and National Transportation Safety Board officials will be investigating the crash. The plane is a Mitsubishi MU-2.

London, Aug 29 — Mitsubishi MU-2B-40 (Solitaire) N171MA crashed near Ormand Beach, Florida, at 1700, Aug 26, while on a flight from Bloomington, Indiana, to Grand Harbor, Bahamas. The aircraft was destroyed. The two persons on board were killed.

N408JC

London, Aug 29 — A press report, dated Aug 28, states: A small aircraft carrying seven people crashed in a wooded, mountainous area of southeastern Kentucky today, and authorities said no survivors had been found. Breathitt County Coroner Bobby Thorpe said there were “definitely fatalities” in the fiery crash but did not know how many people were killed. The crash site is so remote that rescue workers in all-terrain vehicles needed help from a helicopter to find it, said Buddy Rogers, a spokesman for the Kentucky Division of Emergency Management. “At this time, no survivors have been located,” said Kentucky State Police Trooper Jody Sims. Seven people were on board the twin-engine Cessna that departed from Kickapoo Downtown Airport near Wichita Falls, Texas, said Kathleen Bergen, spokeswoman for the Federal Aviation Administration in Atlanta. She said she did not know the destination because the pilot did not file a flight plan. The aircraft crashed in Breathitt County, 100 miles south-east of Lexington and about 10 miles from an airport near Hazard, Sims said. There was rain, thunder and light fog in the area for much of the afternoon, said Tom Johnstone, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Jackson. Thorpe was at the scene today, and Sims said federal aviation investigators and officials from the state medical examiner’s office would probably arrive tomorrow morning.

London, Aug 29 — Cessna 401A N408JC crashed near Jackson, Kentucky, at 1845, Aug 28, while on a flight to Hazard, KY. The aircraft was destroyed. The seven persons on board were killed.

N431CA

London, Aug 27 — A press report, dated today, states: A Comair Canadair CRJ-200 (N431CA) carrying 50 people crashed a mile from Lexington’s airport this morning shortly after take-off, the Federal Aviation Administration said. At least one person survived. Comair Flight 5191, a CRJ-200 regional jet with 47 passengers and three crew members, crashed at 0607 hrs after taking off for Atlanta, said Kathleen Bergen, an

FAA spokeswoman. There was no immediate word on what caused the crash in a field about a mile from Blue Grass Airport. Light rain was falling at the time. The aircraft was largely intact afterward, but there was a fire following the impact, police said. The University of Kentucky hospital is treating one survivor, who is in critical condition, spokesman Jay Blanton said. No other survivors have been brought to the hospital, he said. Fayette County Coroner Gary Ginn said the passengers and crew appeared to still be on the aircraft and the deaths were caused either by the impact or the “hot fire” on board. He said both flight recorders have been found. Investigators from the FAA and the National Transportation Safety Board were en route to the scene, FAA spokeswoman Laura Brown said. The airport closed for three hours after the crash, but reopened by 0900 hrs. Comair is a subsidiary of Delta Air Lines based in the Cincinnati suburb of Erlanger, Kentucky.

London, Aug 27 — Canadair CL-600-2B19 (CRJ200ER) Regional Jet, N321CA, operator Comair/Delta Connection Preliminary crashed in a hilly, heavily wooded area on a working farm just past the end of the runway at Lexington-Blue Grass Airport, at 0607 today. Two of the three crew were killed and all 47 passengers were also killed. It was still dark as Comair flight 5191 taxied out for take-off. Media reports suggest that the crew were cleared for a runway 22 departure, which is Lexington’s main runway. However, the aircraft began its takeoff roll on runway 26 which is a smaller 3500 x 75 feet runway. This runway would probably not be long enough for a safe take-off of a fully-laden CRJ200.

