

CasualtyWeek

Dec 29 2006

Shipping hit by data paralysis as quake causes communication breakdown

Cable repair bid launched, writes Keith Wallis in Hong Kong — Friday December 29 2006

FIVE cables are heading towards southern Taiwan to repair undersea communications cables cut during an earthquake which occurred off the southern tip of Taiwan earlier this week.

The damage has paralysed internet, fax and data communication throughout much of east and southeast Asia over the past two days.

Some companies, such as Orient Overseas Container Line of Hong Kong, have coped well.

Others, including Taiwanese shipping lines, have however fared badly.

Re-routed

OOCL said it had re-routed data transmissions, such as electronic documentation to another system and, although service was slower, it had been maintained.

Internal e-mail communication had not been affected.

But Taiwanese carriers such as Evergreen Marine and Yang Ming Marine had been adversely affected, with customers unable to get web access.

Some freight forwarders and logistics operators had also suffered because of the lack of internet access.

Hong Kong's telecommunications authority confirmed yesterday that two cables, one from Singapore and the other

from the Philippines, were already on their way to the area, while three other vessels left yesterday.

The area off the southern coast of Taiwan is a hub for submarine cables linking east and southeast Asia with North America

The telecommunications authority said six out of seven main submarine cable systems linking Hong Kong were cut by the earthquake, which measured 7.1 on the Richter scale.

One of the damaged cable networks is owned by a consortium that includes Singapore Telecom and France Télécom, while another is part owned by China Unicom, StarHub and Telekom Malaysia.

Connections

The cables account for about 90% of the total capacity and mainly affect connections to Japan, Taiwan, Korea, the US and Canada.

Most data traffic between Asia and Europe goes through North America.

Operators have tried to re-route traffic but capacity constraints have meant some services have been slow.

Most voice call services to countries in the region were back to normal yesterday although non-voice data were still badly affected. Communications links to Taiwan were also difficult yesterday.

Telecommunications authority director-general Au Man-ho expected it would take up to a week for emergency repairs to be completed to the cable system serving Hong Kong.

Chunghwa Telecom, Taiwan's largest telephone operator, said two of its undersea cables had been cut.

The company's head of international business, Leng Tai-feng, said it was likely to be two or three weeks before repairs were completed, although there would be a steady improvement in service levels as damaged cables were repaired.

Would you like casualty information as it happens ?

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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>IN SUNG NO.207</i>	fishing	KOR	KR	846	—	1975	Sank in bad weather off Argentina, in lat 45 10S, long 60 22W, Dec 20. Twenty-eight of the 34 crew rescued.
<i>JOLANDA</i>	barge	—	—	—	—	—	In collision between Hoofdplaat and Breskens, Western Scheldt, Dec 20. Leak in aft part. Almost completely submerged. Tugs proceeding. To be beached near VH10 Buoy.
<i>KVALSTEIN</i>	fishing	NOR	—	375	—	1964	Had fouled propeller in lat 60 56N, long 02 56E, Dec 17. Towed to Fedje by Coast Guard vessel and propeller freed by diver. Cleared to proceed.
<i>LILLEBORG</i>	ro-ro	VCT	RI	3,285	2,804	1976	Listed to starboard while loading a heavy lift motor at St.Nazaire Dec 20. Motor fell overboard. To be recovered.
<i>MER</i>	general	VCT	RI	1,082	1,580	1980	Had steering problems off Tor Bay Dec 4. Towed to Torquay. Reported Dec 17 under tow for Flushing. As of Dec 20, vessel at Sluiskil.
<i>MOL SASSANDRA</i>	container	PAN	NK	25,479	28,879	1999	Grounded off Iles aux Prunes, off Toamasina, Dec 18. Refloated Dec 19 and inspection revealed only scratching damage. Cleared to continue voyage. Scheduled to berth Toamasina Dec 21.
<i>ROYAL</i>	general	ARE	—	—	—	—	Reported Dec 14 to have sunk off the coast of Ras al Mataf, Iran. Crew rescued.
<i>SHOYU MARU 52</i>	trawler	KHM	—	—	—	—	Capsized in storm 130 nautical miles off Sakhalin, in the Sea of Okhotsk, Dec 20 following shifting of cargo in bad weather. Crew rescued.
<i>STONNY</i>	general	KHM	—	1,325	2,259	1969	Grounded Essek Island, in about lat 40 59N, long 28 57E, Dec 20, in bad weather. Flooding in engine-room.
<i>SULAIMANNI</i>	general	ARE	—	—	—	—	Grounded near Bandar Lengeh Dec 16. Crew rescued.
<i>VORIOS IPIROS HELLAS</i>	bulker	PAN	RS	22,069	38,097	1981	In collision with bulker Long Hai at Xingang Anchorage Nov 26. Entered Xingang port Nov 27. Still in port Dec 15.
<i>WILSON MUUGA</i>	bulker	CYP	NV	3,658	5,790	1975	Grounded off Stafnes, Reykjanes Peninsula, Dec 19. Water flooded holds, engines dead. Crew rescued. Resting on even keel in shallow water.

CONTENTS

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

Marine, including Overdue & Missing Vessels	1
Piracy	9
Seizures & Arrests	10
Pollution	10
Weather & Navigation	11
Earthquakes	14
Volcanic Activity	15
Political & Civil Unrest	15
Kidnappings	20
Labour Disputes	20
Awards & Settlements	20
Railway Accidents	21
Miscellaneous	22
Fires & Explosions	22
Aviation	24
Product Recalls	27
Port Conditions	27
Port Conditions charts	28

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The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



ABURDEES (Egypt)

London, Dec 16 — Roll On Roll Off *Aburdees* sailed from Antwerp at 1953 hrs, Dec 15, bound for Alexandria.

ACACIA (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

London, Dec 21 — Following received from Madrid MRCC, timed 1046, UTC: Roll on roll off *Acacia* (13436 gt, built 1974) reported a list of 30 deg to starboard, about 70 miles from Barcelona, at 0220, UTC, Dec 21. The vessel proceeded to Barcelona and is now safely alongside. A diver's survey found a crack in the aft part of the vessel's hull.

ACTIVE (Malta)

London, Dec 16 — General cargo *Active* was reported passing through the Dardanelles, in a westerly direction, at 0855 hrs, Dec 15, on a reported passage of Yuzhnyy for Bristol.

AGHIOS MAKARIOS (Greece)

London, Dec 16 — Following received from Singapore Port Operations, timed 0345, UTC: Bulker *Aghios Makarios* is currently at the Singapore Western OPL (outside port limits) area.

AIAS (Panama)

London, Dec 15 — Product tanker *Aias* arrived at Sao Francisco do Sul on Dec 1. She sailed the next day, bound for Rio Grande, arriving on Dec 4. The vessel departed on Dec 6.

AJAKS (Poland)

London, Dec 16 — Tug *Ajaks* arrived Ymuiden 2327, today from Southampton.

AL KHATTAB (Egypt)

London, Dec 19 — A SMIT Salvage report, dated Nov 20 to present, states: Cutter suction dredger *Al Khattab*, owned by the Suez Canal Authority, capsized and sank early September. SMIT Salvage was contracted to remove the dredger from the main canal transit together with the Suez Canal Authorities. The dredger will be removed with the assistance of three sheerleg cranes. Subsequently the wreckage will be transported to a demolition site.

ALDEBARAN (Argentina)

Buenos Aires, Dec 19 — According to our sub-agents in Mar del Plata, the tailshaft and propeller of trawler (All types) *Aldebaran* have been repaired at Contessi dry-lock, due to a cable entangled on her propeller. On Dec 14 the vessel was undocked from the above mentioned dry-lock to start being prepared to sail and on Dec 15 the vessel sailed off to start her fishing operations. — Lloyd's Agents.

ALGOVILLE (Canada)

London, Dec 16 — As at Dec 11, bulker *Algoville* was still laid-up at Hamilton, Canada.

AMALIA (Greece)

London, Dec 18 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1306, UTC: Chemical tanker *Amalia* (1773 gt, built 1976) and liquid petroleum gas carrier *Diamond Star* (2997 gt, built 1991) were in collision off Thessaloniki, in lat 40 28.4N, long 22 46.05E, at 0830, UTC. Both vessels sustained bow damage and have proceeded to Thessaloniki anchorage. No injuries or pollution were reported.

London, Dec 19 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: At 0950 hrs, Dec 18, chemical tanker *Amalia* and Liquid Petroleum Gas Carrier *Diamond Star* were in collision off Megalou Emvolou, Thessaloniki. There were no injuries reported or pollution caused. At the time of the incident *Amalia* was bound for Agioi Theodoroi, in ballast, with 12 crew members and two passengers on board. *Diamond Star* was bound for Italy, with 15 crewmembers on board. The two vessels proceeded under their own power to Thessaloniki Port accompanied by Coast Guard patrol boats. Thessaloniki Port authority has prohibited departure of the vessels pending issuance of Class Maintain certificates.

London, Dec 19 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1034, UTC: Chemical tanker *Amalia* and liquid petroleum gas carrier *Diamond Star* are still at Thessaloniki anchorage, awaiting inspection.

Piraeus, Dec 19 — Liquid Petroleum Gas Carrier *Diamond Star* collided with chemical tanker *Amalia* at 0950 hrs, yesterday morning in Thermaikos Gulf. *Diamond Star* was bound for Italy while *Amalia* was bound for Agioi Theodoroi port. The crew of both vessels were reportedly healthy and secure. No pollution occurred. Only minor material damages were reported. Both vessels put into Thessaloniki port under their own power and their departures have been prohibited until inspections have been completed. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Dec 21 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1101, UTC: Chemical tanker *Amalia* is now berthed at Thessaloniki. Liquid petroleum gas carrier *Diamond Star* sailed Thessaloniki Dec 20 for Augusta.

AMALTHEA (Marshall Islands)

London, Dec 15 — Information received from Kiel, dated today: Container Carrier *Amalthea* departed Hamburg Dec 15 and is expected at 0500, Dec 16 in the fishing harbour of Bremerhaven. It will be docked at Brede yard for repair there.

ARCTICA HAV (Bahamas)

London, Dec 14 — General cargo *Arctica Hav* sailed from Liverpool on Dec 6, with a reported destination of Norway.

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AYBALA 2 (St. Kitts-Nevis)

London, Dec 16 — General cargo *Aybala 2* was reported arriving at Tuzla on Nov 23, and sailing later the same day. The vessel was next reported at 2015 hrs, Dec 14, passing Istanbul, in an easterly direction, bound for Bartin, Turkey.

BBC GIBRALTAR (Gibraltar)

London, Dec 19 — General cargo *BBC Gibraltar* arrived at Brindisi on Dec 15.

BEAUFORT SEA (U.S.A.)

Houston, Dec 18 — Tug *Beaufort Sea* was repaired by Bollinger Texas City yard and returned to service a few weeks ago. — Lloyd's Agents.

BEETLE NO.3 (Japan)

London, Dec 20 — Japanese accident investigators will not take action against the master of high-speed ferry *Beetle No.3* that struck a whale in March, injuring six passengers. A three-member panel of the Moji Marine Accident Inquiry Agency found that the master, Hitoshi Ogawa, 39, bore no responsibility for the injuries sustained by passengers onboard the ferry. Head of the inquiry panel, Shigemitsu Koganezawa, said Mr Ogawa could not be held responsible for passengers' injuries because many people on board the vessel had ignored an announcement to fasten seat belts. He said the accident might have been avoided if JR Kyushu Jet Ferry had told the master to slow down while transiting the Tsushima Strait where whales had been reported and enforced the wearing of seat belts by passengers.

BOA QUEEN (Cayman Islands)

London, Dec 14 — Tug/supply *Boa Queen* is back in service and was reported sailing from Chaguaramas, Trinidad, on Nov 24, with a reported destination of Venezuela.

BRITISH CYGNET (Isle of Man)

Poznan, Dec 15 — Understand from the agents of crude oil tanker *British Cygnet* that the fuel is presently being pumped off the vessel. The vessel is being prepared for repairs, and is expected to be moved to a dock this evening or tomorrow morning. — Lloyd's Agents.

BUNGA SEROJA SATU (Malaysia)

London, Dec 21 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Large waves caused by container carrier *Bunga Seroja Satu* (89776 gt, built 2006), which was proceeding upstream, destroyed a floating breakwater at Luehe, on the River Elbe, during the night of Dec 19. According to a police investigation, the vessel was moving too fast while approaching the Altenwerder Container Terminal in the port of Hamburg. When the vessel passed the point where the River Luehe enters the Elbe at 0230 hrs, the water rose by up to two metres. The damage to the breakwater was estimated at about Euros 40,000. The vessel's master was

finned by the police. The extent of the pilot's responsibility has yet to be investigated.

CAMILLA DESGAGNES (Barbados)

Halifax, Dec 15 — Repairs to Roll On Roll Off *Camilla Desgagnes* continue. Vessel has just completed a scheduled drydocking concurrent. — Lloyd's Agents.

CANADIAN PROGRESS (Canada)

London, Dec 14 — Bulker *Canadian Progress* sailed Hamilton(CAN) Dec 11 for Ashtabula.

CAPE MAY (Japan)

Antwerp, Dec 21 — During the evening of Dec 16, container carrier *Cape May* (42145 gt, built 1986) collided with general cargo *Chang Da 217* (2983 gt, built 2005), off Shanghai. Both vessels were ordered to drop anchor at Wusong anchorage, Shanghai, for investigation. There were no injuries reported to members of either crew. After completion of the MSA investigation *Cape May* sailed from Shanghai at 1600 hrs, Dec 19, bound for Ningbo. *Chang Da 217* sailed this morning, bound for Hong Kong. — DPS Teamhead Surveyors.

CAPTAIN X.KYRIAKOU (Marshall Islands)

See under "Miscellaneous".

CASTOR (Germany)

See *Thebeland*.

CHANG CHUAN (China)

Yokohama, Dec 15 — Vehicle carrier *Chang Chuan* (11497 gt, built 1986) from Yokohama bound for Nagoya collided on the starboard side of the vessel with the port bow side of tanker *Daishin Maru* (578 gt) bound for Shimostu at lat 34 33N, long 138 15E at 0025, Dec 6. The *Chang Chuan* sustained denting and scratching damage to the port bow. Neither water nor oil ingress had been reported nor personal injury. Both vessels could navigate under their own power. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — *Chang Chuan* subsequently arrived Nagoya Dec 8 and sailed Dec 10 for Vladivostok.)

CHANG DA 217 (Belize)

See *Cape May*.

CIMBRIS (Gibraltar)

London, Dec 17 — General cargo *Cimbris* was reported sailing from Klaipeda at 0200 hrs, Dec 16.

CLIPPER FALCON (Bahamas)

London, Dec 18 — Bulker *Clipper Falcon* was reported arriving at Ipswich at 0744 hrs, Dec 17.

CMA CGM DON GIOVANNI (Liberia)

London, Dec 17 — Container Carrier *Amalthea* arrived at Bremerhaven at 0715 hrs, Dec 16.

COBALTWATER (Netherlands)

London, Dec 19 — Chemical tanker *Cobaltwater* arrived Papendrecht, Netherlands, 0930, Dec 16.

COUGAR ACE (Singapore)

London, Dec 15 — A press report, dated today, states: Mazda Motor Corp., will scrap 4,700 cars and sport-utility vehicles damaged in July when vehicle carrier *Cougar Ace* carrying them to the U.S. and Canada was battered by rough seas. The company decided to junk the vehicles after a two-month assessment to determine whether any could be salvaged, Mazda said today in a statement. "Although many did not appear to be damaged, we could not ensure what was going to happen to those vehicles down the road," spokesman Jeremy Barnes said in an interview. "This is less about the money than customer satisfaction." The vehicles were insured, and the loss would not have a significant financial impact on Mazda, North American Chief Executive Officer Jim O'Sullivan said last month in an interview. "The bigger issue was not having the vehicles for our dealers when we needed them," O'Sullivan said.

CRIS M. (Italy)

London, Dec 15 — Following received from Rome MRCC, timed 1043, UTC: Hydrofoil *Cris M.* (172 gt, built 1990) grounded on sand near Marsala, in lat 37 50N, long 12 25.3E, Dec 13. No damage reported. Salvage operations are under way.

London, Dec 15 — Following received from Rome MRCC, timed 1619, UTC: Hydrofoil *Cris M.* is still aground, and salvage operations are continuing.

London, Dec 16 — Following received from Rome MRCC, timed 1210, UTC: Hydrofoil *Cris M.* is still aground. Salvage operations are continuing.

London, Dec 17 — Following received from Rome MRCC, timed 1425, UTC: Hydrofoil *Cris M.* is still aground. Salvage operations are being delayed by bad weather in the area.

London, Dec 18 — Following received from Rome MRCC, timed 1026, UTC: Hydrofoil *Cris M.* is still aground.

London, Dec 19 — Following received from Rome MRCC, timed 1536, UTC: Hydrofoil *Cris M.* is still aground. No salvage operations are presently in progress, due to poor weather.

London, Dec 20 — Following received from Rome MRCC, timed 1049, UTC: Hydrofoil *Cris M.* is still aground. Bad weather is still delaying salvage operations.

CROOSWIJK (Netherlands)

Portsmouth, UK, Dec 20 — A report, dated Dec 19, states: Non specific inland tanker *Crooswijk* (1600 gt, built 2006) yesterday rammed the railway bridge over the Dortmund Ems channel in the Baarentelgen. The rudder house of the vessel, registered in Rotterdam, was torn off. The brand-new *Crooswijk* was carrying heavy fuel oil from Rotterdam according to police data. It was the 86 metre long vessel's first voyage. Damage was estimated at approx 100,000 euros. The vessel is now at anchor at Altenrheine. — Correspondent.

DAISHIN MARU (Japan)

See *Chang Chuan*.

DIAMOND STAR (Madeira)

See *Amalia*.

DIANE A. (Turkey)

Istanbul, Dec 16 — Vessel *Diana A* (? Container Carrier *Diane A.*, 6819 gt, built 1985) reported with rudder problem around Kandilli (lat 41 04N, long 29 03E) Point at 0235, local time, today. — Turkish Straits.com. (Note — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS *Diane A.* was in lat 41 02 03.72N, long 29 00 59.57E, at 0015, UTC, today, speed eight knots, course 62 degrees.)

London, Dec 16 — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS Container Carrier *Diane A.* was stationary in lat 40 59 09N, long 28 57 54E, at 0328, UTC.

London, Dec 16 — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS, at 1322 UTC, container carrier *Diane A.* was still reported in lat 40 59 09N, long 28 57 54E.

London, Dec 17 — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS, at 0656 UTC, today, container carrier *Diane A.* was reported in lat 41 02.39N, long 29 01.42E, on a course of 54 degs, at a speed of 11 knots.

London, Dec 19 — Container Carrier *Diane A.* arrived at Constantza Roads on Dec 18.

DOLE ASIA (Bahamas)

Zeebrugge, Dec 21 — Refrigerated general cargo *Dole Asia* (10584 gt, built 1994), sailed Antwerp, via Boudewijnlock, 2334, local time, Dec 20. At 2338 hrs vessel reported engine trouble which resolved at 2339 hrs. Engine trouble was reported again at 2356 hrs, Vessel heaved anchor and proceeded seawards at 0259, local time, today. Vessel anchored again at 0420 hrs with engine trouble. — Lloyd's Sub-agents. (Note — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS *Dole Asia* was stationary in lat 51 21 12.85N, long 04 14 02.67E, at 0342, UTC.)

London, Dec 21 — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS refrigerated general cargo *Dole Asia* was still stationary in lat 51 21 11.1N, long 04 14 03.94E, at 0644, UTC.

FAULTLESS (Liberia)

See *Universal Brave*.

FLAMENCO (Germany)

Portsmouth, UK, Dec 17 — The 125 metre passenger (cruise) *Flamenco* sustained damages estimated at 25,000 euros in an incident at 1400 hrs, Dec 14 on the Danube at Passau. The captain of the *Flamenco* wanted to reverse when going alongside, but lost engine power, which resulted in the the vessel floating downstream. Near the suspension bridge at Passau it contacted the left bank and damaged one of the four propellers. None of the 138 German passengers and 46 crew were hurt. The captain eventually succeeded in manoeuvred alongside. The tour operator (Nico Tours, Stuttgart) offered an alternative

programme to the passengers. The planned destination was Vienna. — Correspondent.

FLESTINA-5 (Russia)

London, Dec 19 — Following received from Kiel, dated today: General cargo *Flestina-5*, which grounded at 1330 hrs, Nov 29, was refloated by *Pal-3*. Understood vessel was not damaged in the incident.

FLOTTBEK (U.K.)

Montreal, Dec 19 — Container carrier *Flottbek* (16324 gt, built 2005), Antwerp for Montreal, encountered heavy weather on Dec 13, resulting in extensive heavy weather damage to the vessel's hull, and some container damage. The vessel is due to arrive Montreal Dec 19, where a survey will be carried out. — Lloyd's Agents.

G.L.OSTRANDER (U.S.A.)