Lexington, Kentucky, Aug 29 — The co-pilot who was at the controls of a Comair Canadair CL-600-2B19 (CRJ200ER) (N431CA) which crashed off the wrong runway on Sunday (Aug 27) and killed 49 people may have been confused by changes in the airport’s runway lights, aviation experts said yesterday. The co-pilot, the flight’s lone survivor, may not have been aware the lights on the proper runway were back on after they had been at least partially out when he landed at the airport two nights earlier. A temporary advisory to pilots warning of the lighting outages on the longer runway used by commercial flights at Lexington’s Blue Grass Airport had expired the day before the crash, the aviation sources said. A witness to the accident, a ramp employee of another airline, told investigators the 3,500-foot Runway 26 used by the jet was dark, while the lights were lit alongside the 7,000-foot-long intersecting Runway 22 used by commercial air traffic at the airport. “This individual witnessed the taxi, the take-off roll, and the accident. He told our investigators that Runway 26 was not lit and that Runway 22 and the taxiways were lit,” National Transportation Safety Board investigator Debbie Hersman told a

news briefing. The lone air traffic controller on duty had cleared the aircraft to take off on the longer runway and had no further communication with the pilots as they hurtled down the wrong strip, she said. In a conversation recorded on the aircraft’s cockpit voice recorder, the pilots noted the darkened runway. As the aircraft attained speed, the pilot called for the nose to come up so the front wheels would leave the pavement, Hersman said. Tyre markings showed the aircraft did not become airborne until striking a berm beyond the end of the runway. The aircraft then hit a perimeter fence, cleared a barbed-wire fence, struck some trees, and then came to rest in a field and burst into flames. Co-pilot James Polehinke was pulled from the flaming wreckage, and remained in critical condition. Investigators have yet to interview him. “One of the issues that we’re certainly going to be looking at is the visibility and the ability for the crew to see,” Hersman said. “And also the issue of whether or not air traffic control could see.” The local coroner said the bodies had been removed from the burned-out fuselage and bodily fluids taken to perform toxicology tests. “Toxicology reports are standard in accident investigations,” Hersman said. “They generally look for alcohol and six illicit drugs.” Comair is a feeder carrier for Delta Air Lines. Both are restructuring in bankruptcy. — Reuters.

N6298

London, Aug 28 — A press report, dated Aug 27, states: A Florence woman is dead and a man from Florence is in the hospital after their small airplane crashed today in Elmira. The airplane clipped a home and slammed into some nearby cars at about 1400 hrs this afternoon. The incident happened on Sky Lane, near Evers Road, in Elmira, just after the vintage bi-plane took off at a private airstrip. There were only two people in the old aircraft. The male pilot is at Sacred Heart Hospital with non-life threatening injuries and the passenger was pronounced dead at the scene. Lane County Sheriff’s Deputies said no fire resulted from the crash. Deputy Matt Keetle said the aircraft had taken off from a small private airport and made a banking turn. It is unknown if he lost power, or if there was some other problems. Officials said no one on the ground was injured. Phil Writer, a pilot who lives along the airstrip, identified the aircraft as a 1925 Travelaire. The names of the people in the aircraft have not been released.

London, Aug 29 — Curtiss Wright Travel Air C-4000 N6298 crashed near Elmira, Oregon, at 1400, Aug 27. The aircraft was destroyed. One of the two persons on board was killed and the other was seriously injured.

VH-BZA

See VH-UMB.

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

VH-UMB

London, Aug 31 — A press report, dated today, states: An instructor pilot safely guided his light aircraft back to earth after one wing was seriously damaged in a mid-air collision. The Piper Warrior, VH-UMB, instructor and his student were doing circuit training at Coldstream Aerodrome, in Melbourne's outer east, last December when they collided with another Piper Warrior returning to nearby Lilydale, a transport safety report reveals. The VH-UMB crew issued a mayday call but despite almost losing the right wing and a stabiliser, the instructor managed to regain control of the aircraft before landing safely at Coldstream. The pilot of the second Warrior VH-BZA, who was also instructing a student, also managed to land at Lilydale safely, despite suffering slight wing and nose damage. The VH-UMB instructor was preoccupied with helping his student maintain good distance from powerlines and other traffic, the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) report says.

ZP-TDZ

London, Aug 31 — GAF N.22B Nomad, ZP-TDZ, operator Paraguay Air Services, was chartered for some flights in northern Argentina. It left Asuncion for Resistencia Airport, CH. After another landing at Joaquin V. Gonzalez, the aircraft continued to Salta, Argentina. During the descent an apparent engine problem forced the pilots to carry out a forced landing near the Ruta Provincial 24, some 4 km short of Salta Airport at around 1940, Aug 28. The Nomad struck some trees and landed in a ploughed field. The undercarriage was completely destroyed. There were two crew and 10 passengers on board. There were no fatalities.

Space Vehicles**DELAYED LAUNCH OF SPACE SHUTTLE, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES**

London, Aug 27 — A press report, dated Aug 26, states: Tomorrow's planned launch of the US space shuttle Atlantis has been put back by a day, Nasa has announced. Officials said they wanted more time to evaluate the effects of a lightning strike on the site, and to ensure that weather conditions had improved. Atlantis is due to undertake a construction mission to the International Space Station (ISS). Its six-strong crew is taking giant new power-generating solar arrays to the space station. The half-built \$100bn space station must be completed before 2010, when the shuttle fleet is due to be retired. Atlantis and its astronauts are now scheduled to lift off at 1504 hrs (1904, UTC) on Monday

(Aug 28) from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida. The mission's main objective is to fit the P3/P4 truss, a 17-tonne segment of the station's truss backbone that includes a huge set of solar arrays and a giant rotary joint to allow them to track the Sun.

Product Recalls**APPLE COMPUTER BATTERIES, WORLD-WIDE**

San Francisco, Aug 25 — Apple Computer Inc will recall 1.8 million lithium-ion notebook PC batteries after nine overheated, the second major recall in the past 10 days involving battery cells made by Sony Corp. The recall, announced yesterday, is the second-biggest in US history involving electronics or computers. Just last week, No 1 PC maker Dell Inc recalled 4.1 million lithium-ion batteries, also with Sony-made cells. Apple, like Dell, said it did not expect any "material" financial impact on its business. Sony, however, said the two recalls would cost it between yen 20 billion and 30 billion, or \$172-258 million. The higher figure equals about one-fourth of Sony's net profit forecast for the current business year to March. "Sony clearly has a problem here," said Tim Bajarin, principal analyst at Creative Strategies in San Jose, California. "There's a problem with the batteries overheating." Bajarin noted, however, that in Apple's case there were no reported notebook fires, while several of the recalled Dell computers had erupted in flames. Dell said it had reports of six batteries overheating, but no injuries were reported. Apple's devices caused minor burns to two users, US safety regulators said. The recall tally involving Sony batteries has now reached nearly six million and highlights the potential hazards of lithium-ion batteries, which also power a wide range of portable devices including music players and cellphones. About 100 million notebook computers are sold annually worldwide, Bajarin said. They are the fastest growing segment of the personal computer market. Tokyo-based Sony yesterday said in a separate statement that it did not anticipate further recalls of batteries using the potentially faulty cells. Apple will recall 1.1 million batteries sold with notebook computers in the United States and 700,000 abroad, the US Consumer Product Safety Commission said. "Our No 1 priority is to recall and replace the affected batteries free of charge," Apple spokesman Steve Dowling said. The reported overheating incidents were due to "contamination" in the Sony battery cells, he said, but added that he did not have further details. Roger Kay, president of market researcher Endpoint Technologies Associates, said

the affected Sony battery cells might overheat or catch fire when tiny metal fragments, remnants of the manufacturing process, break loose and cause short-circuits. Dell also pointed to "contamination" in the Sony battery cells as the cause of its problems. The batteries were sold with Apple iBook G4 and PowerBook G4 computers from October, 2003, through this month, according to the safety commission. None of Apple's most recent notebooks using microprocessors from Intel Corp are affected, Dowling said. Apple had said last week after the Dell recall that it was reviewing its notebook batteries to ensure they met its standards. "The key message to consumers is these lithium-ion batteries can actually overheat and pose a fire hazard," said Scott Wolfson, spokesman for the Consumer Product Safety Commission in Washington. — Reuters.