London, Dec 18 — tug *G.L.Ostrander* sailed from Superior, towing barge *Integrity*, on/about Dec 8.

GAZ DE FRANCE PROVALYS (French Southern Territories)

London, Dec 14 — Liquid Natural Gas Carrier *Gaz de France Provalys* is reported to have entered Marseilles port on Dec 13.

GLACIER BAY (Antigua & Barbuda)

See *Mehmet Aksoy*.

GOLDEN HARVEST (Cambodia)

Yokohama Dec 15 — General cargo *Golden Harvest* (1559 gt, built 1981), which arrived Funakawa at 0725, Dec 11, contacted Mukaihama pier within the port due to excessive speed. The vessel sustained holing damage to the bow above sea level and cracking damage to the starboard bow resulting in damage to car stoppers on the pier. — Lloyd's Agents.

GOLDEN SHINE NO.2 (Cambodia)

London, Dec 19 — Following navigation warning issued at 1740, JST, Dec 18: Engine troubled general cargo *Golden Shine No.2*, 1322 gt, (built 1984) exists in the vicinity of lat 33 46N, long 131 54.5E. (Note — At 0010, UTC, today, Japan Coast Guard were not aware of the latest situation.)

GRAND ANEMI (Malta)

Portland, OR, Dec 20 — Bulker *Grand Anemi* (41688 gt, built 1988), loaded with wheat bound for Iraq, has been delayed due to the need to effect repairs in the engine-room. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS, *Grand Anemi* was stationary in lat 45 38 06.44N, long 122 47 07.55W, at 1648, UTC, Dec 20.)

GREEN COAST (Panama)

London, Dec 18 — Information received, dated LaSalle Dec 17, states: A press report, dated Dec 14, states: Angola's Transport Minister, Andre Luis Brandao, said passenger (cruise) *Green Coast* wrecked in Luanda poses no risk of fuel leakage on the sea. Addressing parliament session, aimed

at passing of State General Budget 2007/2008, Andre Lues Brandao, said preventive measures on leakage have been taken. *Green Coast*, which sank due to leakage, awaits a salvage contract from the Audit Court, said Luis Brandao.

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Passenger (cruise) *Green Coast* is lying on its side with its hull visible within the Luanda harbour area and according to Angolan authorities poses little risk of pollution. A decision regarding salvage of the vessel has yet to be taken.

GULSUM ANA (Turkey)

London, Dec 16 — At 0010 hrs, Dec 15, bulker *Gulsum Ana* was reported passing through the Dardanelles, in a westerly direction, on a reported passage of Ambarli for Misurata, where ETA Dec 17.

HAVNATINDUR

Torshavn, Dec 19 — Fishing (general) *Havnatindur* is still sunk. The harbour authorities advised that they do not presently have any knowledge of owners' salvage plans. — Lloyd's Agents.

HERO (Bermuda)

See *Kuruoglu III*.

HERO (Bermuda)

See *Kuruoglu III*.

HOLBERG (Uruguay)

Stanley, Dec 20 — Trawler *Mariana Rojamar Dos* arrived in Port Purvis Dec 15 and moored to the north of fishing (general) *Holberg*. Work immediately began on placing an oil boom around *Holberg*, with divers and crew carrying out preparatory work to enable the offloading of fuel. Understand bad weather slowed progress, but debris from *Holberg's* sides has been cleared and power was being run to the vessel. Reportedly, there is now no oil to be seen coming from *Holberg*. The intention is for fuel to be removed from *Holberg* by *Mariana Rojamar Dos*, with two loads being brought to Stanley, and the final load being taken directly to Montevideo. — Lloyd's Agents.

HYUNDAI PRIMORSKIY (Panama)

London, Dec 20 — Container Carrier *Hyundai Primorskiy* was reported sailing from Shanghai on Dec 8. The vessel was next reported sailing from Qingdao on Dec 14, bound for Busan, where she both arrived and sailed on Dec 16.

IN SUNG NO.207 (South Korea)

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Fishing (general) *In Sung No.207* (846 gt, built 1975) sank in the Atlantic off the coast of Argentina today, killing four people and leaving two others missing, the Korean Coast Guard said. The Coast Guard received an SOS signal from the vessel and reported it to rescue headquarters. Six rescue vessels are presently at the scene. Three Koreans and a Chinese died, and two Koreans

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are missing as a result of the incident. A total of 34 crew members, including 10 Koreans, 13 Chinese and 11 Vietnamese, were on the vessel at the time of the sinking. Twenty-eight of them were rescued before the ship sank. The Coast Guard will ask Argentina's rescue headquarters to provide searchers at the scene with rescue ships and aircraft.

London, Dec 20 — Following navigation warning issued today: Fishing (general) *In Sung No.207* sunk in lat 45 10S, long 60 22W, approximately two crew members missing.

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Two South Korean sailors missing after fishing (general) *In Sung No.207* sank off the coast of Argentina yesterday remain missing despite continuing search efforts, South Korea's Foreign Ministry said today. The vessel was carrying a multinational crew of 34 sailors when it sank 370 km off the coast of Argentina in stormy weather yesterday morning, Korean time, the ministry said in a statement. Four crew members — three Korean and one Chinese — were killed, while two Koreans are still missing, the ministry said. Argentine maritime officials are engaged in their second day of searching for the missing sailors, the ministry said. The 28 survivors will depart later in the day on a vessel for Montevideo, from where they will be airlifted to South Korea.

JOLANDA

See *Vieree*.

JORO

London, Dec 21 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Barge *Joro* was successfully raised by two sheerlegs of GPS Marine Services BV, Sliedrecht, from its sunken position in the Mississippihaven on Dec 12.

KURUOGLU III (Turkey)

Maassluis, Dec 20 — At approximately 0830 hrs today, inbound general cargo *Kuruoglu III* (4456 gt, built 1990) was in collision with the outward bound Container Carrier *Hero* (41023 gt, built 1986). *Hero* believed to have light damage to the anchor and *Kuruoglu III* believed to have damage to the stem. *Kuruoglu III* anchored in the river (Scheldt) at Schaar Oude Doel for inspection and *Hero* is sailing to Flushing where it will anchor for inspection. — Lloyd's Sub-agents. (Note — *Kuruoglu III* sailed from Rotterdam at 2025 hrs, bound Antwerp. *Hero* arrived Antwerp at 0250 hrs, Dec 19.)

Zeebrugge, Dec 20 — At 0830 hrs, today, inbound general cargo *Kuruoglu III* was in collision with the outward bound Container Carrier *Hero* in the River Scheldt. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

London, Dec 21 — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS at 0406, UTC, today general cargo *Kuruoglu III* was anchored in lat 51 25.76N, long 03 35 02.8E, and Container Carrier *Hero* was at anchored in lat 51 16 28.08N, long 04 21 23.34E.

KVALSTEIN (Norway)

London, Dec 17 — Following received from Stavanger MRCC, timed 1125, UTC: Last night fishing (general) *Kvalstein* (375 gt, built 1964) reported a fouled propeller in lat 60 56N, long 02 56E. Vessel was towed to Fedje by a coast guard vessel, where this morning, a diver freed the propeller. Vessel has been cleared to proceed.

LAI KING (Hong Kong)

London, Dec 16 — General cargo *Lai King* and tug *Luna A.* arrived Cape Town Dec 13.

Cape Town, Dec 21 — General cargo *Lai King*: Subsequent to the damage survey, following damage was noted: No 2 main bearing shells were found distorted and showed signs of turning in the housing; No 3 main bearing shells were found distorted and showed signs of turning in the housing; No 4 main bearing shells were found to be badly damaged; upper and lower shells were found to have fused together from the heat; No 5 main bearing shells were found distorted and showed signs of turning in the housing; main bearing caps had been removed and only the tops of the main bearing journal could be seen — these were found to be scored; all the crankpin bearing shells were found to be scored; one of the elements of the auto backwash by-pass filter was found to be damaged; and No 9 piston was found to be damaged in way of the second ring groove. A local repair yard has been contracted to carry out the repair work. Presently the shipyard is in the process of removing the main bearing saddles to gain access to the journals so that these can be magnaflux tested for cracking and tested for hardness. Depending on the outcome of these tests, the crankshaft may have to be replaced. — Lloyd's Agents.

LIBERTY V (Panama)

See "Panama" under "Weather & Navigation".

LILLEBORG

(St. Vincent & Grenadines)

Nantes, Dec 20 — Roll on roll off *Lilleborg* (3285 gt, built 1976) was berthed alongside the quay in St Nazaire basin, intending to load a heavy lift — a motor weighing 205 tonnes — by means of its own gear. During hoisting operations, while the motor was still hanging under the vessel's hook, the vessel developed a list to starboard and the motor fell into the water, landing on the seabed eight metres below the surface. No pollution has been reported so far, as the motor was new and did not contain any oil. The sunken motor slings are still connected to the vessel's hoisting gear. The authorities are investigating options to recover the motor, which is reported to be worth Euros 10 million. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS, *Lilleborg* was in port at St. Nazaire on Dec 14.)

LNG RIVER ORASHI (Bermuda)

London, Dec 16 — Understand Liquid Natural Gas Carrier *LNG River*

Orashi (97561 gt, built 2004), which arrived Marseilles Dec 4, is at a repairyard, at Marseilles, with stern tube problems. The vessel is expected to leave the yard around Dec 29.

LODBROK (Sweden)

London, Dec 16 — Crane barge *Lodbrok* sailed from Stockholm on Dec 15.

LONG HAI (Panama)

See *Vorios Ipiros Hellas*.

MARINA AV HONO (Sweden)

London, Dec 17 — Following received from Gothenburg MRCC, timed 1135, UTC: The coast guard have made several attempts to prevent the oil in sunken fishing (general) *Marina av Hono* from escaping. It is understood that no decision has yet been taken as to whether the vessel is to be raised or not.

London, Dec 19 — Following received from Gothenburg MRCC, timed 1138, UTC: Fishing (general) *Marina av Hono* is still lying sunk. Divers are currently working to halt the leakage of oil.

MARVEL K.

(St. Vincent & Grenadines)

St. Petersburg, Dec 19 — The situation of general cargo *Marvel K.* remains unchanged. — Lloyd's Agents.

MEHMET AKSOY (Turkey)

London, Dec 16 — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS, at 0643 hrs, today, bulker *Mehmet Aksoy* was reported still stationary in lat 40 50N, long 29 14E. At 1910 hrs, Dec 14, refrigerated general cargo *Glacier Bay* was reported passing Istanbul, in an easterly direction, bound for Constantza and according to Lloyd's MIU AIS, at 0706 hrs, today, the vessel was reported in port, at Constantza.

London, Dec 20 — Bulker *Mehmet Aksoy* was reported passing Istanbul, in an easterly direction, at 1145 hrs, Dec 19, bound for Dneprobugskiy, Ukraine. According to Lloyd's MIU AIS, at 1349 hrs, Dec 19, refrigerated general cargo *Glacier Bay* having left Constantza, was in lat 41 51.14N, long 29 01.54E, proceeding on a course of 176.2, speed 17.1 knots.

MER (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

London, Dec 15 — A press report, dated today, states: Tug *MTS Taktow* ex *Taktow 1* will leave Brixham this afternoon, towing general cargo *Mer* (1082 gt, built 1980), bound for Belgium.

London, Dec 15 — Following received from Coastguard Brixham MRSC, timed 2020, UTC: *Mer* six persons on board, had steering problems off Tor Bay, Dec 4. Tug *Bay Protector* tasked and towed vessel to Torquay. (Note — *Mer*, according to Lloyds MIU AIS, is stationary at Torquay Harbour at 2020, UTC, today.)

London, Dec 17 — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS general cargo *Mer* was in lat 50 24 24N, long 03 05 58W, at 1337, Dec 16, speed 6.8 knots, course 132 degrees.

London, Dec 17 — Following received from Coastguard Dover MRCC, timed 1458, UTC: At 1455, UTC, Tug *MTS Taktow*, towing general cargo *Mer*, was in lat 50 32.77N, long 01 00.94E, course 56 degs, speed 5.9 knots. *Mer* experienced main engine breakdown on Dec 15, and is under tow from Torbay to Flushing.

London, Dec 20 — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS, general cargo *Mer* was located stationary at Sluiskil, in lat 51 16 25.44N, long 03 50 12.78E, at 1247, UTC, today.

MIGHTY SERVANT 3 (Netherlands)

London, Dec 19 — A SMIT Salvage report states: In the morning of Dec 6 semi-sub HL vessel *Mighty Servant 3* developed a list and sank after the offloading of a drilling platform off the port of Luanda, and is resting at the sea bottom in approximately 62 metres of water. The cause of the incident is yet unknown and is being investigated. SMIT Salvage was contracted to conduct a complete diving survey prior to making preparations for the removal of the vessel's bunker oil and pollutants remaining on board.

MISSISSAGI (Canada)

London, Dec 19 — Bulker *Mississagi* arrived at Goderich on Dec 16, where she loaded a cargo of salt for Alpena. The vessel departed on Dec 17 and arrived at Alpena at 0715 hrs, Dec 18. After unloading her cargo, she departed at around 1100 hrs, Dec 18.

MOL SASSANDRA (Panama)

Antananarivo, Dec 19 — Container carrier *MOL Sassandra* (25479 gt, built 1999) grounded last night off the coast of Iles aux Prunes, not far from the port of Toamasina. Efforts are under way to refloat the vessel, using tugs. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Dec 19 — Understand container carrier *MOL Sassandra* has been refloated.

Antananarivo, Dec 19 — Container carrier *MOL Sassandra* refloated at 1500, local time. The extent of damage will be ascertained by divers after the vessel is docked. — Lloyd's Agents.

Antananarivo, Dec 20 — According to the attending surveyor, appointed by the P&I representatives, a divers inspection of the fore and aft, port and starboard sides of container carrier *MOL Sassandra*, revealed the vessel sustained only slight paint scratchings on the keel fore part "to 10 metres of markings: 3FS, 3WS, 4FS and WS". Her propeller and rudder are in good condition without any apparent damage. The vessel has been cleared to continue her voyage. ETD pm, today. Her next port of call is Durban. — Lloyd's Agents.

Antananarivo, Dec 21 — Container carrier *MOL Sassandra* has not yet been able to berth, due to port congestion. Understand the vessel is scheduled to berth today, weather permitting. — Lloyd's Agents.

MOL WISDOM (Panama)

See "Uruguay" under "Weather & Navigation".

MUHLENAU (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Dec 16 — General cargo *Muhlenau* sailed from Ipswich at 1230 hrs, Dec 14, bound for Rotterdam. She arrived at 0020 hrs, Dec 15, sailing later the same day, at 1725 hrs, bound for Corcubion.

NJORD B.FSU (Norway)

Trondheim, Dec 20 — The yard at Kristiansund have advised that they expect to complete repairs to floating storage tanker *Njord B.FSU* on/about Jan 22 — Lloyd's Agents.

NONIA (Canada)

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Officials with the Canadian Coast Guard say navigational aids were where they should have been when passenger ro/ro *Nonia* hit a shoal on a routine run near St. Brendan's island earlier this month. The vessel was pulled out of service after it hit a sandbar during a trip between Burnside and St. Brendan's on Dec 8. The vessel is not expected back in service before later this week. Paul Bowering, acting superintendent of aids to navigation for the Coast Guard, said the master of roll on roll off *Sound of Islay* — another vessel on that run — reported in late November that a buoy in the area was out of position. The Coast Guard had sent out a warning to mariners, but did not check it out until after this month's accident. "It may have been a little bit to the south, but it was basically on advertised position," said Bowering. Bowering said buoys are sometimes moved around by wind and water, but that if that particular buoy was south of where it should have been, it would have been even further away from the shoal that *Nonia* had hit. Transport Canada is investigating the accident.

ORION I (Pakistan)

Karachi, Dec 19 — Indus Divers have reported that barge *Orion I* is still being repaired at the work shop of Karachi Fish Harbour (KFH). The vessel and its engine are being overhauled. It is understood that repairs will take a further three to four weeks. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

OUTSAILING 5 (Panama)

London, Dec 18 — Following received from Coast Guard Japan, timed 1445, UTC: General cargo *Outsailing 5* is still aground.

PAMELA (Finland)

Helsinki, Dec 18 — Following repair work and testing at Uusikaupunki, general cargo *Pamela* was allowed to sail. The vessel has discharged at Tallinn and is currently sailing to Turku. The vessel will be docked in the near future. — Lloyd's Agents.

PEACH MOUNTAIN (Hong Kong)

Jakarta, Dec 18 — Bulker *Peach Mountain* has been docked at Pan United Shipyard, Tanjung Muncang, Batam, since early December. Understand the estimate for repair is about three months. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Dec 19 — A SMIT Salvage report states: Fully laden bulker *Peach Mountain* collided with a container vessel off Tanjung Perak, Surabaya on Oct 2. *Peach Mountain* grounded due to the collision and several ballast tanks breached and holds No. 4 and 5 flooded. SMIT Salvage Singapore was contracted by the Chinese owners to refloat the vessel. After an on-site inspection the salvage plan was formulated and presented to the owners and the local authorities. The necessary salvage permits were obtained and via its local partners several crane barges were mobilised to discharge the cargo from the flooded holds. Upon refloating, a combination of de-ballasting and discharging cargo from the dry holds, a high horse power tug was used to keep control of the casualty. *Peach Mountain* was safely delivered at the anchorage on Oct 23 October to full satisfactory of owners their underwriters and the local authorities.

PEDREIRAS (Brazil)

London, Dec 14 — Following received from Cape Town MRCC, timed 1510, UTC: Product tanker *Pedreiras*: We were advised by vessel's agents at 1256, UTC, that it was under way, ETA Cape Town Pilot Station at 1900, UTC, today.

PEPPINO D'AMATO (Panama)

London, Dec 19 — Bulker *Peppino D'Amato* sailed from Darrow on Dec 7.

PERSEUS V (Panama)

See "Panama" under "Weather & Navigation".

PETRA (Netherlands Antilles)

Falmouth, Dec 14 — General cargo *Petra* arrived Falmouth at 0500, Dec 12, in tow of tug/supply *Anglian Express* due to steering problems. The vessel berthed at Kings Wharf at 0940 today for inspection. — Lloyd's Agents.

PONT D'YEU (France)

Portsmouth, UK, Dec 21 — Rising tide waters today freed a French ferry with 196 passengers and crew on board after it spent four hours stuck on a sand bar off the west coast of France, rescue services said. The ferry ran aground at around 2100 hrs (2000, UTC) yesterday and managed to work itself free at 0130 hrs, today. No injuries were reported. The vessel was en route from the Atlantic island of Ile d'Yeu to the port of Fromentine, when it mistakenly followed channel-marker buoys which had been displaced by a storm earlier this month, the emergency services said. — Correspondent.

Nantes, Dec 21 — The vessel which grounded off Fromentine was passenger *Pont D'Yeu* (689 gt, built 2005). — Lloyd's Agents.

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

POSEIDON (Finland)

London, Dec 18 — Following received from Helsinki MRSC, timed 1440, UTC: Tug *Poseidon* has been refloated and is being towed to Teijo shipyard.

Helsinki, Dec 21 — Understand from Alfons Hakans that tug *Poseidon* is still under tow to Teijo Shipyard. — Lloyd's Agents.

PRINCESS AVIV (Panama)

See "Panama" under "Weather & Navigation".

PRINCESS K. (U.S.A.)

Honolulu, Dec 19 — Fishing (general) *Princess K.* has returned to Phoenician Shipyard. Understand sea trials were conducted and the vessel departed for her normal trade. It is unknown if it is related to the original casualty or if the current drydocking is for another problem. — Lloyd's Agents.

PROSPERO (Sweden)

London, Dec 19 — Combined chemical and oil tank *Prospero*, which struck jetty in Milford Haven while attempting to dock Dec 19, sustaining damage, subsequently passed Skaw Dec 15 and arrived Fredericia Dec 16.

PTS 0212 (Russia)

London, Dec 15 — A press report, dated today, states: The search for a fishing vessel (*PTS 0212*) reported missing in the Baltic Sea since Dec 11 has been dropped. The fate of four out of six crewmen is unknown. Deputy Chief of the Kaliningrad Coordination Centre for Rescue at Sea Anatoly Lemeshchenko said that the search operation at sea was dropped, taking into account that the vessel had been missing for four days and water temperatures were no higher than eight degrees above zero, which left no hope to find survivors and made further search efforts useless. The weather forecast for the next few days is unfavourable, Lemeshchenko said. The bodies of two crewmen from the missing vessel were identified yesterday. Lithuanian helicopter crews spotted the bodies on a life raft twelve miles off the Russian state border. Both bodies were identified by photographs. Today, rescue teams from the Kaliningrad region and Lithuanian border patrol teams will continue search on the Baltic coast. Ships passing through the presumed area of the shipwreck have been notified about the tragedy, and they will continue monitoring of this area, looking for the ship or signs of the shipwreck and missing crewmen.