LAPTOP BATTERIES, WORLDWIDE

London, Aug 24 — The Consumer Product Safety Commission have said Apple plans to recall 1.1 million batteries in the United States, plus 700,000 sold abroad. A spokesman for the agency says it's the second-largest recall ever in the computer and consumer-electronics sectors. The recall affects lithium-ion batteries, which have been linked to reports of overheating and fires. The batteries were designed for Apple i-Book G-4 and PowerBook G-4 models that were purchased between October 2003 and August of this year.

LAWN TRACTORS, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 30 — A press release, issued by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, dated Aug 29, states: A recall of approximately 16,000 John Deere X300 Select Series Lawn Tractors was voluntarily conducted by Deere & Company of Moline, Ill., in cooperation with the CPSC. A problem in the manufacturing process could cause damage to the circuit in the interlock module. If the interlock module fails, the mower blades will be able to run with no operator on the tractor seat. Consumers could suffer injuries from contact with operating blades. No incidents or injuries have been reported. Manufactured in the United States, the tractors were sold at authorized John Deere dealers nationwide from April 2006 through to May 2006 for between \$2,800 and \$5,000.

OUTDOOR FIREPLACES, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 30 — A press release, issued by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, dated Aug 29, states: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission announces the following recall in voluntary cooperation with L G Sourcing, Inc., of North Wilkesboro, N.C., of approximately 33,000 øGarden Treasuresø Steel Dome Fireplaces.

Touch-up paint used on the fireplace's exterior can ignite during use, posing a fire hazard. There have been two reports of paint on the fireplace's exterior igniting. No injuries have been reported. The recalled fireplace consists of a round fire bowl that rests on four legs, with a chimney cap and hood. The fireplace is made of steel and is painted black. They are about three-feet tall and two-feet wide. The item number, 91023, is printed on the package materials. Manufactured in China, the fireplaces were sold at exclusively at Lowe's stores nationwide from August 2005 through to July 2006 for about \$100.

TOYOTA MOTOR VEHICLES, CHINA

London, Aug 25 — Toyota Motor Corp. will recall 20,069 Crown sedans made in China because of defective rubber strips that seal the windshields, the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of China said today. Tianjin FAW Toyota Motor Co., a joint venture between Toyota and China's FAW Group, will recall Crown sedans produced between Feb. 21 and Sept. 20, 2005 from Monday (Aug 28), the

government agency said in a statement on its Web site. The rubber strip may fall off when the car is at high speed because of a weak adhesive, and this could be a hazard to other cars or pedestrians, the statement said. The venture hasn't received any reports about accidents or injuries related to the problem, it said. Yale Zhang, an auto analyst with CSM Worldwide, said the number of sedans involved isn't big compared with recalls internationally. The defect is also a small problem and is unlikely to hurt Toyota's sales in China, he said.



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

See under "Political & Civil Unrest."

IRAQ

London, Aug 30 — The Iraqi port of Khor Al Zubair has been closed since

2000, local time, yesterday, following a collision between two general cargo vessels. One of the vessels involved in the collision sank inside the port.

ITALY

Genoa, Aug 28 — Port situation/berthing delays: Genoa: One general cargo vessel waiting for a berth. Average delay in berthing: one half to one day. Savona: No vessels waiting for normal berth, two vessels waiting for special berth. La Spezia: No vessels are waiting for berths. — Lloyd's Agents.

PANAMA CANAL

London, Aug 27 — A press report, dated Aug 26, states: The situation at the Panama Canal is improving. The maintenance work will now complete at 1800 hrs today and it is predicted there will be a vast improvement in canal situation by the middle of next week.

SYRIA

Aleppo, Aug 26 — Current delays for vessels berthing: two days at Lattakia and three days at Tartous. — Lloyd's Agents.

Port Delays

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

Country/Port	Date of report	No. of vessels waiting and/or days delay
Australia		
Abbott Point	04-09-2006	Coal: Ten vessels due by 26/9.
Brisbane	04-09-2006	Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth; Three vessels due by 10/9.
Dalymple Bay	04-09-2006	Coal: Three vessels loading at berth; 12 vessels arrived; 30 vessels due by 30/9.
Dampier	04-09-2006	Coal: Fourteen vessels due by 28/10.
Esperance	04-09-2006	Iron ore: Two vessels due by 10/9.
Geraldton	04-09-2006	Iron ore: One vessel loading at berth, 1 at anchor; 2 vessels due by 18/9.
Gladstone	04-09-2006	Coal: R.G. Tanna coal terminal: Three vessels loading at berth; 4 vessels arrived; 33 vessels due by 2/12; Barney Point: 1 vessel loading at berth; 9 vessels due by 15/10.
Hay Point	04-09-2006	Coal: One vessel loading at berth; 3 vessels arrived; 19 vessels due by 21/9.
Newcastle	04-09-2006	Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: Three vessels loading at berth; 15 vessels arrived; 46 vessels due by 23/9; 8-11 days delay expected; Dykes 4+5: 1 vessel loading at berth; 7 vessels arrived; 20 vessels due by 22/9; 8-12 days delay expected.
Port Hedland	04-09-2006	Iron ore: BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Mt. Newman (Nelson Point), "A" berth: One vessel loading at berth; 1 vessel arrived; 6 vessels due by 11/9; "B" berth: 1 vessel loading at berth; 2 vessels arrived; 6 vessels due by 14/9; 3 other vessels due by 19/9 at A or B berth 2/4; BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Goldsworthy (Finucane Island "C" berth): berth closed due to refurbishment; (Finucane Island "D" berth): 1 vessel arrived; 3 vessels due by 10/9; Cockatoo Island: 3 vessels due 13/9.
Port Kembla	04-09-2006	Coal: Fourteen vessels due by 28/10.
Port Walcott	04-09-2006	Iron ore: Two vessels loading at berth; 8 vessels arrived; 11 vessels due by 29/9.
Whyalla	04-09-2006	Iron ore: One vessel loading at berth, 1 at anchor; 8 vessels due by 28/10.
Azerbaijan		
Apsheron	04-09-2006	Oil products: Three vessels discharging at berth (1 gasoil, 1 fuel oil, 1 kerosene).
Baku	04-09-2006	Oil products: Azertrans terminal: Nobel Avenue: port open; no vessels; Sangachal District: port open; no vessels.
Bulgaria		
Bourgas	04-09-2006	Nine vessels in port of which 3 loading cois, 6 discharging (2 copper concentrate, 2 metal, 1 salt, 1 gasoil); 1 vessel in roads to discharge clinker; 4 vessels due of which 1 to load concrete iron, 3 to discharge (1 coal, 1 copper concentrate, 1 iron ore).