RAVANDA (Turkey)

Trieste, Dec 18 — Early morning, Dec 15, general cargo *Ravanda* (1814 gt, built 1981), while leaving Porto Nogaro with a full cargo of steel products for Skikda and Arzew, ran aground, embedding her stern into the bank opposite to the loading quay. Vessel still hard aground in mud. Understand that negotiations are being carried out by owners to find a suitable way of refloating her. — Lloyds Agents.

Trieste, Dec 20 — General cargo *Ravanda* is still aground and no decision has yet been made regarding salvage operations. — Lloyd's Agents.

ROERBORG (Netherlands)

London, Dec 20 — Container Carrier *Roerborg* arrived Vigo Dec 1 and sailed Dec 13.

London, Dec 20 — Information received, dated Dec 19, states: Tug *Captain Michalis* with the rudder damage Container Carrier *Roerborg* has arrived in Ymuiden. *Roerborg* has been taken over by two tugs who will take the vessel to Amsterdam. (Note — *Roerborg* and *Captain Michalis* arrived Ymuiden 1902, UTC, Dec 19 and according to Lloyd's MIU AIS *Roerborg* was in lat 52 25 23.4N, long 04 47 56.4E, at 0004, UTC, today, speed 6.8 knots, course 103 degrees.)

ROKIA DELMAS (Panama)

Nantes, Dec 20 — All the deck containers have now been removed from roll on roll off container carrier *Rokia Delmas*, along with most of the underdeck containers. However, another 10 containers still remain under the deck and are very difficult to reach. The cargo of wood packages is still on board. Discharge operations are progressing, so far as the weather permits. Understand that the vessel will be cut into pieces after all the cargo is removed. — Lloyd's Agents.

ROYAL (United Arab Emirates)

London, Dec 14 — A press report, dated today, states: UAE-flagged general cargo *Royal*, has reportedly sunk off the coast of Ras Al Mataf island located in Iran. The vessel, which was owned by an Iranian businessman, had left for Iraqi port of Abu Fuloos in Basra from the Hamriya port in Dubai. The Dubai-based Cellcon Shipping and Trading is the shipping agent for the vessel. According to a source at the Mission to Seafarers in Dubai, the 11 Indian crew members on board the vessel were rescued by a passing Greek vessel. They were taken to Kuwait from where they were sent to India.

RYNDAM (Netherlands)

London, Dec 15 — Passenger (cruise) *Ryndam* was reported sailing from Tampa at 2100 hrs, Dec 8 and was next reported arriving/sailing at/from Dominica on Dec 13.

SAFMARINE LEMAN (Switzerland)

Oporto, Dec 18 — Viana do Castelo port authorities and the agents of part containerised general car *Safmarine Leman* are presently transferring the spilled chemicals from the vessel's hold into lorries. — Lloyd's Agents.

SAGACIOUS ID (Panama)

London, Dec 15 — Bulker *Sagacious ID* (26064 gt, built 1996) reported dragging its anchor in English Bay Anchorage, Vancouver, BC, at 1355, Dec 11.

London, Dec 19 — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS, bulker *Sagacious ID*

was located in lat 37 00 48.96N, long 123 04 25.26W, at 1214, UTC, course 153.4 deg, speed 12.4 knots, 59.1 nautical miles from Redwood City.

SAKURAKAWA (Cambodia)

Yokohama, Dec 15 — General cargo *Sakurakawa* is currently in Sagami Bay, Kanagawa, and able to navigate under own power. Vessel is scheduled to be inspected by the Cambodian Classification Society on Dec 15 and will resume its voyage upon confirmation by the class. — Lloyd's Agents. (See issue of Dec 13.)

Yokohama, Dec 20 — General cargo *Sakurakawa* resumed its voyage from Sagami Bay to Haimen at 1905, Dec 18 after passing the special navigation test conducted by Japan Coast Guard. — Lloyd's Agents.

SCL BERN (Switzerland)

See "Montreal, Canada" under "Pollution."

SEA FALCON (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

London, Dec 15 — A press report, dated today, states: Tug *Sea Falcon* (262 gt, built 1972) had difficulties off the Breton coast, leaving a barge at Brest and went to Concarneau for repairs. There vessel has languished (Ukrainian crew repatriated some months ago). The Portuguese tug *Leao Dos Mares* also arrived at Concarneau, intending to tow away *Sea Falcon* and pick up the barge.

London, Dec 20 — Information received, dated today, states: Tug *Leao Dos Mares* is underway with tug *Sea Falcon* from Concarneau to Brest. Next week it will depart Brest for Mumbai.

Brest, Dec 21 — Tug *Sea Falcon* sailed Concarneau Dec 18 for Brest in tow of tug *Leao Dos Mares*. The convoy arrived the following day. Understand *Leao Dos Mares* was chartered to tow *Sea Falcon* to an Indian port, along with a barge carrying two cranes. The convoy is due to depart from Brest next week. — Lloyd's Agents.

SEA MASTER ONE (Antigua & Barbuda)

Chittagong, Dec 18 — Understand from the local agents of general cargo *Sea Master One* that the vessel is still in the same position, and salvage operations are continuing. — Lloyd's Agents.

SEABOURN SPIRIT (Bahamas)

London, Dec 20 — Following received from Hong Kong MRCC, timed 0300, UTC: At 2300, UTC, Dec 19 passenger (cruise) *Seabourn Spirit*, C6FR4, (9975 gt, built 1989) reported a fire in starboard engine-room while alongside at the Hong Kong Ocean Terminal. The fire was extinguished at 0005, UTC, today. There were no injuries. The fire is considered minor. (Note — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS *Seabourn Spirit* was moored at Hong Kong at 0305, UTC, today.)

London, Dec 21 — Passenger (cruise) *Seabourn Spirit* sailed Ocean Terminal, Hong Kong, 1927, local

time, Dec 20 and according to Lloyd's MIU AIS was in lat 22 17 39.7N, long 114 11 22.04E, at 1121, UTC, Dec 20, speed 8.1 knots, course 63.4 degrees.

SEAWAY (Panama)

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Ferry *Seaway* (492 gt, built 2004) was stuck in Wallaroo last night and unable to operate the afternoon run to Lucky Bay. Stuart Ballantyne from Sea SA, said an electrical transmission problem with the engine controls caused the cancellation. "We worked into the night and we fixed the problem, so the vessel is back on schedule," he said. "We did lose one run, but that's the problem with having a one vessel service, we're a little bit reliant on that, but we seem to have sorted it out and it's back on schedule this morning."

SEGOVIA CARRIER (Bahamas)

London, Dec 18 — Refrigerated general cargo *Segovia Carrier* arrived at Puerto Limon, Costa Rica, on Dec 8, and departed on Dec 9.

SENECA (U.S.A.)

London, Dec 15 — A Coast Guard Grand Marais, Mich, press release, dated Dec 14, states: The Coast Guard and environmental response contractors continue pollution response operations for tug *Seneca*. Weather conditions, earlier this week, forced the Coast Guard and environmental response contractors to suspend pollution response operations for the tug. During that period, pollution responders assessed the effectiveness of past actions and made preparations for future response operations. Future operations will encompass four stages of action. The first stage calls for responders to access the interior of the vessel to safely remove as much product as possible. The second stage will assess the vessel's watertight integrity and ability to float. During the third stage, a trench will be dug from the vessel to a water depth safe for refloating. The fourth stage calls for the tug to be towed from its current location back to Sault Ste. Marie. Once the vessel arrives in the Sault, the vessel will be returned to the owner. The current operational plan takes into consideration personnel safety and environmental concerns. The plan will reduce the amount of time personnel and equipment will operate in an exposed portion of Lake Superior. In addition, the removal of the tug will prevent further environmental concerns. The Coast Guard and contractors will continue to monitor the situation and adjust actions accordingly. (See issue of Dec 15.)

Troy, Mich., Dec 18 — Salvage operations for tug *Seneca* were suspended Saturday (Dec 16) night due to high winds and heavy sea states that were experienced on scene. Responders arrived safely in the Sault early yesterday morning. With the limited time available on scene, responders were able to remove

additional waste oil from the vessel, prior to departing for the Sault. The Coast Guard has not given up on its attempt to free the *Seneca*. However, operations are limited to 24 hours of favourable weather conditions. The Coast Guard will continue to assess the best possible strategy for removing the tug from the beach and will resume operations as soon as favourable weather conditions permit. The Coast Guard will continue to monitor the situation and adjust actions accordingly. — Great Lakes Seaway & Shipping.

London, Dec 18 — Following received from Coast Guard Cleveland, timed 1606, UTC: Tug *Seneca* is still aground.

London, Dec 20 — Following received from Coast Guard Cleveland, timed 1549, UTC: Tug *Seneca* is still aground. A diver's inspection will be carried out later today.

SEVEN ISLAND NIJI (Japan)

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated Dec 18, states: Hydrofoil *Seven Island Niji* (267 gt, built 1981) struck what appeared to be a whale off the coast of Izu-Oshima Island this morning, damaging part of the vessel, coast guard officials said. *Seven Island Niji* struck the object about 12 kilometres northwest of Izu-Oshima at about 1030 today. A front foil on the vessel was slightly damaged, but the boat arrived safely at the island about 45 minutes later. The 21 passengers and crew onboard the hydrofoil, including two children, were not harmed. Local coast guard officials said an object resembling a whale's back was spotted from the hydrofoil's pilothouse, promoting the master to slow the vessel down, but it failed to avoid the object and struck it.

SHAH BADAR-I

Chittagong, Dec 18 — Understand from the local agents of lighter vessel *Shah Badar-I* that repairs have not yet commenced and are expected to begin next week. — Lloyd's Agents.

SHAMKHOR (Azerbaijan)

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated Dec 18, states: There was an explosion at 1630 today, on Caspian Shipping Company-owned vessel *Shemkir* (? product tanker *Shamkhor*, 7807 gt, built 1975) under repair in Paris Commune Dockyard, Baku, the Sebayel Prosecutor's Office said. Caspian Shipping Company said that three men were slightly injured and a man died as a result of the accident. The gas in a ship's pipe caused the explosion during welding. Investigations on the case continue.

SHOYU MARU 52 (Cambodia)

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Cambodia trawler *Shoyu Maru 52* capsized in a storm 130 nautical miles off Sakhalin in the Sea of Okhotsk at 0945, local time, today, officials said. All 19 of her crew, all Russian citizens, were rescued and evacuated to fishing *Kapitan Kamratov*, said Konstantin Sviridov,

the chief of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre in Vladivostok. The seamen were successfully picked up from inflatable rafts in spite of four-metre waves and the wind of up to 18 metres a second. Nobody was injured. The capsized boat continued her drift. A relevant warning was issued to all the ships in the region.

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: The 50-metre trawler *Shoyu Maru 52* capsized when the cargo onboard was shifted by the severe storm in the Sea of Okhotsk. The accident details were reported to the Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk sea rescue centre from trawler *Kapitan Kamratov* trawler that rescued 19 crewmembers from *Shoyu Maru 52*. This morning, *Kapitan Kamratov* received the distress signal and headed to the area together with another Russian vessel. The crews of the vessels saw red flares fired by the fishermen in distress. The people were found in an inflatable life raft. They were taken onboard. Dry clothes and food were given to the rescued fishermen. The master of *Shoyu Maru 52* said that the cargo onboard his trawler was shifted during the storm. Four-five-metre waves removed the hold hatch, and the water got into the hold. The vessel capsized in five minutes and lay to starboard. The crew in a hurry evacuated into the raft. They had no time even to take documents. *Kapitan Kamratov* is on the way to the port of Korsakov where the people will be discharged. The capsized *Shoyu Maru 52* remained afloat. There are 36 tonnes of fuel in its tanks. Rescuers suppose the vessel will sink.

SIMPATI (Russia)

Istanbul, Dec 15 — Vessel *Sympathy* (? general cargo *Simpat*, 3989 gt, built 1972), with a pilot on board, reported generator problems three to four miles from the north entrance of the Strait of Istanbul, near Kavak Point, at 1458, local time, Dec 15. — Turkish Straits.com (Note — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS, *Simpat* was in lat 41 16 19.26N, long 29 02 33.12E, at 1143, UTC, proceeding at 4.4 knots, and was subsequently at anchor.)

London, Dec 17 — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS general cargo *Simpat* was at anchor in 40 58N, long 28 55 23.88E, at 2348, UTC, Dec 16.

London, Dec 18 — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS general cargo *Simpat* was still at anchor in 40 58N, long 28 55E, at 0014, UTC, today.

London, Dec 19 — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS, general cargo *Simpat* was located stationary near Istanbul, in lat 40 58 03N, long 28 55 23.94E, at 1119, UTC, today.

London, Dec 21 — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS, general cargo *Simpat* was still stationary near Istanbul, in lat 40 57 54.9N, long 28 55 14.46E, at 1032, UTC, today.

SIR MICHAEL (Honduras)

St. Vincent, Cape Verde, Dec 18 — Anchor handling tug *Sir Michael* is still under arrest. — Lloyd's Agents.

SOLAR 1 (Philippines)

Manila, Dec 15 — The coastal areas of five villages are still covered by oil waste following the sinking of non specific tanker *Solar 1*, the provincial government of Guimaras island reported. The affected villages include Lapaz, San Roque, Lucmayan, Tando and Cabalagnan. The provincial government of Guimaras has asked Petron Corp to resume clean-up of these five villages. Petron Corp has assumed responsibility for the clean-up of villages affected by the oil spill resulting from the sinking of the vessel on Aug 11. The vessel was chartered by Petron Corp to carry two million litres of bunker fuel when it capsized off the coast of Guimaras island in stormy seas. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, Dec 20 — Sunshine Maritime Development Corp, the owner of the sunken tanker *Solar 1* ceased operations after handing out the "last salaries" of its employees on Dec 15. In a letter to employees, Sunshine Maritime president Clemente Cancio said that "the company has been virtually bankrupt and non-operational since the sinking incident but the management has done its best to keep you in its payroll for five months. Presently, the company has run out of funds for your salary and other basic operational expenses." "That is why with it is with deep regret that this salary for the Dec 15 shall be your last," he noted. The company, which operates three tankers, including *Solar 1*, has had its fleet grounded by regulatory authorities following the sinking of *Solar 1* on Aug 11. Employees said that the company still owes them at least a month's salary. Officials said that this would be paid out once proceeds from *Solar 1*'s hull insurance is paid out. Company sources, noted, however, that Sunshine Maritime may not be able to collect on the *Solar 1*'s hull insurance as the insurance premium has not been fully paid. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

SONGA MAYA (Marshall Islands)

Montreal, Dec 14 — Product tanker *Songa Maya* is still in Hamilton for repairs. It has been reported to us that The CPP's spare parts should arrive tomorrow. After the repairs completed, the vessel will resume its voyage. ETD Dec 19. The onsite contractor's representative does not yet know the cause of the failure. The Seaway will shut down on/or about Dec 25, and needs to be out of the Great Lakes, before the closing date, or it will be land locked in the area. — Lloyd's Agents.

SPAR GARNET (NIS)

Falmouth, Dec 20 — Bulker *Spar Garnet* entered No 3 dry dock, Falmouth, at 0619 today, to effect repairs. — Lloyd's Agents.

ST.WESTERN (Malta)

London, Dec 16 — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS, at 0159 hrs, today,

St. Western was still in lat 40 23 35.88N, long 26 39 32.76E.

London, Dec 19 — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS, general cargo *St. Western* was stationary off Gelibolu, in lat 40 23 37.99N, long 26 39 33.31E, at 0746, UTC, today.

London, Dec 21 — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS, general cargo *St. Western* was still stationary off Gelibolu in lat 40 23 35.22N, long 26 39 30.96E, at 1134, UTC, today.

STONNY (Cambodia)

Istanbul, Dec 20 — A Turkish press report, dated today, states: General cargo *Stonny* (1355 gt, built 1969) is aground Essek Island due to bad weather, she is crashing and sinking. — Turkishstraits.com. (Note— According to Lloyd's MIU AIS, *Stonny* was reported at 1039, Dec 20, in lat 40 59 10.71N, long 28 56 43.93E. Nearest port - Istanbul, Turkey, distance 1.5 nautical miles. The vessel was stationary.)

Istanbul, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: General cargo *Stonny* is aground on Essek Island, due to bad weather, at 2240, local time, Dec 20. She is crashing, flooding in engine-room and sinking in position lat 41 13.82.4N, long 29 13.13.8E. Start to rescue operation from shore, throwing gun and breeches buoy. — Turkishstraits.com.

Istanbul, Dec 20 — General cargo *Stonny* aground in lat 41 13.824N, long 29 13.138E, due to bad weather at 2240, Dec 22. Vessel has flooded engine-room. Traffic suspended from north to south 2115, Dec 20 will be open noon Dec 21. — Turkishstraits.com.

SULAIMANNI (United Arab Emirates)

Portsmouth, UK, Dec 20 — General cargo *Sulaimanni*, Abu Fuloos port, Basrah, for Dubai with a cargo of dates, grounded in Iranian territorial waters near Bandar Lengeh port on Saturday night (Dec 16). The vessel's 11 crew members were reportedly rescued by Iranian officials. Hussein Mahazar, a UAE national and the vessel's owner, said the Iranian Coast Guard had rescued the crew and taken them to Bandar Lengeh port. — Correspondent.

SUMATRA (Argentina)

Buenos Aires, Dec 19 — According to our sub-agents at Port of Mar del Plata, trawler (All types) *Sumatra* was undocked from SPI dry-dock without her tail shaft, rudder and propeller and with her stern tube blocked, on Dec 6. It has been estimated that the vessel in question will have her propeller installed in about 10 days time. — Lloyd's Agents.

THEBELAND (U.K.)

London, Dec 19 — Following information received from Kiel, dated today: At 1000, Dec 18, Roll On Roll Off *Thebeland* (20881 gt, built 1978), Finland for Lubeck, was in collision with German inland water craft *Castor*, length 67 metres, on the river

Trave at km 13, Danischburg / pile 28. The German vessel, homeport Hamburg, was on the way from Geesthacht to Lubeck and crossed the river without pilot. The visibility was poor. The bulbous bow of the ferry struck the German vessel in the stern region on port side. It sustained water ingress through a gash of 50 cm. It was able to berth at the Henningskai. The damage to the ferry was only minor. No one was hurt. The police are still investigating.

TORO (Greece)

Montreal, Dec 14 — Bulker *Toro* completed repairs and proceeded to Quebec City, where it loaded and departed Dec 11. — Lloyd's Agents.

UNIVERSAL BRAVE (Malta)

London, Dec 18 — Understand tanker *Universal Brave* (156692 gt, built 1997), in ballast, and crude oil tanker *Faultless* (79718 gt, built 1992), in ballast, were in contact at Fujairah Anchorage over the weekend (Dec 16/17). As a result both vessels sustained minor damage but will require repairs. (Note — *Universal Brave* arrived Fujairah anchorage Dec 5 and *Faultless* arrived Fujairah anchorage Dec 12.)

VERA (Germany)

London, Dec 20 — Following received from Kiel, dated today: The redelivery of general cargo *Vera* to its owners is scheduled for the first week of January, 2007.

VERONA (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Dec 17 — General cargo *Verona* sailed from Dordrecht at 0135, hrs, Dec 15 and at 0005 hrs, today, was reported passing Skaw, in a southerly direction.

VESTHOLM (Denmark)

London, Dec 15 — Following received from Aarhus RCC, timed 1028, UTC: Dredger *Vestholm* is still aground. Salvage operations are expected to begin later today. (See issue of Dec 14.)

London, Dec 18 — Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 1033, UTC: Dredger *Vestholm* is still aground. The oil has been pumped off the vessel, and refloating operations are expected to begin today or tomorrow.

London, Dec 20 — Following received from Aarhus RCC, timed 1149, UTC: Dredger *Vestholm* was refloated at 1400, UTC, Dec 18, and is now alongside at Agger Shipyard.

VLIEREE (Honduras)

Portsmouth, UK, Dec 20 — Suction dredger *Vlieree* (1097 gt, built 1955) and sand barge *Jolanda* were in collision in the Western Scheldt, between Hoofdplaat and Breskens, at around 0815 today. *Jolanda* has a leak in the aft part. Police and tugs are proceeding. — Correspondent.

London, Dec 20 — Following received from Scheldt Co-ordination Centre, timed 1101, UTC: Suction dredger *Vlieree* is presently anchored near the VH10 Buoy, Western Scheldt. Sand

barge *Jolanda*, which is almost completely submerged, will be beached near the VH6 Buoy.

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Sand barge *Jolanda* sprang a leak and sank on even keel after being contacted by suction dredger *Vlieree* near Hoofdplaat on the Western Scheldt Dec 20. Tugs *Multratug 15* and *Coby* tried to prevent it from sinking in deep water; now the wheelhouse and masts are visible. Multipurpose vessel *Frans Naerbout*, oil protection vessel *VLB 1* and other craft headed to the scene of the accident. At the time of the collision the visibility was low.

VLORA (Panama)

London, Dec 19 — Following received from Rome MRCC, timed 1541, UTC: Liquid petroleum gas carrier *Vlora* (1922 gt, built 1973) struck the breakwater early this morning while entering port at Brindisi. The vessel sustained slight damage to the bulbous bow and berthed for Class inspection. A Class Maintain certificate has now been issued.