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Port Conditions

Varna	04-09-2006	Varna East, Varna West, Balchik: Seventeen vessels in port operating of which 10 loading (1 hardboard, 8 soda, 1 misc. cargo/bulk STPP), 6 discharging (3 bulk coal, 2 containers, 1 clay), 1 discharging/loading containers; no vessels waiting in roads.
Cyprus		
Larnaca	05-09-2006	One conventional vessel discharging at berth; 1 conventional vessel due 6/9; no delays expected.
Limassol	05-09-2006	Five container vessels discharging/loading at berth, 1 conventional vessel discharging at berth; 6 vessels due 6/9 of which 4 containers, 2 conventional vessels; no delays expected.
Egypt		
Adabiya	04-09-2006	Five vessels at berth (loading/discharging), all general cargo.
Alexandria	04-09-2006	Twenty-nine vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 20 general cargo, 3 bulk carriers, 3 tankers, 3 container vessels; 10 vessels at inner anchorage, 7 at outer anchorage.
Damietta	04-09-2006	Twenty-one vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 19 general cargo, 2 bulk carriers; no vessels at inner anchorage, 17 at outer anchorage.
Dekheila	04-09-2006	Nine vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 2 general cargo, 6 bulk carriers, 1 tanker; 2 vessels at outer anchorage.
Port Said	04-09-2006	Six vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 2 general cargo, 4 container vessels.
Suez	04-09-2006	Seven vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 5 general cargo, 2 passenger vessels; 2 tug boats; 1 vessel dry-docked.
Suez Canal	04-09-2006	Twenty vessels transiting Northbound, 28 Southbound.
Estonia		
Tallinn	04-09-2006	No labour problems. City port: No vessels at berth, none at anchorage; no vessels due, with no delays expected; Paljassaare (formerly Kopli): 3 vessels discharging at berth (1 cacao beans, 1 oil products, 1 sugar); 3 vessels due, with 10 days delay expected; Muuga: no vessels at berth, none at anchorage; no vessels due, with no delays expected.
India		
Kolkata	04-09-2006	10 vessels operating at berth of which 2 vessels loading Containers, 6 vessels discharging (Containers-2, Pulse-3, General Cargo), 2 vessels waiting to discharge Edible Oil; 1 vessel working at midstream and discharging Logs; 4 vessels under repair; 1 vessel waiting to sail; 4 vessels due (Containers-3, Edible Oil).
Haldia	04-09-2006	13 vessels operating at berth of which 3 vessels loading (Iron Ore-2, Thermal Coal), 8 vessels discharging (Crude-2, Met Coke, Net Coke, Lime, A. Nitrate, Fertiliser), 2 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 2 vessels awaiting berth at anchorage to discharge; 5 vessels due (Containers, Crude-2, Iron Ore, Butadine).
Paradip	04-09-2006	9 vessels operating at berth of which 6 vessels loading Iron Ore, 3 vessels discharging (Coking Coal, Hard Coke, Rock Phosphate); 2 vessels awaiting berth at anchorage (1 to discharge, 1 to load), 2 vessels waiting at anchorage (1 to load, 1 to discharge); 27 vessels due.
Visakhapatnam	04-09-2006	14 vessels operating at berth of which 4 vessels loading (Steel Cargo, Fly Ash, Feld Spar, B.F. Slag), 9 vessels discharging (Coking Coal, Urea, Steam Coal, DAP, Wheat, DBM, Alumina, Steel Pipes, Timber), 1 vessel loading and discharging Containers; 11 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage (8 to discharge, 3 to load); 35 vessels due (Iron Ore-7, Steel Cargo-2, Granite, Product Tankers, Phosphoric Acid, Sulphur, Coking Coal-13, Styrene Monomer, Passenger, Acerona, Containers-2, Lime Stone, Met Coke, POL & Crude Oil).
Chennai	04-09-2006	13 vessels operating at berth of which 5 vessels loading (Granite Block, C. Stone, IOL-2, High Speed Diesel/Super Kerosene), 4 vessels discharging (Wheat-2, Steel Coal-2), 4 vessels loading and discharging (Containers, M. Ore/GC, Steel Coil/Granite Block, Project/Granite Block); 4 vessels due (Supply, Wheat-2, Steam Coal).
Tuticorin	04-09-2006	11 vessels operating at berth of which 3 vessels loading (Granite, General Cargo-2), 8 vessels discharging (Raw Cashew, Thermal Coal-2, Wheat, Logs, Co. Cont., Rock Phosphate, Palm Oil); 6 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage (2 to discharge, 4 to load);
Cochin	04-09-2006	5 vessels operating at berth of which 4 vessels discharging (Crude, Soda Ash, Bauxite, MOP, Wheat), 1 vessel loading and discharging Containers; 1 vessel awaiting berth at anchorage to discharge.
New Mangalore	04-09-2006	5 vessels operating at berth of which 1 vessel loading Granite Stone, 4 vessels discharging (Fertilizer-2, LPG, POL Crude); 12 vessels due (Cement, POL Product-4, Timber, Fertilizer. Crude Palm Oil, Iron Ore (P), Container, Phosphoric Acid, Iron Ore Fines).
Mormugao	04-09-2006	4 vessels operating at berth of which 2 vessels loading Iron Ore, 2 vessel discharging (MOP, Coking Coal), 2 vessels working at midstream and loading Iron Ore; 1 vessel awaiting berth at anchorage to discharge; 4 vessels under dry docked; 4 vessels due (Containers, C. P. Coke, Met Coke, Alumina).
Mumbai	04-09-2006	13 vessels operating at berth of which 5 vessels loading (Steel Cargo-2, SBM in Bulk/Bagged SBM), 6 vessels discharging (Steel/Project/General Cargo-2, Palm Oil Product, POL-3), 2 vessels loading and discharging (Steel/ Woodpulp /II/Lift/Containers/General Cargo); 3 vessels working at midstream and loading and discharging POL; 4 vessels not ready to work at anchorage (1 to load, 2 to discharge, 1 to load and discharge), 3 vessels waiting order at anchorage (1 to discharge, 2 to load and discharge); 11 vessels under repairs/dry docked; 7 vessels under arrest; 33 vessels under laid up (Berths not required for cargo operations); 29 vessels due (Containers-5, Oil, General Cargo-21).

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Port Conditions

Kandla	04-09-2006	12 vessels operating at berth of which 5 vessels loading (Copper Pipes, Rice, Cement-2, Agriculture Product), 6 vessels discharging (Urea, Copper Conc, Steel Cargo, Steel Pipes-2, Timber Logs); 1 vessel working at midstream and loading Zinc Ingots, 2 vessels working at midstream and discharging Timber Logs; 11 vessels awaiting berth at anchorage (5 to discharge, 6 to load), 9 vessels not ready to work at anchorage (7 to load, 2 to discharge).
Ennore	04-09-2006	1 vessel operating at inner anchorage loading Iron Ore, 2 vessels due (MV Nordghmt (Iron Ore), MV Tamil Anna (T. Coal)).
Israel		
Ashdod	05-09-2006	No labour problems; Two vessels loading general cargo at berth, 11 discharging at berth (6 general cargo, 5 bulk cargo), 2 loading/discharging containers at berth; 7 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (2 general cargo, 5 bulk cargo), 1 tanker waiting at anchorage to load/discharge; 17 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Eilat	05-09-2006	No labour problems; One vessel loading/discharging containers at berth; 3 vessels due, with no delays expected.
Haifa	05-09-2006	No labour problems; Four vessels discharging at berth (2 general cargo, 2 bulk cargo), 9 loading/discharging at berth (4 containers, 5 tankers); 5 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge bulk cargo; 4 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; 18 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Kazakhstan		
Aktau	04-09-2006	Oil products: Five vessels in roads, all to load; 8 vessels due by 6/9, all to load.
Mozambique		
Maputo	05-09-2006	Eight vessels in port operating of which 2 loading 4 discharging, 1 discharging/loading; 1 other vessel; 21 vessels due by 17/9 of which 9 to load, 4 to discharge, 7 to discharge/load, 1 other vessel.
Pakistan		
Karachi	05-09-2006	Four vessels loading at berth (3 cement, 1 rice), 6 discharging at berth (2 C oil, 1 palm oil, 1 phosphorus, 1 peas, 2 sugar), 2 loading/discharging containers at berth; 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 chemicals, 1 soybean meal); 2 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; 1 vessel awaiting orders; 6 vessels due (4 containers, 1 general cargo, 1 chemicals), with no delays expected.
Port Qasim	05-09-2006	One vessel loading cement at berth, 4 discharging at berth (2 palm oil, 1 canola, oil, 1 C oil); 4 vessels waiting at anchorage to load (1 cement, 3 containers), 7 waiting at anchorage to discharge (3 containers, 2 palm oil, 1 MEG, 1 sugar); QICT berth: 2 vessels loading/discharging containers at QICT berth.
Poland		
Gdansk	04-09-2006	Twelve vessels in port operating of which 7 loading at berth (1 coal, 3 bulk cargo, 2 general cargo, 1 grain), 5 discharging at berth (2 bulk cargo, 1 tanker, 1 grain, 1 general cargo); 11 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; 19 vessels due.
Gdynia	04-09-2006	Nine vessels in port operating of which 4 loading at berth (1 coal, 3 general cargo), 2 discharging at berth (1 grain, 1 general cargo), 3 waiting orders (1 grain, 2 general cargo); 21 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; 43 vessels due.
Russia		
Novorossiysk	04-09-2006	Thirteen vessels in port operating, all loading; 1 vessel in roads to load wheat; 60 vessels due of which 52 to load, 5 to discharge (1 equipment, 2 coils, 1 debars, 1 vegetable oil), 3 to discharge/load containers; Oil terminal: 3 tankers loading at berth (2 crude, 1 diesel oil); 3 tankers in roads, all to load crude; 4 tankers due, all to load (2 crude oil, 2 diesel oil).
Spain		
Bilbao	04-09-2006	Fourteen vessels in port operating (1 tanker, 13 others), of which 1 loading, 10 discharging, 3 loading/discharging.
Sri Lanka		
Colombo	04-09-2006	Berthing/unberthing (pilotage) delays being experienced on breakbulk/conventional vessels. Delays to conventional vessels are due to the fact that container/feeder vessels are given priority berthing at break bulk berths if there is container congestion; conventional cargo vessels at BQ 1 & 2 are facing delays in navigation after commissioning of SAGT 1 & 2 berths (former QEQ 1 & 2). Nine vessels loading at berth (8 container/feeders, 1 essential services), 14 discharging at berth (11 container/feeders, 1 timber, 1 bagged fertiliser, 1 bagged sugar); 4 container/feeder vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge; 5 vessels dry-docked; 4 container/feeder vessels due, with no delays for general cargo/bagged cargo/containers/feeders expected.
Turkmenistan		
Turkmenbashi	04-09-2006	Oil products: Port open; One vessel loading heating oil at berth; 3 vessels in roads, all to load (1 gasoil, 1 kerosene, 1 gasoline); 1 vessel due 5/9 to discharge crude oil.