Brindisi, Dec 21 — Liquid Petroleum Gas Carrier *Vlora* struck breakwater at Brindisi Dec 19. At the moment the vessel is waiting for a new certificate from its classification society. Understand the certificate has already been issued and, once vessel obtains this, it will load at Brindisi and depart immediately. No repairs will be carried out here. — Lloyd's Agents.

VOLGO-BALT 210 (Russia)

London, Dec 15 — General cargo *Volgo-Balt 210* is currently at Liepaja.

VORIOS IPIROS HELLAS (Panama)

Tianjin, Dec 15 — Bulker *Vorios Ipiros Hellas* (22069 gt, built 1981), entering Xingang, collided with bulker *Long Hai* (39997 gt, built 1977) at Xingang Anchorage on Nov 26. After the collision, both vessels entered Xingang Port the next day. *Vorios Ipiros Hellas* is still berthed at Xingang Port. The accident investigation is still ongoing, in addition the main damaged parts of vessel is under water. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — *Vorios Ipiros Hellas* sailed Qingdao Nov 23.)

WESTLANDGRACHT (Netherlands)

Portsmouth, UK, Dec 21 — Non specific tanker *Westlandgracht* (670 gt, built 1974), outbound from Amsterdam, struck the sounder of the high tension mast on the south side of the Ketelbrug bridge at 0630 this morning. The vessel, which was en route from Kampen to Friesland, sustained a substantial crack in its forepart. — Correspondent.

WILMA (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Dec 14 — Following received from Kiel, dated today: General cargo *Wilma* is presently dry-docked at the Norderwerft in Hamburg and the opportunity will be taken for the vessel to also undergo a general

overhaul. The damaged 275-t-crane has been placed on the pier where it is to be repaired. Repairs, which will be carried out by the "Neuenfelder Maschinenfabrik" (machine factory Neuenfelde) which built the crane in 1997, will take until end of January. The crane-leg has to be completely rebuilt, the cranehouse can be repaired. *Wilma* will depart from the Norderwerft on Dec 22, and for four-five weeks will operate with just the two cranes onboard. A decision as to when, and by whom, repair works on the severely damaged bridge will start, is expected next week. The bridge has been closed to traffic since the collision. The police investigation against the captain of the *Wilma* is continuing. It is alleged that a Philippine crew member raised the crane after passage through the Holtenau bridges, not expecting any further bridges.

WILSON MUUGA (Cyprus)

Reykjavik, Dec 19 — Bulker *Wilson Muuga* (3658 gt, built 1975) grounded off Stafnes, Reykjanes Peninsula, south-west coast of Iceland, at 0400 today. The 12 crew members are safe and still on board, but understand they will shortly be picked up by helicopters. Danish Coast Guard vessel *Triton* was under way to Reykjavik this morning and passed by the vessel. Eight crew members from *Triton* boarded a rescue craft and were trying to approach the grounded vessel, but their craft capsized and one of the crewmen drowned. The coast guard and rescue teams are presently waiting for daylight. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — According to Lloyd's MIU AIS, *Wilson Muuga* was stationary in lat 63 59 07.94N, long 22 45 12.37W, at 0751, UTC, Dec 19.)

London, Dec 19 — A press report timed 1128, today, states: A crew member of Danish Coast Guard vessel *Triton* died this morning when a liferaft he was in overturned in the surf south of Sandgerdi in southwest Iceland. Seven other members of the Danish crew were rescued. The Danish sailors had attempted to reach bulker *Wilson Muuga* that had run ashore off the Reykjanes peninsula earlier this morning when their raft overturned. Icelandic Coast Guard helicopters and members of local rescue teams began searching for the eight sailors immediately. They were found at 0800 this morning and the seven survivors were brought to a hospital. The stranded ship has a Russian crew. It had come from Grundartangi smelter in Hvalfjordur fjord north of Reykjavik where it had unloaded a shipment of quartz. The ship is located about 150 metres off the coast. The reasons for its stranding are unknown. Water has flooded its holds and its engines are dead. Nearly 200 rescue team members, two helicopters and three rescue boats have arrived at the scene to save the crew. Earlier this morning saving the Danish sailors was a priority. It is very windy near Sandgerdi and, according to forecasts, the weather conditions will not improve.

London, Dec 20 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Bulker *Wilson Muuga* was under way from Grundartangi, Iceland, to Murmansk. The crew of 12 was evacuated by Icelandic rescue helicopters. The vessel rests on an even keel south of Sandgerdi in shallow water.

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Water had flooded the holds of bulker *Wilson Muuga*. It is feared that oil might leak from the vessel and damage the surrounding environment, so preparations for pumping oil out of the vessel are being made.

Reykjavik, Dec 21 — All the crew members of bulker *Wilson Muuga* were safely taken ashore by helicopter Dec 19. The vessel was boarded by a selected party yesterday, and the engine room and hold No 2 were found to be flooded. The vessel is this morning lying very close to shore, apparently without having moved from where it stranded on Dec 19, after having skated over reefs and rocks. Most of the vessel's bottom is believed to be gone, and it is lying with its tank top securely stuck on the boulders and rocks. The main priority at present is to get hoses out to the vessel and pump ashore approximately 120 tonnes of heavy fuel oil and 20 tonnes of marine diesel oil to prevent pollution. — Lloyd's Agents.

YM SOUTH (Liberia)

London, Dec 18 — Container Carrier *YM South* arrived at Norfolk, Va at 0555 hrs, Dec 12. Vessel was subsequently reported arriving at New York at 1405 hrs, Dec 16. The vessel departed from New York at 1240 hrs, Dec 17.

ZOSCO ZHOUSHAN (Panama)

London, Dec 15 — Bulker *ZOSCO Zhoushan* sailed from Rotterdam at 0455 hrs, Dec 14, bound for Tubarao.



BANDAR ABBAS, IRAN

London, Dec 19 — Caution is being urged after Combined chemical and oil tank *Maritime Gisela* (29211 gt, built 2001), loaded with gasoline, was attacked by pirates late last night, Dec 18, while waiting for her turn at the Bandar Abbas Anchorage. The pirates boarded *Maritime Gisela* and removed three of its liferafts. The liferafts inflated and a smoke flare went off, attracting the attention of the crew, who immediately alerted the port. Even though the pirates got away with the remaining life rafts, Port Police arrived at the scene by speed boat and captured three pirates, who are currently being held in custody. This was the first piracy incident to be reported in the Bandar Abbas

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

Anchorage area. Crews are requested to stay alert while their vessels are at anchorage in the area.



Seizures & Arrests

A.P.SUNSHINE (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

Zeebrugge, Dec 19 — General cargo *A.P.Sunshine* was released Dec 15. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

EMIRATES SWAN (Singapore)

Portsmouth, UK, Dec 14 — Combined chemical and oil tank *Emirates Swan* (5776 gt, built 2006) was arrested Dec 13 for twice failing to report entering Norwegian territorial waters. The Coast Guard imposed a fine on the vessel's master, but he refused to pay and has therefore been taken to the police for questioning. The vessel is now docked at the Esso tank facility at Bergen. — Correspondent.

London, Dec 16 — Combined chemical and oil tank *Emirates Swan* was reported passing Skaw at 0418 hrs, Dec 15 and according to Lloyd's MIU AIS, at 0801 hrs, today, was in port at Fredericia.

GREGORIO I (Panama)

Limassol, Dec 15 — General cargo *Gregorio I* released from Larnaca Port on Dec 12 and sailed for Piraeus. — Lloyd's Agents.

MERCHANT BRILLIANT (Jamaica)

London, Dec 14 — A press report, dated today, states: The High Court granted an arrest against Roll On Roll Off *Merchant Brilliant* (9368 gt, built 1979) over claims that \$204,000, is owed to the 20 man crew of Latvians and Russians. International Transport Federation inspector Ken Fleming succeeded in his application for a vessel's arrest against the vessel this afternoon. The order was granted by Judge Liam McKechnie in the Admiralty Division of the High Court. Mr Fleming, who is on secondment to the ITF from Siptu said "When I arrived on board the *Merchant Brilliant* this morning, the crewing agency attempted to evict the crew and when that failed they attempted to leave Dublin port. Fortunately Norfolk Lines, who had chartered the ro-ro vessel, withdrew their pilot," he said. "I understand that the crewing agency is still attempting to find a pilot in the port and I am on my way down there now to ensure the court's order is enforced. "If they want to remove the vessel from Dublin they can do so by honouring their debts to the crew or successfully challenging the 'arrest' of the vessel in the courts. I know from an inspection of the ship's records just how likely a legal challenge is to be successful," Mr Fleming added.

London, Dec 15 — A press report, dated today, states: Efforts are continuing to resolve a dispute on board the Roll On Roll Off *Merchant Brilliant* which is under an arrest warrant in Dublin Port. The International Transport Federation secured the vessel's detention in the High Court yesterday amid claims that the 20 Russian and Latvian crew were being grossly underpaid. Management of the crewing agency was expected to fly to Dublin today for talks.

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated today, states: Representatives of Russian agency AGD Shipping are due in Dublin today in a bid to have the Roll On Roll Off *Merchant Brilliant* released. The vessel was stopped yesterday as it attempted to leave Dublin Port. The International Transport Federation stopped the vessel from leaving, as it believes the labour agency owes the crew around 150,000 euros in pay arrears. A high court order was obtained to detain the vessel. A meeting between the ITF and the agency will take place today in the hope of coming to an agreement to get the order lifted. The ITF says the vessel will not be released until the crew has been paid.

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Talks will begin tomorrow between unions and employers on board Roll On Roll Off *Merchant Brilliant* in Dublin Port. The High Court today ordered *Merchant Brilliant* to be detained until a dispute is resolved over E150,000 in unpaid crew wages. Representatives of the Russian agency which employs the Latvian and Russian workers, arrived in Dublin today and have agreed to meet officials from the International Transport Federation (ITF) on the deck at 0900 hrs tomorrow. The ITF went to the High Court to have the vessel detained after it attempted to leave Dublin Port earlier this month. They claimed it had uncovered evidence of alleged systematic underpayment of the crew. The grounded vessel is a sistership of *Merchant Bravery*, which was involved in a similar controversy earlier this month, when its crew members were found to be owed similar amounts of money. Both vessels provide a roll-on roll-off freight service between Dublin and Heysham. The ITF said it can only ask the High Court to lift its order if the crew was paid the arrears.

Dublin, Dec 20 — Roll On Roll Off *Merchant Brilliant*: The dispute has now been resolved and the vessel has been released. It is expected to sail this afternoon. — Lloyd's Agents.

NYZDAN (North Korea)

Karachi, Dec 21 — General cargo *Nyzdan* is still under arrest at Karachi Ship yard. — Lloyd's Agents.

RICKMERS CHENNAI (Panama)

Zeebrugge, Dec 19 — General cargo *Rickmers Chennai* (17128 gt, built 1979) was arrested at Antwerp Dec 12 and released Dec 13. — Lloyd's Sub-agents. (Note — *Rickmers Chennai* sailed Antwerp Dec 15.)

SEA PARK (Panama)

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: Eleven Filipino seafarers who were rescued by the Philippine Embassy in Rome arrived home Dec 14 after being stranded in Dures Port, Albania. Present to welcome the arriving seamen at the airport were Ambassador Philippe J. Lhuillier, OWWA and DFA representatives. The Filipino crewmen, were stranded in Albania for five months without salaries, food and basic items and supplies. Their ship, general cargo *Sea Park* (ex *Edarte*, 1582 gt, built 1975) was due for major repairs when they arrived in Albania in July. However, the expected repairs did not materialise after the owner apparently suffered financial difficulties. Philippine envoy to Italy Ambassador Lhuillier, upon learning the case of the Filipino seafarers, immediately dispatched Assistance to Nationals (ATN) Officer Antonio Villar and Overseas Workers Welfare Association (OWWA) Officer Marco Antonio Liwag to Albania to provide the seamen's basic needs, assess the situation and bring them home. After the marathon negotiations with the Albanian Harbour-master, the Director of the Shipyard and the Immigration Police, case officers were able to effect the release and safe passage of the distressed seamen.

TRADER (Georgia)

Odessa, Dec 15 — General cargo *Trader*, under arrest at Nikolayev due non-payment of salary to the crew, sailed Oct 13. — Lloyd's Agents.

WENG TENG NO.688 (South Korea)

Suva, Dec 19 — Fishing (general) *Weng Teng No.688* is still under investigation. — Lloyd's Agents.



Pollution

MONTREAL, CANADA

Montreal, Dec 17 — Part containerised general car *SCL Bern* (9990 gt, built 2005) was bunkering at Montreal anchorage and there was a very small oil spill. The vessel was cleaned and departed for Tunisia at 1300, Dec 17. The shore area will be cleaned tomorrow (Dec 18). — Lloyd's Agents.

Weather & Navigation

**AUSTRALIA**

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: The price of tropical fruits could skyrocket over Christmas, after south-east Queensland farmers were hit hard by weekend storms. Peak horticultural group Growcom estimates the damage bill to farmers will be up to Aus\$15 million. Spokeswoman Jan Davis says large hail and cyclonic winds shredded hail nets and destroyed crops from Cooroy to Childers. "Some growers in that region from Childers through to the Sunshine Coast had very, very severe damage," she said. "One grower I spoke to has had most of their entire crop of mangoes and lychees destroyed - she reckons 500 tonnes of lychees and probably 800 trays of mangoes. "Their trees are very badly damaged, sprinklers and hail nets have been shredded by the hail."

INDONESIA

London, Dec 15 — A press report, dated today, states: A landslide swept over a remote village on Indonesia's Sumatra island before dawn today, killing at least 17 people, local officials said. A number of other people were still missing, the officials said. "Villagers are still searching for victims and some bodies have been pulled from the mud," Yurnaldi Nurdin, a city council member, said today. The landslide struck the village of Air Dingin, about 560 miles northwest of the capital Jakarta, before dawn today, he said.

MALAYSIA

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated Dec 20, states: Flooding caused by heavy monsoon rains has forced more than 20,000 people to flee their homes in the southern Malaysian state of Johor, officials said today. Flooding was also reported in the neighbouring states of Malacca and Negeri Sembilan, but the situation there was not as serious. About 22,000 people in eight districts of Johor had taken refuge in town halls, schools and community centres on higher ground by early today, Che Moin Umar of the Civil Defence Department said. A police officer at an emergency operations centre in the state capital of Johor Bahru put the number of evacuees at 26,000. Che Moin said the number could increase in the coming week. "The flood situation is still at a very worrying level," Che Moin said, "But management-wise, we have things under control. There is enough food supply for the evacuees, warm blankets, medical assistance, we are OK." Teams of army, police, firefighters and volunteers were searching for people who may be

trapped in their homes, he said. Continual rains since Sunday (Dec 17) have caused major rivers to overflow into villages and towns in Johor, including Johor Bahru, which lies across a causeway from Singapore, bringing the state to a virtual standstill, The Star newspaper said. The rains eased by this morning but intermittent showers were forecast through tomorrow.

PANAMA

Balboa, Dec 14 — General cargo *Liberty V* is still in the same position, with the diver's flag raised and men working on board. General cargo *Perseus V* is still in the same location and is undergoing repairs, with men working above and below deck and alongside, painting the vessel's hull. Local workers advise that the vessel will be refloated soon. The bow of general cargo *Princess Aviv* has been lashed to a barge, and the vessel has been refloated and towed to a position just adjacent to Pier 3 at 5th and Front Street. — Lloyd's Agents.

TROPICAL CYCLONE "BONDO"

London, Dec 19 — Following received from the Meteorological Office: Tropical cyclone "Bondo" near lat 10.7S, long 59.5E, at 0600, UTC, Dec 19. Movement past six hours 280 deg at 11 knots. Position accurate to within 25 nautical miles, based on centre located by satellite. Maximum sustained winds 75 knots with gusts to 90 knots. Radius of 64-knot winds 20 nautical miles. Radius of 50-knot winds 35 nautical miles. Radius of 34-knot winds 100 nautical miles south semicircle, 90 nautical miles elsewhere. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Dec 20: Position lat 11.1S, long 54.1E. Maximum sustained winds 105 knots with gusts to 130 knots. Radius of 64-knot winds 25 nautical miles. Radius of 50-knot winds 45 nautical miles. Radius of 34-knot winds 120 nautical miles south semicircle, 110 nautical miles elsewhere.

London, Dec 20 — Following received from the Meteorological Office: Tropical cyclone "Bondo": Position at 0600, UTC, Dec 20, lat 10.5S, long 55.0E. Maximum average wind speed 110 knots. Radius of 50-knot winds 50 nautical miles south semicircle, 30 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 30-knot winds 100 nautical miles south semicircle, 40 nautical miles elsewhere. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Dec 21: Position lat 10.2S, long 51.4E. Maximum winds 100 knots.

London, Dec 21 — Following received from the Meteorological Office: Tropical cyclone "Bondo": Position at 0600, UTC, Dec 21, lat 09.5S, long 51.5E. Maximum average wind speed 100 knots. Radius of 65-knot winds 15 nautical miles. Radius of 50-knot winds 25 nautical miles. Radius of 30-knot winds 400 nautical miles south semicircle. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Dec 22: Position lat 10.3S, long 48.7E. Maximum winds 100 knots.

Victoria, Dec 21 - Seychelles authorities evacuated 35 people from a remote atoll ahead of a rare tropical

cyclone due to strike there today, officials said. The move left just eight residents of Farquhar sheltering in a concrete bunker waiting for cyclone "Bondo", which is expected to whip in with winds touching 190 kph. "We expect major damage to the infrastructure there, but we will only know the extent of it tomorrow," said Glenny Savy, chief executive of the government body that runs the island. "We left eight people to get things up and running after the cyclone has passed. We're in touch with them and they are okay," he said. Mauritius meteorologist Rajoo Veerasamy said cyclones were extremely rare in the 115-isle Seychelles archipelago because of its proximity to the equator. Farquhar Atoll lies some 800 km southwest of the Seychelles' main island, Mahe. — Reuters.

TROPICAL STORM "TRAMI"

Manila, Dec 19 — At least 70 Filipino fishermen were reported missing near the Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea after strong winds and large waves caused by tropical storm "Trami" sank their vessels on Dec 16. Belated reports reaching the town of Infanta in Pangasinan province, where the fishermen originated, indicated that 31 fishermen were rescued by fishing vessels which survived the storm. The Philippine Navy dispatched two helicopters to the area early this morning to conduct search and rescue operations. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: Tropical Storm "Trami" looked set to pass the typhoon-battered eastern Philippines and head toward southern Japan or dissipate over the open sea, forecasters said today. The storm, with winds of 65 kilometres per hour and gusts of up to 80 kph, was 880 kilometres east of the northern Philippine island of Luzon, but no longer posed a direct threat, the country's weather bureau reported. It may move westward toward southern Japan or dissipate within the next day or two, according to the bureau and Japan's Meteorological Agency. The eastern Philippines is still reeling from landslides and flooding caused by Typhoon "Durian" earlier this month. The storm left more than 1,000 people dead. Nine days later, Typhoon "Utor" hit the country, killing more than 20 people and forcing the government to postpone two Asian summits in the central city of Cebu. The UN last week asked donors for \$46 million to provide tens of thousands of people with food and shelter.

TURKEY

Istanbul, Dec 15 — Traffic suspended from north to south at 0700, today, due to fog. — Turkish Straits.com.

Istanbul, Dec 18 — Traffic, suspended from north to south at 2145, Dec 17, and will be open from 1340, today. — Turkish Straits.com.

Istanbul, Dec 17 — Traffic will be suspended from north to south at 2145, Dec 17, and will be open around noon, Dec 18. — Turkish Straits.com.

TYPHOON "UTOR"

London, Dec 15 — A press report, dated today, states: Typhoon "Utor" has destroyed fishing sheds and caused vessels to run aground in the Xisha Islands, in south China's Hainan Province, but no human casualties have been reported, local sources said today. About 140 sheds in Yongxing, Yagong, Zhaoshu and Beidao islands were flattened, and one vessel seeking shelter in harbour sank, while five others ran aground, according to the Hainan work committee for Xisha, Nansha and Zhongsha islands. Forty-nine people were evacuated to safe places ahead of the typhoon, the committee said. The typhoon slammed into the Xisha Islands early Wednesday morning (Dec 13) with winds of up to 162 kph. After hours of gale-force winds, waves at Yongxing Island, the largest island, were seven to eight metres high. Local fishermen and government staff stationed in the Xisha Islands have begun reconstruction work, said the committee. The Xisha Islands are about 300 km south-east of Hainan Island and have a land area of 10 square km. "Utor" weakened into a depression yesterday afternoon with its eye 210 km south-east of Hainan's Sanya City. The typhoon killed 27 people and left eight missing in the Philippines after making landfall in the country on Tuesday.