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Port Conditions

Ukraine

Illichevsk	04-09-2006	Ten vessels in port operating of which 9 loading (7 steel products, 1 wheat, 1 barley), 1 discharging steel products; 4 vessels in roads, all to load (1 rapeseed, 2 coils, 1 sunflower oil); 12 vessels due of which 8 to load (2 steel products, 2 coal, 1 project, 1 sunflower oil, 1 barley, 1 sulphur), 4 to discharge/load containers.
Mariupol	04-09-2006	Twelve vessels in port operating of which 11 loading (7 steel, 1 wheat, 2 barley, 1 coal), 1 discharging/loading containers/fire-clay; 16 vessels in roads, all to load (11 steel, 2 coal, 2 barley, 1 wheat); 52 vessels due of which 50 to load (27 steel, 8 coal, 3 coke, 9 fire-clay, 1 barley, 2 wheat), 1 to discharge foodstuff, 1 to discharge/load magnesite/kaolin.
Odessa	04-09-2006	Twenty vessels in port operating of which 9 loading (3 metal, 1 pig iron, 2 scrap, 1 wheat, 1 grain, 1 barley), 8 discharging (2 passenger vessels, 3 baggage, 1 wheat, 2 bananas), 3 discharging/loading containers; 7 vessels in roads of which 2 to load (1 wheat, 1 ore), 1 to discharge wheat, 4 to discharge/load containers; 71 vessels due of which 41 to load, 2 to discharge (1 citrus, 1 general cargo), 28 to load/discharge containers.

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