Kuala Lumpur, Dec 21 — Around 50,000 people have been forced to evacuate their flooded homes in southern Malaysia as the region suffered its heaviest rainfall in a century, news reports said today. The rains, blamed on Typhoon "Utor", triggered large-scale flooding, cut off several towns in the southern state of Johor, shut down power and water supplies and disrupted train services. Official news agency Bernama put the total number of evacuees in Johor and three neighbouring states at 50,000, up sharply from 30,000 a day earlier. The Meteorological Services Department said more rains were forecast in Johor and the northeastern states of Kelantan and Terengganu over the next 24 hours. Science Minister Jamaluddin Jarjis blamed the downpours on strong winds from the western Pacific Ocean. "The phenomenon is due to the effects of Typhoon Utor near the Philippines," he said. The typhoon killed 27 people in the Philippines last week. Johor is one of Malaysia's biggest producers of rubber and palm oil. There was no immediate word on the impact on crops in the state, but palm oil prices have risen on fears of supply disruption. — Reuters.

Manila, Dec 21 — Philippine disaster officials sent ships and helicopters today to search for 78 fishermen missing since their boats sank in rough seas last week off the northern Philippines. The National Disaster Coordinating Council said 117 of 195 fishermen reported missing from the towns of Infanta, Dasol and Agno since Dec. 16 in Pangasinan province had been rescued. Three men had been

picked up by a U.S. Navy ship, the council said in a report. Local rescuers brought the rest ashore. The fishermen were aboard 38 vessels off Lingayen Gulf when they were engulfed by huge waves, local radio DZRH quoted Infanta mayor Roberto Martinez as saying. Martinez said local officials learned of the incident on Monday (Dec 18) when some of the survivors returned home. — Reuters.

UNITED KINGDOM

London, Dec 20 — Due to fog across the southern part of the United Kingdom, all remaining British Airways domestic flights into and out of London Heathrow Airport have been cancelled today.

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: British Airways has cancelled all mainline domestic flights to and from London Heathrow Airport for the rest of the day because of severe fog. Flights between Heathrow and mainland Europe are also being severely disrupted by the weather. London Gatwick Airport has also been affected, and inward and outward British Airways flights are facing lengthy delays. The airline has urged customers due to travel on domestic flights to or from Heathrow not to travel to the airport. The flights affected are in both directions between Heathrow and Manchester, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Newcastle. Long-haul flights are still being operated by the airline, but with severe delays. BA said dense fog and low visibility had caused air traffic control to place restrictions on flights landing and taking off at Heathrow. It said flow rates were at 50% of normal capacity throughout this morning, affecting all carriers at the airport. "The fog is likely to remain over south-east England for the next 48 hours," the statement said. "There are likely to be severe delays and possibly cancellations to many British Airways short-haul and domestic services to and from London Heathrow for at least the next 48 hours. "British Airways flights to and from London Gatwick are also likely to be impacted."

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Thick fog has forced British Airways to cancel all domestic flights from Heathrow and many European ones. Some 350 flights out of Heathrow have been cancelled today. Passengers booked on domestic flights to and from Heathrow are being advised not to go to there. BA flights from Scotland have also been cancelled. Liverpool's John Lennon airport, Coventry and Cardiff International have also been hit by the weather. The BBC Weather Centre said fog is set to continue into tomorrow. All flights out of Coventry Airport have been cancelled. Passengers will be taken to Birmingham by bus, where there are no problems at the moment. The airline said low visibility had caused air traffic control to place restrictions on flights landing and taking off. BA said "significant numbers of services"

to Paris and Brussels would be affected. Airport operator BAA said 223 flights had been cancelled altogether yesterday. Those due to fly on a cancelled service can rebook, re-route the ticket subject to availability, or claim a refund. BA said it plans to run about 220 shorthaul flights to and from London Heathrow today, out of a normal daily total of 400 shorthaul and domestic flights. The BA flights affected yesterday were in both directions between Heathrow and Manchester, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Newcastle. A Heathrow spokesman said Lufthansa and Alitalia were among the other airlines affected. The fog also caused delays for ferries docking at Pembroke port - with 160 passengers on Irish Ferries' *Isle of Inishmore* coming in 10 hours late yesterday.

UNITED STATES

London, Dec 14 — Dense fog is again causing disruption along the U.S. East and Gulf Coasts. In Baltimore, the Chesapeake River is currently closed to all traffic due to the foggy conditions. Meanwhile, Savannah River has been closed since 0830 yesterday, and St. Johns River at Jacksonville remains closed since 2330, last night. The Coast Guard has also closed Algiers Point in the Mississippi River to all vessel traffic. The port of Freeport was also closed due to fog at 0600, this morning.

Houston, Dec 14 — Oil tankers and cargo vessels may remain idled along the 53-mile Houston Ship Channel to the busiest US petrochemical port into Thursday night (Dec 14) due to dense fog on Thursday, the US Coast Guard said. Ship pilots in Texas City, Texas, near the Gulf of Mexico entrance to the channel, and Houston stopped guiding vessels shortly after 0100, CST, after limited visibility made navigating the waterway unsafe, the Coast Guard said. The fog was too thick to navigate through as of 1500, CST, according the Houston ship pilot association. — Reuters.

London, Dec 15 — A press report, dated today, states: A powerful storm socked the Pacific North-west with heavy rain and wind gusts close to 100 mph yesterday, flooding streets, toppling trees and cutting power to thousands. Three deaths were blamed on the storm. More than 350,000 customers lost electricity in Oregon, utilities reported. Washington's largest utility, Puget Sound Energy, said tens of thousands lacked power, and Snohomish County Public Utility District, which reported as many as 60,000 customers without power, said 35,000 of them remained in the dark late yesterday. Seattle City Light reported about 15,000 outages. A wind gust of 97 mph was recorded at Rockaway Beach, Ore. The Hood Canal Floating Bridge, which links Washington's Kitsap and Olympic peninsulas, and the Evergreen Point Floating Bridge, which links Seattle and its eastern suburbs, were closed because of high wind gusts. Flooding stalled traffic in parts of Seattle, and

falling trees and debris forced the closure of several highways in Oregon and Washington. "It's just too unsafe out there to take chances with people's lives," said Bob Doran of the Oregon Department of Transportation. "The brunt of the storm hasn't yet hit, so we are expecting more trees to come down later tonight." In Washington, a falling tree crushed the truck of a couple who stopped their pickup because of downed trees, Pierce County sheriff's spokesman Ed Troyer said. The woman was killed and the man was cut from the wreckage and taken to Madigan Army Medical Centre in critical condition. A man who swerved his car to avoid a fallen tree died when he hit another tree, Troyer said. A woman died in Seattle after getting trapped in her basement by rising floodwaters, authorities said. The National Weather Service said as much as eight inches of rain was expected on the coast and five inches in the Cascade Range, with snow at higher elevations. The weather service issued flood watches along many rivers in both states, and high wind warnings were in effect.

New York, Dec 15 — A prolonged delay in crude oil shipments along waterways in Texas and Louisiana due to fog could force some Gulf Coast refineries to slow down fuel production, experts said today. As many as 77 vessels were waiting for a blanket of mist to clear on the Houston Ship Channel, the second day fog made navigation unsafe along the 53-mile waterway to the busiest U.S. petrochemical port. Current forecasts predict the thick sea fog will persist for five more days, according to the Coast Guard and Houston ship pilots association. Shipping along the Calcasieu channel, which connects the Lake Charles, Louisiana, refining hub to the Gulf of Mexico, was also halted this morning due to fog, a Coast Guard official said. — Reuters.

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: Fog maintained its hold on Galveston County's waterways yesterday, and the National Weather Service says today is the earliest it will lift. The fog, which has lingered for nearly a week, has also slowed freeway traffic daily. The fog remained dense yesterday, with visibility limited to a quarter-mile. Ship pilots kept the Houston Ship Channel closed, leaving vessels stuck waiting to get into and out of the ports of Houston, Texas City and Galveston.

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated Dec 19, states: Over sixty vessels are at anchor in the Houston area as six days of intermittent closures of the Houston ship channel have led to a large backlog of vessels waiting to enter or depart the largest oil and petrochemicals port in the United States. Dense fog forced the temporary closure of the Houston Ship Channel for the sixth consecutive day this morning, although improved visibility allowed the Houston Pilots Association to resume moving ships into the port around midday. A U.S.

Coast Guard spokesman said this afternoon that 34 vessels were waiting to get into the Houston Ship Channel while 16 were waiting to depart. Two more were at anchor waiting for permission to move into berths in Texas City and Galveston, while another 11 were waiting to leave those areas. Heavy fog has regularly disrupted shipping along the Gulf Coast from Texas City, Texas, to Lake Charles, Louisiana, since last Thursday (Dec 14), with the Houston area hardest-hit. Most area refiners say they are not experiencing operational difficulties despite the delays in receiving crude oil imports. "We're still fine and are expected to remain so as long as there are breaks in the fog, which there have been thus far," said Mary Rose Brown, a spokeswoman for Valero Energy Corp., the nation's largest independent oil refiner. Deer Park Refining, a joint venture between Royal Dutch Shell and Mexico's state oil company, Pemex, said yesterday its operations had been only minimally affected by the disruptions to crude supply. A spokesman for the Sabine River Pilots Association, which operates the shipping channel into Port Arthur, Texas, said today that the port had reopened and that a backlog of 16 vessels waiting to enter the port was being reduced.

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Heavy snow blew across Colorado today, cancelling airline flights and shutting down a major highway, as a major storm moved onto the Plains after hitting New Mexico. The National Weather Service posted blizzard warnings for most of eastern Colorado and adjoining sections of Nebraska and Kansas. Up to two feet of snow was possible in the foothills just west of Denver, with two to three feet a possibility farther north, and 20 inches could accumulate on the Plains of eastern Colorado, the weather service said. Wind up to 30 mph could pile the snow into high drifts. United Airlines, the busiest carrier at Denver International Airport, cancelled all afternoon and evening flights, and Frontier Airlines planned to cancel up to 40 afternoon flights, representatives said. "This is a step that we need to take because of what Mother Nature is throwing at us," said United spokesman Jeff Kovick. He was not sure how many United flights were affected. Parts of Interstate 70 and other roads were closed in eastern Colorado, and dozens of schools called off classes in anticipation of the storm. The storm dropped more than a foot of snow in the state's southwestern mountains Tuesday, with 19 inches at the Wolf Creek ski area and 17 at Durango Mountain Resort. The broad storm also spread rain across parts of Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska today, with snow in western Kansas and Nebraska, where police reported vehicles sliding off I-80 in the Nebraska Panhandle. The storm rolled into Colorado from New Mexico, where roads around the state were

still snowpacked and icy today. Numerous schools opened late or remained closed. Up to a foot of snow fell at higher elevations of north-west and west-central New Mexico yesterday, and snow and sleet closed sections of I-40 across northern New Mexico and in the Texas Panhandle. Albuquerque International airport was closed for several hours yesterday as snow covered runways.

New York, Dec 20 — The number of ships waiting to get into the Houston Ship Channel has dropped to 35 from around 50 this morning, as clear weather allowed the waterway to open, the Houston Pilots Association said. "We've been open since 0745 hrs (1345, UTC) and we've nearly cut the inbound backlog in half," a pilots official said. He added that outbound traffic was still shut. — Reuters.

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Government offices and schools were closed and mail delivery suspended for a second day today after a powerful blizzard dumped more than two feet of snow along Colorado's most populous region and stranded travellers. Denver, Colorado Springs and other cities along the Rocky Mountain Front Range were virtually ghost towns, with cars crawling through thick snow towards the suburbs yesterday. Some 4,700 people spent the night at Denver International Airport, where flights in and out were cancelled, spokesman Steve Snyder said. Bus and light rail service in a six-county region was suspended. The State Patrol reported a rash of collisions, some involving several vehicles, but no fatalities. More than 30 inches of snow fell in the mountains and up to two feet fell in the Denver metro area, with snow expected to let up by noon today. Winds cut visibility and whipped up drifts several feet high on the plains. Governor Bill Owens declared a state of emergency and activated the National Guard, which assisted dozens of motorists on the highways around Denver and delivered diapers, formula and bottled water to the airport. Long stretches of Interstates 70 and 25, the main east-west and north-south routes through the Mountain West, were closed. Interstate 76 was closed from Denver to Nebraska. "They pulled everyone off the highway," said Leon Medina, manager of a truck stop on Interstate 25 in Walsenburg, about 130 miles south of Denver. "Cars are all around the building. Trucks are all over, trucks and cars pulled into ditches." At least 270 people took refuge at seven American Red Cross shelters in the metro area, though that number was expected to rise as motorists arrived by the busload early today, said Robert Thompson, spokesman for the Mile High chapter. Shelters were also open in Fort Collins and Colorado Springs, and the Red Cross provided 140 cots for nearly 350 people stranded at a Greyhound bus station in downtown Denver, Thompson said. Mail service was canceled in the eastern half of the state because roads were impassable

for mail carriers getting to work and for trucks delivering mail four days before Christmas. Denver International Airport was closed to all flights at mid-afternoon yesterday, and more than 1,000 flights were cancelled through today. No time was set for runways to reopen. United Airlines cancelled more than 670 flights into Denver and 160 that had been scheduled to take off before noon today. Frontier Airlines cancelled up to 190 flights.

UNITED STATES AND CANADA

London, Dec 15 — About 1.5 million homes and businesses in Washington and Oregon had no power early Friday after howling windstorms and heavy rains caused at least three deaths, closed two major bridges and prompted flooding. One of the concourses at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport was without electricity, and an airport spokesman said some flights were canceled. About 30 flights were scratched at Portland International Airport, a spokesman said, and Amtrak canceled service between Portland and Seattle. In Edmonds, north of Seattle, about 50 residents of an assisted living facility were evacuated after a tree crashed through the third floor, flooding the building, Snohomish County emergency management officials said. No injuries were reported, and residents were sent to other facilities. The Hood Canal floating bridge, which links Washington's Kitsap and Olympic peninsulas, and the Tacoma Narrows Bridge were reopened early today after being closed yesterday evening because of wind gusts up to 74 mph. In Oregon, Portland General Electric reported that power had been lost to about 245,000 of its customers — about 30 percent of its service territory.

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated Dec 17, states: BC Hydro says it is quickly restoring power to the tens of thousands of customers who were left in the cold and dark following last week's wind storms. Hydro spokeswoman Elisha Moreno said about 15,000 customers were still out of power this evening, mostly on Vancouver's north shore and in the Victoria area. That was down from 250,000 who were without power at the height of Friday's (Dec 15) record-breaking storm. Moreno said some Hydro crews were confronted by angry customers on Vancouver Island, where some areas have been out of power for nearly a week. More than 800 workers have been working for Hydro 12-16 hours a day to repair damage throughout the week. Moreno said authorities in Washington State, where at least four people died and hundreds of thousands have been left without power from the Friday storm, are seeking help from BC Hydro. "It's possible down the road" for Hydro to send some crews there, she said. "But we have to clean up things here first." Moreno said Hydro expects some of its customers could remain without power for a few more days. The utility has

yet to determine the cost of the damage. Telus crews were also scrambling today to restore telephone service around Metchosin and Sooke on Vancouver Island. By midday, fewer than 2,000 customers were without phone service, compared with 5,000 the previous day. Telus spokesman Shawn Hall said it could take two or three days before service is completely restored in remote areas, but most customers would have telephone service by today. Capt Rob Jones-Cook of the Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services said no storm-related deaths or serious injuries were reported in the city.

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated Dec 18, states: Four family members were found dead in their home from apparent carbon monoxide poisoning today, bringing the death toll from the North-west's worst windstorm in a decade to 14. The four were found in a home in Burien, a south Seattle suburb, along with another relative who was still alive, said King County sheriff's Sgt John Urquhart. Like many in the area left without power after the storm, they had been running a generator in their garage, authorities said. Carbon monoxide was also responsible for killing two men over the weekend (Dec 16-17). One had been using a portable generator in his living room, the other was using a charcoal grill to heat his bedroom. At least 100 people have developed symptoms of exposure to carbon monoxide since the winds knocked out power to more than a million homes and businesses late last week. Of the 14 storm-related deaths, 12 were in Washington and two were in Oregon. The region's worst windstorm in more than a decade struck on Thursday, knocking out power to more than 1.5 million homes and businesses. Wind gusted to 113 mph during the storm near Mount Rainier and to a record 69 mph at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. About 200,000 customers were still without power in western Washington, utilities reported, as temperatures were in the low to mid 20s (Fahrenheit) over most of the affected area early today. Authorities said it could be days before power is restored. Washington Governor Chris Gregoire declared a statewide disaster and the state National Guard was mobilised to help get fuel and supplies to hard-hit areas.

URUGUAY

Montevideo, Dec 18 — A storm before dawn on Dec 17, with 140-kph winds and heavy rainfall, caused severe damage in at least 12 of Uruguay's 19 departments, damaging power lines, high tension cables, communications, dwellings and trees in numerous cities. Two people were killed and two others were injured. In Montevideo port, container carrier *MOL Wisdom* (41114 gt, built 1995) broke "22" mooring lines and drifted in the basin until it was re-berthed with the assistance of port tugs. The vessel reportedly sustained a "one-metre"

indentation in its starboard bow bulwark and has since sailed for Sao Francisco do Sul. Severe storms were forecast to continue today, with heavy rainfall, some hail and winds between 70 and 100 kph. — Lloyd's Agents.

Earthquakes



INDONESIA

Jakarta, Dec 18 — Three moderate earthquakes struck Indonesia's Sumatra island today, an official from the country's meteorological agency said, with a witness reporting that four people were killed in one area. The first earthquake struck at 0410 hrs, (2110, UTC, yesterday) with a magnitude of 5.8. Its epicentre was 128 km under the sea southwest of the city of Banda Aceh, an official from Indonesia's meteorology and geophysical agency said. The second quake, which had a magnitude of 5.7, came about 30 minutes later on land at depth of 53 km in an area northwest of the city of Padang in Sumatra, the official said. A third quake, of 5.5 magnitude, hit at 0824 hrs, in North Sumatra, the official said. The official said there were no reports of damage or casualties, but one witness telephoned El Shinta radio to say that four had been killed in the town of Muarasipongi in west Sumatra. — Reuters.

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated today, states: A moderate earthquake killed at least seven people and injured 100 early today, spreading panic across a large swath of the Indonesian island worst hit by the 2004 Asian tsunami, witnesses and officials said. The 5.5-magnitude tremor hit just before dawn and was centred about 670 miles north-west of Jakarta, the US Geological Survey said. It triggered landslides that hampered emergency efforts, and destroyed or damaged more than 680 homes. Frightened residents of Sumatra fled into the streets. The quake was followed by several aftershocks that kept people on edge in the worst-hit region. "Our rescue teams are facing difficulties reaching the affected areas because landslides are blocking roads," said Josikar Tanjung, an employee at the north Sumatra governor's office, adding that some heavy equipment had gotten through. Six people, including two children, were killed by falling debris, while an elderly person died from a heart attack, Tanjung said. At least 1,000 people whose homes were destroyed took shelter under tents or in local government buildings, said government spokesman Edy Sofyan. About 30 minutes before the quake, a 5.8-magnitude tremor struck off Sumatra's coast, the USGS said. No tsunami warning was issued as a result of that quake.

KURIL ISLANDS, RUSSIA

London, Dec 14 — A press report, dated today, states: A tsunami warning was issued for northern Japan and Russia's northeastern coast after a major quake shook the Kurile Islands yesterday, the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Hawaii said. NHK public television in Japan said the first wave of the tsunami was expected to arrive shortly after 2100 hrs and was predicted to range from one to two metres in Hokkaido. The site of the quake was roughly 1,700 km north-east of Tokyo. The US Geological Survey said the quake, which it estimated at magnitude 7.8, occurred at 2014 hrs at a depth of 27.7 km below the seabed.

RUSSIA

London, Dec 14 — An earthquake measuring 6.1 points hit the Republic of Buryatia late yesterday. The epicentre was located 95 km to the north-east of Kabansk, a regional administrative centre. The city residents felt tremors measuring up to three points. There are no casualties or destruction. All the life-support facilities of the Kabansk district continue working normally.

Volcanic Activity**MOUNT BULUSAN, PHILIPPINES**

Manila, Dec 20 — A volcano south of the Philippine capital spewed ash over wide areas today after its 15th explosion this year, bringing a risk of mudslides. The country's top volcanologist said Mount Bulusan, located around 400 km south of Manila, was not a violent volcano but warned that a big explosion was still possible after it belched ash over a 15 km area. "The most important thing is for the people not to venture into the four-kilometre radius permanent danger zone around the volcano," Renato Solidum, director of the government volcanology agency, said in a radio interview. "If there are heavy rains, residents should stay away from rivers around the volcano because the new deposits of ashfall may be swept by the waters and cause lahar (a volcanic debris flow)." Solidum later told Reuters the ash explosion was accompanied by rumbling sounds and lightning flashes, but he said the volcanology agency was not recommending evacuations and it was maintaining the lowest alert level, 1, over the mountain. — Reuters.

SHIVELUCH, RUSSIA

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: A series of ash plumes has been registered from the crater of the Shiveluch volcano on Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula. One of the plumes reached an altitude of 10 km above the summit, the Kamchatka

branch of the Geophysical Service of the Russian Academy of Sciences said today. A plume of ash 61 by 35 km in size moved 24 km north-east of the volcano. Increased seismic activity has been observed in the volcano. The giant mount presents no danger to nearby settlements, according to scientists who have been monitoring the eruption. However, ash clouds spewed by Shiveluch may be dangerous to local aviation. Shiveluch became active on Dec 5 after a relatively calm period since autumn, 2005. The volcano's eruptions are explosive, which makes it difficult to forecast them.

Political & Civil Unrest**AFGHANISTAN**

Kabul, Dec 20 — NATO and Afghan forces have killed about 50 Taliban fighters in the past few days in an operation in southern Afghanistan, an alliance spokesman said today. The operation, dubbed Falcon's Summit, was launched on Friday (Dec 15) and focused on the Panjwai and Zari districts in Kandahar province, the same area that was the focus in September of one of the biggest offensives since the Taliban's ouster in 2001. There were no casualties among NATO and Afghan forces in the latest operation, said NATO spokesman Brigadier Richard Nugee. "We have cleared one large and two small villages of Taliban. We have killed a reasonable number of Taliban. It is in the range of about 50," Nugee told a news conference in Kabul. Kandahar is the Taliban's birthplace and the September operation killed several hundred guerrillas, NATO said. More than 4,000 people, a quarter of them civilians, have died in violence in Afghanistan this year, the bloodiest since the Taliban's fall. About 160 foreign troops have also died. NATO leads about 32,000 troops in Afghanistan and the US-led coalition commands about 8,000 more. — Reuters. (See issue of Dec 15.)

Herat, Dec 21 — A roadside bomb aimed at a senior Afghan police officer killed at least four civilians today and wounded four others and the policeman, police said. The remote-controlled blast happened on a bridge on the main highway just south of the western city of Herat bordering Iran. — Reuters.

BANGLADESH

Dhaka, Dec 21 — Troops and riot police fought pitched battles with protesters today as a strike aimed at forcing electoral reforms in Bangladesh turned violent. Witnesses said at least 25 people were wounded in the clashes that broke out in several areas of the capital Dhaka, which is largely paralysed by the strike that has also affected business and

transport across the country. The protest was called by a 14-party alliance, led by former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, to force the interim government to implement reforms ahead of a general election set for next month. In Dhaka, troops in armoured cars patrolled the streets, chasing down protesters and rounding them up. Police also fired tear gas and rubber bullets at activists who had set a police car ablaze in the Shyamoli residential area, witnesses said. The interim government had put the army on stand-by earlier this month, despite criticism by the Hasina-led alliance. Activists also smashed some vehicles and rickshaws that were defying the day-long strike and at least six people were wounded in the southern coastal district of Barisal. The disputed election is set for January 22, but Hasina has asked for a delay to allow time for campaigning and to prepare a "flawless" voters list as well as issue voter identity cards. Hasina's alliance also wants President Iajuddin Ahmed, head of the caretaker government, to resign and accused him of bias. — Reuters.

CHAD

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated Dec 15, states: Troops from Chad entered Sudan's Darfur region in pursuit of Chadian rebels today as the U.N. and humanitarian aid groups prepared to pull some workers out of a key border town, fearing an imminent battle. Sudanese army and police barricaded the town of El Geneina, near the border, to prevent any attack by Chadian forces, a U.N. official said. There were concerns janjaweed militia were moving toward the town to reinforce Sudanese government troops. Janjaweed fighters have been accused of burning villages and massacring civilians in Darfur. The Chadian military fought Chadian rebels in Darfur's Tendelti area, about 12 miles northwest of El Geneina, the U.N. official said. Chad confirmed that it had sent troops into Sudan. "Government forces have used their right of pursuit to cross the border into Sudan," the Chadian government said in a statement. Chad's Communications Minister Hourmadji Moussa Doumgor met with Sudan's ambassador today and demanded Khartoum hand over the rebels, but Doumgor said that Chad's incursion was not an act of war against Sudan. "Chad has not declared war to Sudan and has no intention of doing so," the government statement quoted Doumgor as saying. The U.N. official said between 1,000 and 2,000 Chadian rebels had fled to their bases in Darfur, near El Geneina, after a battle a week ago near Biltine, 90 miles across the border in Chad. Most of the U.N. and aid workers in El Geneina were asked to leave on end-of-the-year holidays as a precaution. "It's just a preventive measure, because there's a lot of tension," said Dawn Blalock, the spokeswoman at the U.N.'s office for the coordination of humanitarian affairs. Nearly 4 million civilians in

Darfur rely completely or partially on international aid to survive, U.N. officials say. They say violence prevents workers from reaching more than 100,000 more in need of aid. So far in December, 250 humanitarian workers have been forced to evacuate their posts in various parts of Darfur, leaving about half a million people with little access to aid in the vast, arid region nearly the size of Texas, a coalition of international aid groups said in a statement today.

N'Djamena, Dec 19 — Nearly 40 people were killed in clashes between Chad's security forces and armed raiders who attacked two eastern villages, burning homes and mutilating their victims, the government said today. Communications Minister Hourmadji Moussa Doumgor said the villages of Aradibe and Habile were attacked at the weekend by Janjaweed raiders. The victims included 15 Chadian civilians, five Sudanese refugees and eight government soldiers who had their eyes gouged out, Doumgor said. — Reuters.

IRAQ

Baghdad, Dec 16 — A special Iraqi army unit backed by U.S. troops killed one militant and arrested six people during operations against a death squad leader in a Baghdad Shi'ite stronghold early today, the U.S. military said. The military said the target, who appears to have evaded capture, was believed to lead a group of 100 militants who conducted kidnappings, killings and rocket attacks against some neighbourhoods from Sadr City. "Minimal damage was caused to the objective and surrounding area and there were no reports of civilian casualties. There were no Iraqi forces or Coalition Forces casualties," the U.S. military's statement said. — Reuters.

Baghdad, Dec 16 — Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki said today Iraqi army officers of all ranks sacked after the U.S. invasion in 2003 would be allowed to reapply for their posts in the new army. Maliki, a Shi'ite, issued the invitation, a gesture towards disgruntled minority Sunnis, at a national reconciliation conference in Baghdad aimed at easing sectarian violence that U.N. officials estimate causes more than 100 deaths a day. Shortly after the U.S. invasion to topple Saddam Hussein, U.S. administrator Paul Bremer quickly dissolved the Iraqi army, a decision experts consider a miscalculation. Many of its members joined the ranks of the Sunni insurgency. The Defence Ministry has recruited former officers of Saddam's army in the past but limited the invitation to junior ranks. Maliki's invitation was the first extended to all ranks. "The new Iraqi army is opening the door to former Iraqi army officers. Those who do not come back will be given pensions," he told a conference of Kurdish, Sunni Arab, Shi'ite and secular politicians. The U.S. military has been training the new, 300,000-strong army as part

of a plan eventually to withdraw its own 135,000 troops. Sunnis view the Shi'ite-dominated army with suspicion and there are doubts about its sectarian loyalties. — Reuters.

Baghdad, Dec 17 — A roadside bomb killed three U.S. soldiers and wounded one north of Baghdad yesterday, the U.S. military said today in a statement. "The combat patrol was conducting a route clearance mission in order to free the roads of any possible dangers so that a follow-on unit could move through the area without harm. As they conducted their mission, a roadside bomb exploded near one of their vehicles, killing three and wounding a fourth soldier," the statement said. — Reuters.

London, Dec 17 — A press report, dated today, states: Gunmen wearing Iraqi army uniforms kidnapped more than two dozen workers from the Baghdad offices of the Red Crescent humanitarian group today and the US military announced the deaths of three more American soldiers. The gunmen pulled up to the Red Crescent building near downtown Baghdad's Andalus Square about 1130 in two police cars and 20 other cars, a spokesman for the medical group said. Staff members thought the men were police and allowed them to enter the building, he said. Once inside, the kidnappers separated men from women and abducted an estimated 28 men. The victims included Red Crescent staff, visitors and three guards from the Dutch Embassy, which has been vacated but still shares space with the office. Red Crescent staff called the Iraqi ministries of interior and defence and were told neither had troops in the area, said the spokesman, who requested anonymity due to concerns for his safety. "We do not suspect anyone, as we are a humanitarian organization that does no harm to any bloc," he said. The Red Crescent, which is affiliated with the International Committee of the Red Cross, has about 1,000 staff and 200,000 volunteers in Iraq, providing food, water and medicine. The US military announced today that three US soldiers stationed in Baghdad were killed yesterday by a roadside bomb while on a combat mission north of the capital.

Baghdad, Dec 19 — Gunmen including some wearing police uniforms stole at least 1.25 billion Iraqi dinars (\$875,000) in cash in the second major heist in central Baghdad in 10 days, a police source said today. The source said the gunmen took the money from Industry Ministry employees who were picking up money for salaries from a bank in the Karrada district of Baghdad this morning. An Interior Ministry source said the gunmen stormed the bank itself and took as much as 2 billion dinars (\$1.4 million). There were no injuries reported in the robbery. Last week gunmen wearing Iraqi army uniforms ambushed a security vehicle transporting money to the Central Bank and made off with \$1 million in

cash, police and Interior Ministry sources said. Four private security guards were kidnapped in the daylight robbery in busy Sadoun Street in central Baghdad in an attack that highlighted the lawlessness gripping the capital. — Reuters.

Baghdad, Dec 20 — U.S. forces have captured a senior al Qaeda in Iraq leader accused of killing hundreds of Iraqi civilians, including women and children, the U.S. military said in a statement today. The military said the "terrorist leader", whom they did not identify, was captured on December 14, in the northern city of Mosul in a raid which also netted five other suspects. "The terrorist leader was captured when Coalition Forces raided a known terrorist meeting place. (He) was attempting to flee from the location when Coalition Forces chased him across a street and detained him," it said in a statement. "He was personally responsible for hundreds of civilian deaths, including women and children. He housed foreign fighters to be used in suicide bombing attacks against the Coalition and the Iraqi people." The military statement said the al Qaeda suspect had been in charge of the Sunni Islamist group's military operations in Mosul and the Iraqi capital, during which time he had co-ordinated carbomb attacks and kidnappings for ransom. — Reuters.

Baghdad, Dec 20 — A suicide car bomber rammed his vehicle into an Iraqi police checkpoint near Baghdad University today, killing 11 people and wounding 31, an Interior Ministry source said. The source said there were university students among the dead and wounded from the blast in the Jadriya district in the southwest of the capital. — Reuters.

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: The U.S.-led coalition handed over security responsibilities in Iraq's northern Najaf province to Iraqi forces this morning. Najaf was the third of Iraq's 18 provinces to come under local control. British troops handed over control of southern Muthana province in July, and the Italian military transferred Dhi Qar province to Iraqis in September.

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: A bomb killed an American soldier and wounded three others south of the Iraqi capital, the U.S. military said today. The soldiers were part of a combat patrol that was escorting servicemen to a base when the roadside bomb exploded yesterday, the military said. In a separate incident, A suicide bomber targeted a police academy in the Iraqi capital today, killing at least 14 people and wounding 21 others, police said. The attack occurred at 0715 hrs, in eastern Baghdad, authorities said. The attacker was wearing a belt laden with explosives, and at least two of the dead were policemen. The area around the facility remained cordoned off hours after the attack. Yesterday, two suicide car bombings killed at least 19 people in the capital.

ISRAEL

Nablus, West Bank, Dec 16 — Israeli troops shot and killed a Palestinian gunman during a raid in the occupied West Bank town of Nablus today, local medical officials said. An Israeli army spokesman said troops had come under attack by local residents who threw makeshift explosive devices at them during an arrest raid in the town and that they had identified hitting one of three gunmen they had spotted. Medical officials said 19-year-old Amin Makhoulouf died of his wounds at a local hospital. He was identified as a member of al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, an armed wing of President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah faction. — Reuters.

Gaza, Dec 17 — Gunmen killed an officer loyal to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Gaza today, a day after Abbas called for new elections in a move that raised the stakes in his showdown with the ruling Islamist Hamas group. The officer was killed during a dawn raid by masked men on a training camp in Gaza City used by Abbas's presidential guard, a 3,500-strong force backed by the United States. Abu Ubaida, a spokesman for Hamas's armed wing, denied the group was behind the attack. Hamas has accused Abbas of attempting a coup after he announced plans yesterday for early presidential and parliamentary elections, an attempt to break months of deadlock and get international sanctions lifted. Dozens of masked gunmen in uniforms similar to those worn by Hamas militants shot and wounded a guard at the entrance to the camp and then killed him at close range, a senior officer from the presidential guard told Reuters. The gunmen then stormed the camp and set fire to dozens of tents and traded gunfire with several presidential guards stationed inside, wounding at least five of them. Following months of factional violence that has raised fears of civil war, Abbas, the head of Fatah, said elections should be held as soon as possible but added that efforts to form a unity government should continue. Hamas, which has a majority in parliament, said the president had no authority to call early elections. Hamas legislators were expected to call a parliamentary vote today declaring Abbas's move illegal, but it was not clear if they would have the numbers to get the vote on the agenda. The Palestinian basic law, which acts as a constitution, has no provision for calling early elections. Fatah officials say Abbas can do so by issuing a presidential decree. Hamas says that would be illegal. One senior Abbas aide said the polls might not be held until mid-2007 because of legal and technical factors. Abbas has previously said he would not stand for another term. — Reuters.

Gaza, Dec 17 — Gunmen fired two mortar bombs at Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's office in Gaza today, wounding at least five members of his personal guard as tensions with the ruling Hamas

movement threatened to boil over. Foreign Minister Mahmoud al-Zahar, a senior Hamas leader, accused Abbas's forces of attempting a "military coup" in Gaza after they overran two ministries under the control of the Islamists. Zahar demanded the security men leave the ministries or else be arrested, a move that could provoke further violence. "What is happening is a real military coup, assassinations, attempted assassinations, the occupation of headquarters and ministries," Zahar said. A Palestinian security source said two mortar bombs landed less than 100 meters from Abbas's office. The president was not in Gaza at the time. The spiraling unrest followed Abbas's call yesterday for fresh presidential and parliamentary elections, a dramatic move that seeks to end nine months of political impasse under Hamas's Islamist-led government. Abbas's forces had earlier sealed off the area around his home in Gaza and battled Hamas gunmen. — Reuters.

Gaza, Dec 18 — A shaky ceasefire took effect today between Palestinian rivals Hamas and Fatah after days of heavy fighting pushed the Gaza Strip to the brink of civil war. It was unclear whether the truce would last as groups of heavily armed gunmen from both sides continued to roam the tense streets of the impoverished coastal strip. Fighting escalated after President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah called on Saturday (Dec 16) for fresh presidential and parliamentary elections, a move intended to break political deadlock with the Hamas government and lift Western sanctions on its administration. There were sporadic exchanges of fire overnight, including an incident in which two members of a Hamas-led police force were wounded moments after the agreement was announced. Previous deals to end internal fighting this year have fallen apart. Forces loyal to Hamas and Fatah fought street and rooftop gunbattles across Gaza yesterday. Gunmen also fired mortars at Abbas's offices while his forces seized two Hamas ministries. Abbas was not in Gaza at the time. At least three people were killed and 20 wounded. British Prime Minister Tony Blair, on a drive to revive Middle East peace negotiations, arrived in Israel just before Hamas and Fatah announced the deal yesterday night. Blair will hold talks today with Abbas in the occupied West Bank and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in Jerusalem. The ceasefire deal followed heated accusations yesterday by Foreign Minister Mahmoud al-Zahar, a senior Hamas leader, that Abbas's security men had launched a "military coup" against the Hamas government in Gaza. The truce calls for the rival factions to pull back their fighters and release men abducted by each side. It also calls for Abbas's security forces to end a day-long siege of the two Hamas-led government ministries. Fatah said the agreement does not call for a resumption of stalled unity government talks, as asserted by

Hamas, which took control of the Palestinian Authority in March. Abbas has said early elections should be held as soon as possible. But he also said efforts to form a unity government should continue. — Reuters.

Gaza, Dec 19 — Hamas policemen and forces loyal to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas fought gunbattles at Gaza's main hospital today, killing one person and wounding 11 in a further sign that a day-old truce was in tatters. Clashes also erupted outside a key security agency controlled by Abbas. A Palestinian security source said the fight broke out when Hamas gunmen fired a rocket-propelled grenade at the compound of the General Intelligence agency. Witnesses and rival factions said a Hamas policeman was killed in the gun fight at the entrance and inside the compound of the Shifa Hospital in Gaza City. Rocket-propelled grenades were also fired. That gunbattle began when Hamas police tried to detain security men from Abbas's Fatah faction on suspicion they had been involved in earlier clashes. While neither side has declared Sunday night's (Dec 17) truce dead, there has been a spate of gun fights and kidnappings of rival activists since then. Most hostages have been swapped. Abbas told visiting British Prime Minister Tony Blair yesterday he was committed to early elections but left the door open for the formation of a Fatah-Hamas coalition with a "technocrat" cabinet that could satisfy Western countries. The fighting has renewed fears of civil war in the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank. The West has sought to bolster Abbas, who favours a two-state solution to end conflict with Israel. Hamas, an Islamist group advocating Israel's destruction, has struggled to govern since taking office in March under the weight of Western sanctions imposed because of its refusal to recognise the Jewish state and renounce violence. In Damascus, exiled Hamas leader Khaled Meshal said the election call was illegal and that Hamas would take practical steps to stop early elections taking place using "peaceful, popular pressure — not with violence". Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, in an apparent effort to shore up Abbas, said after meeting Blair that Israel planned to set up a joint committee with Palestinian officials that would discuss releasing Palestinians held in Israeli jails. A major amnesty could help Israel recover a soldier whose abduction by Gaza gunmen in June pushed Israeli-Palestinian relations to a new low. While a Gaza truce declared by Abbas and Olmert last month has largely held, Israel has kept up military action in the West Bank. Israeli commandos shot dead a Fatah militant in the West Bank city of Nablus today, witnesses said. An Israeli army spokeswoman said the militant tried to evade arrest. — Reuters.

Jenin, West Bank, Dec 20 — Israeli troops killed two Palestinian militants

from Islamic Jihad in the West Bank today during a raid, the Israeli military and the group said. They said the raid took place in a village near the West Bank city of Jenin. Witnesses said Israeli troops surrounded a house and asked the two militants to surrender. They refused. A gunbattle ensued and the two were killed. An Israeli army spokeswoman confirmed the two were killed in an exchange of fire during an arrest operation. "The two were involved in attempts to carry out a number of suicide attacks inside Israel," she said. Israeli troops shot and killed a 13-year-old Palestinian girl near the West Bank town of Tulkarm yesterday after soldiers accidentally mistook her for a gunman trying to enter Israel. Israeli forces also killed two militants in the West Bank yesterday. — Reuters.

IVORY COAST

United Nations, Dec 15 — The Security Council extended the mandate of U.N. and French peacekeepers in Ivory Coast for just a month today after the United States said it needed more time to get congressional approval for a longer period. A resolution approved unanimously by the 15-nation council authorized the two peacekeeping forces to remain in the world's top cocoa grower until just January 10, 2007. Without council action, the mandate would have expired at the end of the day. The previous mandate renewal was for 11 months. Today's resolution expressed the council's "serious concern" over the deteriorating situation in the volatile West African nation, which was split into a government-run south and a rebel-held north by a 2002-2003 civil war. It also reaffirmed the council's support for Ivory Coast's sovereignty and territorial integrity. A separate unanimous council resolution extended for six more months the work of outside experts monitoring the effectiveness of a U.N. arms embargo on Ivory Coast. Despite a string of U.N.-backed peace deals, the country has made little progress toward reuniting or holding elections as the government and rebel sides bicker over their implementation. Around 11,000 U.N. and French peacekeepers police the buffer zone that cuts the country in half. Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo, whose constitutional five-year term expired in October 2005, vowed today in Abidjan to do everything possible to ensure long-delayed presidential elections polls take place next year. — Reuters.

NEPAL

London, Dec 15 — At least 43 people have been killed since the Nepalese government and the Maoist rebels announced a cease-fire in April this year, an independent local human rights watchdog said in a report yesterday. The report published by the National Human Rights Commission said 15 people were killed by rebels and 11 by government security forces since April 26, when the truce was declared.

Kathmandu, Dec 19 — Students and labour groups backed by Nepal's Maoist rebels blocked traffic in the capital today in a strike called to protest against the appointment of ambassadors by the interim government without consulting them. The day-long strike, the first by the rebel groups since they began a peace process with the government in May, pointed to fresh strains in their uneasy relationship. The rebels have called for transport, businesses, schools and factories to shut down in Kathmandu. Early morning traffic in Kathmandu was disrupted by protesters, some of whom tied a rope across a road, burned tyres and set up other roadblocks to stop vehicles. "The appointment of the ambassadors is against the understanding reached between us and the government," senior Maoist leader Krishna Bahadur Mahara told Reuters. "We protest this as it was done without any consultation with us. We consider this as a conspiracy against the understandings and could seriously affect the peace process in future." The government, which named envoys to 14 countries including neighbouring India, the United States, Britain and Japan yesterday, denied it had done anything wrong. The ambassadors had been recalled by the interim administration set up after King Gyanendra ceded power following weeks of mass protests in April. — Reuters.

NIGERIA

Abuja, Dec 15 — Gunmen have invaded an oilfield control station operated by Royal Dutch Shell in Nigeria's Bayelsa state and are holding several soldiers and oil workers hostage, security and industry sources said today. It was the second attack against Western oil interests in Bayelsa in eight days, after militants tried to destroy a major oil export terminal and kidnapped four foreign workers on December 7. "Gunmen attacked a Shell logistics base and currently hold both naval and other personnel," a security source said. A Shell source said the facility was an oilfield control station at Nun River, pumping 12,000 barrels per day, and that the attackers had occupied it yesterday. Production is routinely shut down when such attacks occur. The same facility was occupied by armed men on October 10 for two days during which 60 oil workers were kept against their will over a financial dispute with Shell. "It appears this is a community problem. The community says Shell owes it 120 million naira (\$937,000)," a military source said. Nigerian oil production is currently down by about a fifth because of attacks by militants in another part of the delta in February. Meanwhile, the four foreign oil workers captured last week from the nearby Brass export terminal are still in captivity. The group holding the men — three Italians and one Lebanese — has made several demands including more regional control over the delta's oil wealth. — Reuters.

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated Dec 18, states: Militants seeking a greater share of oil revenues for their impoverished region detonated two car bombs nearly simultaneously in southern Nigeria today, the latest in a series of attacks that have cut crude production in Africa's oil giant by one quarter. No casualties were reported at either site. One blast, at a compound belonging to Italian oil firm Agip, blew out the windows of a medical facility and cracked compound walls. Agip said the car bomb was parked outside the compound wall and that no injuries were reported. Residents of a Shell compound hit by the other blast said several cars caught fire. Both explosions occurred in high-security residential areas around lunchtime, when most employees would be at work. Witnesses reported chaos at the scene. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta claimed responsibility in an e-mail to reporters, saying the bombs contained a mix of commercial and military-grade explosives and were triggered by mobile phone. A third attack was aborted because many civilians were nearby, it said. The group gave warning of the bombing 15 minutes before the two devices detonated almost simultaneously. MEND previously claimed responsibility for a car bombing that killed two people at a military barracks in April, and another that targeted an oil refinery in May. However, the simultaneous explosions today pointed to a much higher level of co-ordination than many previous militant groups showed. MEND's attacks have already cut one quarter of the normal 2.5 million barrels pumped per day in Africa's largest producer of crude. Much of the Niger Delta oil-pumping infrastructure is away from highly populated areas like Port Harcourt, making it unlikely today's blast would result in large production cuts. Earlier this month, MEND targeted an export terminal belonging to Agip, taking three Italians and a Lebanese man hostage. The group e-mailed photos of the hostages to journalists today in which the men looked tired and unshaven, but unharmed. MEND said the pictures were taken last Wednesday (Dec 13). The group says the hostages will not be released until Nigerian authorities free Mujahid Dokubo-Asari, a militant leader currently on trial on treason charges, and Diepreye Alamieyeseigha, former governor of a southern state, on trial on money-laundering charges.

Lagos, Dec 21 — The largest oil operator in Nigeria, Royal Dutch Shell, began evacuating hundreds of expatriate staff dependants from the Niger Delta yesterday after militants planted a car bomb in a residential compound, the company said. The withdrawal began hours after armed militants stormed an oil facility operated by France's Total in the delta's Rivers state, killing three people, police said. Shell's pullout involves about 400 foreign family

members from residential compounds in Port Harcourt, Warri and Bonny Island. Staff will stay put and oil and gas production will not be affected, officials said. “Dependants of expatriate staff are being relocated as a precautionary measure because of the explosion,” said Shell spokesman Bisi Ojedin. A senior Shell executive added: “We are not sure if this thing is going to deteriorate. If it deteriorates we will have fewer people to contend with.” Despite the attack on the Total facility, oil production at the 35,000 barrel-a-day Obagi field in Rivers State was unaffected, a company source said. Attacks on oil facilities and kidnappings of workers have become an almost a weekly occurrence in Nigeria, but Monday’s (Dec 18) car bomb attack in the car park of a Shell residential compound in the region’s largest city Port Harcourt increased up the pressure. No one was killed or injured, but nine cars were damaged. Industry executives had been expecting security to decline before a landmark poll next April, because elections often reignite long-standing power struggles between rival clans and militias in the remote, lawless region. Italian oil company Agip, a unit of ENI, has already transferred the families of its workers from the delta to Lagos. Militants also detonated a car bomb at the perimeter fence of its Port Harcourt headquarters on Monday. Militants fighting for more control over the region’s oil wealth are still holding four foreign oil workers — three Italians and one Lebanese — after an attack on an Agip oil export terminal on December 7. It accused Agip of offering ransoms for the workers yesterday and vowed to kill the four men rather than free them for cash. Criminal attacks against the industry are also common, often sponsored by local community chiefs seeking ransoms or other benefits from Western oil operators. Unidentified gunmen are holding five Shell workers at a company logistics base after invading the facility on December 14. They argue that the company owes the local community almost \$1 million. — Reuters.

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Brass Onshore Terminal was evacuated yesterday, following a threat that militants were planning to overrun the terminal again. One ship in berth is still loading but at a very slow rate. It is not yet clear if another ‘force majeure’ will be declared in addition to the one still in force from previous incidents.

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Armed men attacked a Total SA oil pumping station in Nigeria in an overnight raid that left three security guards dead and shut down the facility, a company official said today. He said the pumping station in the Obagi oil field, which normally produces about 50,000 barrels per day, had been shut down. Two private security contractors had previously reported an attack by armed men on the Total SA oil

installation in southern Rivers state. It was not immediately clear how many attackers were involved, or if they occupied the facility or took hostages.

PHILIPPINES

Manila, Dec 16 — Two men on a motorcycle shot dead a Philippine congressman and his bodyguard in their car in central Manila, police said today. Luis Bersamin, a political ally of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo’s, was leaving a Roman Catholic church in Quezon City after attending a wedding when gunmen blocked his car and fired at him several times, they said. “He was killed on the spot,” said a police investigator. “His bodyguard exchanged gunfire but was also killed.” Bersamin’s driver was wounded in the shootout, police said. “We’re still trying to establish the motive for the killing and the identities of the gunmen,” an investigator said. Soldiers and police officers have been on alert since yesterday because of a demonstration organised by Roman Catholic bishops in Manila’s main public park tomorrow to express opposition to moves by Arroyo’s allies in Congress to change the constitution. Opposition from powerful religious groups forced the lower house of Congress to abandon attempts this week to alter the charter and shift the country to a parliamentary system, which critics saw as an attempt to extend Arroyo’s powers. Church leaders said the gathering would still go ahead to express outrage. — Reuters.

SOMALIA

Baidoa, Somalia, Dec 20 — Somali government troops and Islamist fighters skirmished today as a top European Union envoy arrived to push the resumption of peace talks. The rivals factions, locked in an impasse since talks broke down in early November and facing off across a jagged frontline, exchanged mortar fire today, after a late-night gunfight between reconnaissance units. The government said one of its troops was killed by a mortar round and two injured in fighting that was still going on in the village of Idaale when EU development and aid chief Louis Michel, arrived 70 km northeast of there in Baidoa. “Last evening, a reconnaissance team from the government and the Islamic courts clashed. But this morning, ground troops from both sides exchanged mortars from a distance,” Deputy Defence Minister Salad Ali Jelle told Reuters. “Their aim was to create fear and disturb peace ahead of the European Union team visit to try and reconcile us.” An Islamist military source who declined to be named confirmed the fighting was raging: “Two Islamic courts troops were killed. Both sides were using heavy weapons.” Michel did not speak to reporters after landing in Baidoa, the government’s sole stronghold, and headed off to meet with President Abdullahi Yusuf

and Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi in a push to get the two back to negotiating a peace deal. Michel was due to fly to Mogadishu, the traditional capital, controlled by the Islamists, in the afternoon to speak with top SICC leader Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys. — Reuters.

Nairobi, Dec 21 — Somali Islamists and their Ethiopian-allied government rivals shelled each other for a third day today, a day after a European Union envoy said the two sides had agreed to new peace talks. Deputy Defence Minister Salad Ali Jelle said heavy fighting broke out in the morning near Dinsoor, 100km southwest of the government’s surrounded stronghold, Baidoa. — Reuters.

SRI LANKA

Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka, Dec 19 — Suspected Tamil Tiger rebels abducted 23 schoolchildren in Sri Lanka’s volatile east overnight, police said today, the latest in a spate of kidnappings amid renewed civil war. Police said the rebels took the children, aged between 15 and 17, and their two teachers from an evening class in the coastal hamlet of Vinayapuram, in the tsunami-battered eastern district of Ampara late yesterday. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) neither confirmed nor denied involvement, saying in an unusual statement that they were investigating the incident and that if any of their fighters were involved, they would be punished. In a separate incident, the Vice Chancellor of the main university in the island’s east, was abducted in the capital, Colombo, last week. The Tigers usually issue flat denials when accused of abductions or killings and have not previously hinted at any possible insubordination in their ranks. — Reuters.

Batticaloa, Dec 19 — Sri Lanka’s Tamil Tigers said today they had freed 23 teenage school children reported abducted overnight, and had suspended rebel fighters who recruited them without checking their age. However, the military said the Tigers only released 15 of 16 girls aged 15-17 who were taken from an evening class in the coastal hamlet of Vinayapuram, in the eastern district of Ampara, late yesterday. One girl and seven boys were still missing. It was the first time the Tigers have made public a disciplinary measure against their own fighters, as the rebels fight a new escalating chapter of the island’s two-decade civil war with the military. “It wasn’t actually an abduction,” Tiger military spokesman Rasaiah Ilanthiraiyan said from the rebels’ northern stronghold. “Our cadres who brought in the young fellows did not properly check their ages, and that is criminal negligence.” “They have been released to their relatives,” he added. “The cadres involved have been decommissioned — like a suspension.” The Tigers

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routinely deny charges by United Nations children's agency UNICEF that they recruit children, and argue that any children in their ranks lied about their age to get there. Sri Lanka has been plagued by abductions this year, which have been blamed both on the Tigers and on a group of renegades led by a breakaway Tiger commander called Karuna — who Nordic truce monitors suspect some elements of the military are helping. Analysts say both rebel factions are abducting teenagers to boost their ranks as a new chapter in a two-decade civil war that has killed 67,000 people since 1983 deepens. More than 3,000 civilians, troops and rebel fighters have been killed so far this year and tens of thousands of people have been displaced from their homes amid a rash of battles, air raids, ambushes and suicide bombings, leaving a 2002 truce in tatters. The Tigers, who accuse successive majority-Sinhalese governments of discriminating against minority Tamils, declared they were resuming their fight for an independent state in the island's north and east after President Mahinda Rajapakse flatly rejected their demands for a separate homeland. — Reuters.

Kidnappings



MEXICO

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated Dec 18, states: A Texas man kidnapped from his Mexican hunting ranch three weeks ago was released today, officials said. Librado Pina Jr., 49, was reportedly in good condition after crossing into Laredo, Texas, said Santos Vasquez, a prosecutor in the border state of Coahuila, where the kidnapping occurred. Vasquez did not comment on whether a ransom was paid for his release. Vasquez said there was no information on the ranch's Mexican cook, Marco Ortiz, who was kidnapped along with Pina, his son, and two other men. Librado Pina III, 25, was released Friday (Dec 15) in Nuevo Laredo, just across the border from Laredo. The two others were freed a few days after their abduction. The Pinas and the others were on a hunting trip when 30 to 40 armed men abducted them Nov. 26 from the La Barranca ranch. Erik Vasys, an FBI spokesman in San Antonio, Texas said Monday's release was an encouraging sign but noted there were many other U.S. citizens held captive south of the border. "The FBI is very thankful for the safe release of Librado Pina, however it's punctuated by the 27 outstanding unsolved kidnapping cases of Americans in Mexico," Vasys said.

Labour Disputes



INDIA

London, Dec 14 — Cargo handling operations at Kandla are expected to be disrupted or even totally paralysed today as the two major unions at the port have decided to join a nationwide strike.

ITALIAN AIRLINE PERSONNEL

London, Dec 15 — A press report, dated today, states: Troubled Italian airline Alitalia has been forced to cancel 472 flights today and tomorrow due to a 24 hour strike by employees, it said on its internet site. 462 flights, of which 209 were international, were cancelled today, with 46 more not expected to fly tomorrow, the company, which normally runs 800 flights a day, said. Eight trade unions called the 24 hour strike over the renewal of their members' collective bargaining agreement as well as pay indices. The unions have also criticised company's administration in the face of financial difficulties. The Italian government recently announced plans to sell at least 30.1% of its holding in the group, with preference given to domestic investors rather than foreign companies.

Awards & Settlements



FRAUD, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 15 — A press report, dated today, states: A Corpus Christi couple were awarded more than \$3.4 million in actual damages plus \$16 million in punitive damages this week after a Nueces County jury found a Pennsylvania biomedicine company guilty of fraud in marketing its drug Remicade. The drug, produced by Centocor, is mostly prescribed to treat conditions of Crohn's disease, an often debilitating bowel disorder, and rheumatoid arthritis, according to the company's Website. Jurors in Nueces County Court at Law No 4 on Wednesday (Dec 13) awarded total damages of more than \$19 million to 47-year-old Patricia Hamilton, who received the Remicade treatments, and her husband, Thomas Hamilton, 48. The drug caused Patricia Hamilton to develop drug-induced lupus after two years of use, according to court records. One of her attorneys, John Gsanger, said yesterday that the treatments also caused Hamilton to have severe pain and worsened the condition of her liver, which had already suffered damage because she was suffering from Hepatitis C, Gsanger said. Centocor negligently

mislabelled and untruthfully advertised Remicade by not disclosing all of its risks, including damage to the liver and inflamed rheumatoid arthritis, Gsanger said. In the trial, which lasted more than two weeks, the jury heard evidence showing that the company knew the drug caused liver damage, Gsanger said.

INDUSTRIAL INJURY, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: A young husband who became sexually disinhibited after suffering a head injury at work has won £3.166 million High Court damages. The lives of 29-year-old Stephen Tame and Sarah, his wife of eight months, were "shattered" when he fell from a gantry while working in a cycle warehouse in Wickford, Essex, in January, 2002, said Judge Michael Harris. Mr Tame made a "miraculous" neurological recovery after two years of treatment but was still severely disabled.

MAGIC PIPE OFFENCES, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 20 — Overseas Shipholding Group (OSG) has agreed to pay more than \$37million in federal fines and fees for magic pipe-related offences in five states. This is the largest-ever settlement in the US over oil dumping and record book charges. OSG has to pay \$27.8million in fines and \$9.2million in community service contributions. It also faces three years probation and promises not to violate the law in the future and to launch an extensive environmental compliance plan.

SEXUAL ABUSE, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated Dec 15, states: Attorneys representing 45 people who sued the nation's largest Roman Catholic archdiocese, accusing clergy members of sex abuse, signed off today on a \$60 million settlement, according to the lead plaintiffs' lawyer. The Archdiocese of Los Angeles said this month that it would pay \$60 million to settle 45 cases that dated from prior to the mid-1950s and after 1987 - periods when the archdiocese had little or no sexual abuse insurance. Attorneys for the plaintiffs said the archdiocese had gone public with the agreement before all the accusers and their attorneys had reviewed and signed the documents. That process was finished today, Ray Boucher, the lead plaintiffs' attorney, said in a statement. Cardinal Roger Mahony said this month that \$40 million of the payment would come from the archdiocese, while \$20 million would be from religious orders, plus a small amount of independent insurance coverage. Negotiations had been in progress for at least a year but were held up because attorneys for the plaintiffs wanted the church to release the accused priests' private personnel files. Mahony said the agreement calls for an independent judge to review those files and decide which

documents can be released to the accusers. That process is expected to take several months. Boucher said several priests had not yet signed the settlement to authorize the release of their personnel files. He said, however, that if some priests don't sign it will give them the right to appeal only the release of those files - and not the monetary agreement. Boucher said more than 700 sexual abuse cases are still pending against the archdiocese and other Southern California dioceses. He blamed the insurance companies for holding up negotiations. The first of the cases is expected to go to court as early as March.

Railway Accidents



AMAGASAKI, JAPAN

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated Dec 20, states: A government panel investigating Japan's worst train wreck in decades said today the driver may have failed to use the brakes in time because he was distracted by a radio conversation. The report also suggested that pressure on drivers to conform to an overly precise train schedule may have contributed to the 2005 accident. A total of 107 people — the driver and 106 passengers — were killed when a speeding West Japan Railway Co commuter train jumped off a curve in Amagasaki and slammed into an apartment building. In a report, Japan's Aircraft and Railway Accidents Investigation Commission said the driver may have been preoccupied by a radio conversation between his train's conductor and the control centre about a mistake the driver made at a previous station. The commission said Takami overshot the previous station by about 238 feet and had to backtrack, losing 80 seconds in the process, a significant delay in a country obsessed with punctuality. Takami then hit the curve at 73 mph, far faster than the 43 mph speed limit for that stretch, apparently to make up for lost time. Officials will investigate the accident further before releasing its final report some time next year, according to commission official Hiroki Nakagiri.

BUCHAREST, ROMANIA

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Several hundred passengers were evacuated this morning following the derailment of a subway train car near Dristor 2 station, eastern Bucharest, at 1045 hrs, sources with the Bucharest Transportation Company said, adding that there were no casualties reported. A technical committee will investigate the circumstances of the accident.

BUCYRUS, OHIO, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated Dec 16, states: Ten "cars" from a freight train carrying hazardous materials derailed today north of Bucyrus, causing a minor leak, the railroad company said. No one was injured or evacuated, authorities said. The 100-"car" Norfolk Southern train derailed in a field shortly after 1800 hrs, Bucyrus police dispatcher Denise Young said. A small leak in a car carrying phenol, a chemical used in disinfectants, plastics and pharmaceuticals, was sealed quickly and the accident was expected to be cleared by the end of today, company spokesman Rudy Husband said. Husband said he didn't know how much of the chemical, which is caustic to the skin and can irritate the lungs and eyes, spilled from the "car". Investigators from the Norfolk, Va.-based railroad were looking into what caused the accident in Bucyrus, about 65 miles north of Columbus.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated Dec 19, states: The last two cars of one of Chicago's elevated transit trains derailed today, causing minor injuries to some commuters, officials said. The four-car train was heading into the downtown Loop from Midway Airport when the car went off the rails. The last car was "crossways on the track, but it's upright," said Fire Department spokesman Larry Langford. "There's nothing dangling, nothing teetering, nothing's going to fall." The train was on a section of track that is 18-24 feet above the ground. Rescue workers used cherry pickers to lower 24 passengers to the ground. Eight people were taken to hospitals with minor injuries such as bumps and bruises. Chicago Transit Authority President Frank Kruesi said that the first two cars safely passed over a portion of track where a switch is located but that somehow the switch moved, causing the last two cars to derail. Authorities were trying to determine whether switching equipment was accidentally activated, and two transit employees working near the derailment site underwent routine tests for alcohol and drugs, Kruesi said. The train was going at about 25 mph. Kruesi also said debris on the track might have caused the derailment.

DEHNAD, IRAN

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated today, states: An Iranian passenger train derailed in central Iran yesterday morning and left at least eight people injured, the official IRNA news agency reported. The train was en route from Bandar Abbas in the country's southern province of Hormuzgan to the capital city of Tehran when eight of its passenger carriages suddenly derailed in Dehnad station near Iran's central city of Kashan at 0805 hrs (0435, UTC), a

local official was quoted as saying. The wounded were taken to hospital for treatment, said Ali-Reza Kashaninejad, head of Kashan's Medical Sciences University. The railway route between Tehran and central city of Isfahan was blocked due to the accident, and technicians were working to reopen it as soon as possible, the report said. An investigation into the cause if the accident is under way, it added.

MARRIOTTVILLE, MARYLAND, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 15 — A press report, dated today, states: No one was injured and there was no hazardous material spill when a CSX freight train derailed early today near Marriottsville, a company spokesman said. The train travelling from Cumberland to Philadelphia derailed about 0215 hrs, according to CSX spokesman Bob Sullivan. The train had three locomotives and 91 cars. Sullivan said 21 cars left the tracks, including a tanker carrying anhydrous ammonia that fell on its side.

QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated today, states: A train derailment late on Saturday night (Dec 16) is expected to further delay the railing of Newlands Steam Coal to the terminal at Abbot Point. Vessels currently at anchor awaiting Newlands Steam Coal can expect at least another two-three days wait at anchor. Current indications are that the rail link from Newlands Coal Mine to Abbot Point will not re-open until tomorrow afternoon/evening at the earliest.

SPOKANE, WASHINGTON, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 15 — A press report, dated Dec 14, states: Two trains have derailed on separate tracks that run parallel to each other in the Spokane area, officials said. No one was injured in either derailment. About 1400, three empty freight train cars derailed on BNSF's main railway about one and a half miles east of downtown Spokane, said BNSF spokesman Gus Melonas. The train originated in North Portland and was destined for Harlam, Mont. The mainline is blocked, Melonas said. However, no city intersections are blocked, he said, adding that the derailment is not expected to impact Amtrak's passenger service through Spokane. Simultaneously three train cars on a merchandise general freight derailed in a Spokane train yard, Erie Yard, Melonas said. The train originated in Havre, Mont., headed to Pasco, Wash., and was picking up additional cars. The two rail lines are parallel to each other, Melonas said. Both trains were traveling west at 10 mph. The cause is under investigation by BNSF officials, Melonas said. We have equipment on site and expect to have the mainline open at 2000, tonight. About 35 BNSF personnel are on site, Melonas said.

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

Miscellaneous


**CAPTAIN X.KYRIAKOU
(Marshall Islands)**

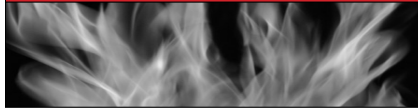
Portsmouth, UK, Dec 14 — Two oil tanker crewmen have been charged with falsifying records to conceal dumping of waste oil and sludge in Northern California waters. A federal grand jury indicted Artemios Maniatis, 55, the chief engineer, and Dimitrios Georgakoudis, 29, his top assistant in the engine room, on a felony charge of knowingly failing to maintain accurate logs of discharges by their ship, crude oil tanker *Captain X.Kyriakou* (81074 gt, built 2003). The vessel delivers oil products to West Coast ports. Prosecutors said Coast Guard inspectors found a pipe that was used to bypass pollution control equipment and allow the vessel to dump oily wastes overboard off the Northern California coast and elsewhere from Oct 27 to Nov 2. Those discharges were not disclosed in the vessel's records, according to the indictment returned on Tuesday (Dec 12). Prosecutors said the government is investigating the vessel's owner, Free Seas Shipping, and its operator, Athenian Sea Carriers. — Correspondent.

OUTBREAK OF "BIRD FLU"

Hanoi, Dec 20 — Vietnam has detected the lethal H5N1 bird flu virus in chickens and ducklings in two Mekong Delta provinces, the country's first infections since August, the Agriculture Ministry said. The virus was found in more than 6,000 dead chickens and ducklings hatched more than a month ago but not vaccinated against bird flu, the ministry's Animal Health Department said in the report seen today. Agriculture Minister Cao Duc Phat has criticised officials in the delta provinces of Ca Mau and Bac Lieu for failing to deal with the outbreaks. Dead poultry were found in water channels early this month but the officials failed to report it to Hanoi. The Animal Health Department said all the poultry found dead had been hatched illegally and tests had confirmed the presence of the H5N1 virus. "The risk of bird flu widely spreading in the Mekong Delta is extremely high because farmers have thrown dead poultry into water channels for a long time," it said. Temperatures were falling in the southern region incorporating the delta, which would also help the spread of a virus that thrives best in cooler temperatures. Vietnam has been free of human bird flu cases since late 2005. In August, it found the H5N1 virus on a small duck farm in the delta province of Ben Tre. An H5 subtype avian flu virus resurfaced in Vietnam earlier this year, mainly in ducks and wild storks. According to

the World Health Organisation (WHO) bird flu has killed 154 people out of 258 infected globally since late 2003. — Reuters.

Fires & Explosions


BUSH, AUSTRALIA

London, Dec 14 — A fireball razed houses in a Tasmania seaside hamlet to the ground today as voracious wildfires across swathes of Australia threatened to rip through more homes, officials and residents said. Firefighters warned that houses in the southern state of Victoria, where more than 420,000 hectares (1.04 million acres) have been scorched by 11 raging bushfires, were also in grave danger. Flames fuelled by strong winds tore through two homes and several other buildings in northeastern Tasmania, where 13 homes have been destroyed in recent days, forcing residents to evacuate to a beach, firefighters said. Fire crews were forced to abandon some houses to the flames as the blaze, fuelled by renewed winds, consumed 14,200 hectares. "We will send our crews to houses that we have a chance of saving," Tasmanian Fire Service spokesman Danny Reid told AFP. "If a house is undefendable, it will be left," he said, adding that crews were making sure no one was in those homes. Fire officials expected the blaze threatening the town of St Marys, population 1,200, to keep burning well into the weekend. Police manned roadblocks north and south of Four Mile Creek, where massive gusts of smoke blackened the air. Several major fires in Victoria have combined into one enormous blaze in the state, where 44,200 square kilometers have been blackened, the state's Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) said.

London, Dec 15 — A press report, dated today, states: Residents of Toongabbie, north of Traralgon in Victoria's Gippsland, are still cleaning up after fires destroyed homes and sheds on the outskirts of town. Fire ripped down from the hills and onto private land near the Cowwarr Weir yesterday afternoon. Smouldering gum trees are still letting off smoke, and others were ripped from their roots by the wind. Paddocks are razed right up to the doorsteps of those who managed to save their homes. At least five houses in the area have been burnt to the ground. Premier Steve Bracks is due to arrive in Toongabbie later this afternoon. Mansfield Shire chief executive Gary Gaffney says the council will provide emergency accommodation for the residents who lost their homes in the fire south of Jamieson overnight. But Mr Gaffney says many of the houses destroyed by fire were holiday properties. The Department of Sustainability and

Environment's (DSE) Duncan Pendrigh says the blazes should be contained today.

London, Dec 15 — A press report, dated today, states: Tasmania's bushfires have destroyed plantation timber worth an estimated \$50 million. About 17,000 hectares of bush has been burnt on the north-east coast since the fire began last weekend (Dec 9-10). Kim Creak from Forestry Tasmania said it was too early for accurate assessments but early estimates place the losses in the tens of millions. "Fires like the St Marys fire may have damages in excess of \$50 million worth of production timber so it's quite significant but again it's not the key thing at this point in time, the key thing is containment and strategic planning to make sure they stay that way," he said.

Sydney, Dec 18 — Hundreds of thousands of native Australian animals such as koalas and kangaroos have been killed in bushfires that have burnt across southeast Australia in the past two weeks, wildlife officials said today. The bushfires, which are still burning in three eastern states, have been so big and intense that wildlife officials fear some species may become extinct as the fires destroy large swathes of animal habitats. "The fires are so devastating and moving so quickly that animals just don't have a chance to get out of the way," said Pat O'Brien, president of the Wildlife Protection Association. Koalas and possums, which instinctively climb to the treetops for safety, would have had no chance of escaping the blazes, and kangaroos and bush birds would have been unable to outrun the fast-burning fires, he said. This meant a very real threat of seeing species unique to the burnt-out areas, such as frogs and birds, becoming extinct, O'Brien said. Fires in Victoria, Tasmania and New South Wales states have burnt more than 847,000 hectares. The worst fires are in Victoria where more than 4,000 firefighters are battling four large blazes which have blackened 750,000 hectares. Police say more than 30 homes have so far been razed. Firefighters said today cooler conditions had eased the bushfire threat in the three eastern states but fires were still burning out of control. In Western Australia, a fire which has already destroyed 12,000 hectares is blazing unchecked. — Reuters.

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Despite strengthening winds, this afternoon, the bushfire on Tasmania's east coast has not crossed Elephant Pass. Elephant Pass Road is also still open to traffic, but the speed limit has been reduced to 60 kilometres an hour. The fire remains active and crews are still working on containment lines to try to stop it from crossing the road. If the blaze crosses Elephant Pass and continues south through Douglas Apsley National Park, it will have a virtually uninterrupted run to the coastal town of Bicheno. Elsewhere, fire crews fighting a blaze at Kellevie

in the south-east will continue to monitor the north-eastern edge of the fire after back-burning yesterday.

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: Exhausted firefighters continued to battle blazes across Australia yesterday, almost a month after this season's fires started. While firefighters have been pushed to the limit and overseas reinforcements called in — 11 New Zealand firefighters were treated for injuries on Saturday (Dec 16) — blazes continue to burn in all states except Queensland. Four bushfires in a West Australian national park have joined to form one massive blaze. Lightning strikes on Sunday started at least six fires in the Fitzgerald River National Park in the south of the state. Fire crews from the Department of Environment and Conservation and two fixed-wing aircraft have contained two of the blazes, but four others near West Mount Barren have now joined up, a spokesman for the department said yesterday. The spokesman said the combined fire was contained on three sides, but the eastern boundary was unchecked. "It's entered some gully country so that could cause a few problems," he said. In South Australia, 250 firefighters and three water bombers fought a blaze that burned 25ha near Williamstown, north-east of Adelaide. Victorian firefighters used yesterday's cooler and still conditions to continue backburning and build containment lines around blazes in the state's north-east and Gippsland. The largest of the Victorian fires near Licola has burnt out almost 380,000 hectares and continues to threaten towns in the area. The Victorian fires have burned more than 700,000 hectares and could burn for much of the summer. Victorian police continue to hunt for arsonists believed to have started a blaze that resulted in the death of Donald Dosser, 48, who died after falling off a trailer and being run over by a water tanker on Thursday. Police are trying to identify people who used the Walhalla-Tyers Road between 1030 and 1130 last Thursday. In New South Wales, firefighters continued to tackle a blaze in the Blue Mountains. Fires in Tasmania's north-east continue to burn, and the Tasmania Fire Service yesterday warned residents of Elephant's Pass near St Marys to activate their fire plans.

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: Residents in Walhalla are on high alert as a bushfire bears down on the Victorian township. An urgent fire threat warning has been issued for Walhalla and the small neighbouring community of Maidentown in Gippsland as residents prepare for ember attacks from the Coopers Creek fire. The blaze has claimed one life and destroyed 11 homes, and continues to rage out of control. Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) spokeswoman Rachel Dawkins said the fire threat is serious and firefighting resources are saturating the area. "(It's) pretty

serious for them, they do have a lot of resources up there looking after them, helping to protect them," she said. "There are a number of helicopters working in the area now ... to protect private property. We have got CFA (Country Fire Authority) strike teams in helping to protect." Meanwhile, the area surrounding Mount Buller, in Victoria's north-east, is being cornered by a fire approaching from three directions. Blazes to the south, north and east have Sheeppark Flat, Tobacco Flat, Howqua Hills, Sawmill Settlement, Timbertop and Mirimbah on high alert. Firefighters are racing to strengthen containment lines around Victoria's bushfires ahead of extreme weather on Thursday (Dec 21). The bushfires so far have blackened 750,000 hectares across the state. CFA deputy chief officer Graham Fountain said crews would continue to focus on preparing for the return of hot, windy weather on Thursday. The extreme conditions could see fire activity increase with fires potentially spreading or new outbreaks. Authorities have confirmed 32 houses so far had been lost to bushfires across the state, including a two-bedroom hut lost in Buffalo Creek, near Ovens in the state's north-east. Of the homes destroyed, 11 were in Coopers Creek, 10 in Gaffney's Creek and seven at the A1 mine settlement. Fire has also destroyed two school camps at Coopers Creek and Licola and a ski lodge at Mount Buffalo.

CHEMICAL PLANT, LINZ, AUSTRIA

Vienna, Dec 21 — Two workers were killed and one seriously injured in an explosion at a chemical plant in the northern Austrian city of Linz today, police said. "We have two dead and one seriously injured," a police spokeswoman said. "We are searching for the cause." The ammonia producing plant of Agrolinz Melamine International was being maintained when the explosion happened, a spokesman for the firm told public broadcaster ORF. "The equipment was shut down immediately, there was no leakage of ammonia," said company spokesman Gerhard Kneidinger. — Reuters.

FUEL STORAGE, SHENGJIN, ALBANIA

Durres, Dec 18 — An explosion and fire occurred Dec 17 when three onshore petroleum storage tanks at Shengjin caught fire. The three tanks were owned by the local Albanian company TACI OIL, which is the largest importer of petroleum in Albania. The three tanks that were destroyed held 900 tons of diesel, 500 tons of diesel and 300 tons of gasoline respectively. The explosion and fire occurred in the first tank, holding 900 tons of diesel, at 0445, local time, Dec 17, and spread to the other two tanks, despite the intervention of firefighters. The fire was extinguished today, and the situation is now under control now. A local official investigation into the cause of the

incident is in progress. According to TACI OIL representatives, the damage is calculated around \$9.5 million. The facility is understood to be insured by the local market and reinsured abroad. — Lloyd's Agents.

MINE, HENGYANG, HUNAN PROVINCE, CHINA

London, Dec 14 — A press report, dated today, states: Twelve miners were killed in a mine explosion yesterday morning in Hengyang, a city in central China's Hunan Province, local authorities said. The accident, which was reported at 0100 hrs, was thought to have been caused by illegal use of explosives, said officials with the provincial workplace safety administration. They said most victims were from Hengyang.

OIL DEPOT, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Dec 15 — A press report, dated today, states: Fuel could be flowing from the Buncefield oil depot by the middle of next year. Oil company BP, which owns a part of the site that was relatively undamaged by the December, 2005, fire, is in talks with various agencies "with a target date for starting up business again mid next year, with road tanker use at a much reduced level". BP also says there is a "priority requirement" to connect up pipes at the depot so fuel can flow once again to Heathrow Airport, where airlines are complaining they cannot get enough fuel. Meanwhile, Total UK Ltd, a partner in Hertfordshire Oil Storage Limited, the company that runs the part of the depot where the blast occurred, has also applied to pump fuel to the airport. Dacorum Borough Council has received an application from Total and is currently obtaining legal advice, to decide whether the oil company needs formal planning permission.

REFINERY, SARNIA, CANADA

London, Dec 14 — Imperial Oil Ltd., Canada's largest oil company, said a processing unit at its refinery in Sarnia, Ontario, exploded, reducing production of some specialty lubricant products. The explosion at about 0300, local time was contained to a hydrocracker, and the refinery, which can process about 121,000 barrels of oil a day, continues to produce gasoline, diesel and other fuels, Imperial spokesman Pius Rolheiser said in a telephone interview. The hydrocracker can process about 18,000 barrels a day. "The fire was contained to one unit, the hydrocracker, and the rest of the refinery is operating normally," Rolheiser said. "Our major production units are unaffected and are running at capacity." Imperial's refinery in Nanticoke, Ontario, can help make up for any shortfall in output from Sarnia, Imperial's second-largest refinery, he said. No one was injured in the explosion and ensuing fire, which will be allowed to burn itself out, Rolheiser said. The cause of the explosion hasn't been determined, he said.

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

London, Dec 15 — A press report, dated today, states: Consumers in eastern Canada could face higher prices at the gas pumps after a major explosion and fire yesterday shut down a unit at Imperial Oil Ltd.'s Sarnia refinery, an analyst warned. But a spokesman for Canada's oil company said it's too early to talk about an impact on fuel prices. The cause of the fire is not known, it was allowed to burn itself out. The company will carry out an investigation to determine the cause of the fire and the extent of the damages before deciding on a course of action. Imperial Oil, he said, expects that it can still make up for shortfalls at the Sarnia plant from its other refinery in Nanticoke, Ont. Desjardins Securities analyst Adam Zive said the damage at the Sarnia unit is material, but "it will not have a huge impact" on Imperial Oil's profit for the next quarter.

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated Dec 17, states: Imperial Oil Ltd said on Friday (Dec 15) that a fire that rocked its Sarnia, Ontario, refinery the day before had been fully extinguished. The Calgary-based company said no product shortages were expected in the near term as a result of the explosion, as supply would be rebalanced through the company's refining network if required. An investigation into the fire is now under way and damages to the hydrocracker are being assessed. The rest of the refinery is operating as usual and employees are back at work, Imperial said. There were no injuries as a result of the fire, which began early Thursday, and all workers at the plant have been accounted for.

STEEL WORKS, PORT TALBOT, WALES, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Dec 15 — A press report, dated today, states: Steel firm Corus has been ordered to pay more than £3m for breaching health and safety laws at a factory where a massive explosion killed three workers. Corus had admitted at Swansea Crown Court failing to ensure worker safety at its Port Talbot plant. Twelve other workers were injured in the blast in November 2001. High Court judge Mr Justice Lloyd Jones fined Corus £1,330,000 and ordered it to pay £1,744,474 costs. He said Corus had "fallen short" of safety standards. The explosion in 2001 destroyed blast furnace five, lifting it off its base and blasting out 200 tonnes of steel slag and hot gasses. The lamentable catalogue of failures makes clear that this was an accident waiting to happen. The judge, Mr Justice Lloyd Jones Len Radford, 53, from Maesteg, Andrew Hutin, 20, and 25-year-old Stephen Galsworthy, from Port Talbot, died in the blast. Corus UK Ltd admitted civil liability about a year after the explosion. Negotiations about compensation are still on-going. The prosecution for which Corus was to stand trial until it entered a guilty plea at the last minute followed a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation.

WILDFIRES, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: A discarded cigarette is suspected as the source of a wildfire that scorched 1,690 acres of land near Sonoita on Saturday, Dec. 16. A passing motorist reported the blaze that started on the side of State Route 82, just one mile east of the Sonoita Crossroads intersection. The Sonoita - Elgin Fire Department was paged about 1300 hrs and responded with three Type 6 fire engines and a tender truck. Dispatch immediately requested mutual aid and volunteers from the Patagonia Fire Department went to Sonoita with two Type 6 engines and a tender. Sonoita-Elgin Fire Capt, Kevin Venos said that when they left the firehouse, the sustained wind speed was close to 20 mph with gusts up to 30 mph. Sonoita-Elgin and Patagonia firefighters secured nearby homes and other structures that were threatened by the fire. At this point mutual aid was requested from the state, which in turn brought in firefighting crews from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Whetstone, Huachuca City, and the National Forest Service. Air support was requested, but there were no planes available in the area. Approximately 30 personnel and 13 apparatus were utilized to fight the blaze. Firefighters had the blaze under control by 1900 hrs and all personnel were released with the exception of a BLM crew that stayed until the following day in order to monitor and maintain the area. Just over half the acreage burned was on the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, which is managed by BLM. The balance of burned acreage was mostly private in addition to nine-10 acres of state land. Motorist suspected Venos said that the fire was most likely caused by a discarded cigarette at the side of the highway.



AIRCRAFT GROUNDED DUE TO SMOG, BEIJING, CHINA

London, Dec 15 — A press report, dated Dec 14, states: Beijing's environmental protection bureau advised everyone in the city to stay indoors this week, as pollution soared to seven times the safety level. Just 20 months from the start of the Green Olympics, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide are regularly suffusing the capital. These gases, creating a smog that cut visibility on Monday (Dec 11) and Tuesday to less than 200m, are produced by the burning of low-grade coal for power, heating and cooking and by the exhausts of millions of cars running on mostly low-grade fuel. More than 100 flights scheduled to land at, or leave from, Beijing airport were cancelled on Monday alone, although yesterday a change of wind helped shift the shroud of pollution and clear the skies.

AIRCRAFT PUT BACK TO LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 15 — A press report, dated Dec 14, states: A United Airlines jet bound for Portland was forced to return to Los Angeles International Airport shortly after take-off this afternoon after there were indications of a fire in the aircraft's wheel wells. Flight 708 landed safely at LAX at 1418 with no visible signs of a fire, according to Federal Aviation Administration spokesman Ian Gregor. A sensor notified the crew about a possible fire in the aircraft's wheel well, he said. CNN reporter Chris Lawrence, who was on board the aircraft, reported on the network that passengers heard a loud noise and said they saw signs of a fire before the aircraft turned back about 20 minutes into the flight. But United operations officials told FAA air traffic personnel that there didn't appear to be signs of a fire, Gregor said. The 737-300 jet was over Central California when it headed back to LAX.

COLLISION IN MID-AIR, SOUTHERN GERMANY

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated Dec 18, states: Swiss air traffic control company Skyguide has agreed the compensation it will pay to relatives of 30 people who died in a 2002 mid-air collision close to the Swiss-German border, a lawyer for the firm said today. Lawyer Alexander von Ziegler declined to give details on amounts to be paid to the relatives and said Skyguide had already agreed compensation with the families of the 41 other people who died in the same crash. However, when asked if Skyguide had agreed compensation for the final 30 families, Ziegler said: "Yes. The families' lawyers can now take a look and decide if they want to appeal the amounts in the Swiss courts." Skyguide, which was operating the airspace over southern Germany, has admitted errors in the incident. On Jul 1, 2002, Skyguide was operating with a single air traffic controller who told the pilot of a Bashkirian Airlines Tupolev Tu-154 to descend to avoid a collision, even though early-warning instruments on board the aircraft had told the pilots to climb. The automatic anti-collision system on the other aircraft, a DHL Boeing 757, also instructed its pilots to descend to the same level and the Boeing's tail fin sliced open the Russian aircraft. The 69 people on board the Tu-154, most of them children, died in the crash, along with two pilots on the Boeing 757.

CRASH, JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: The pilot of a light aircraft was killed on impact when he flew into a block of flats in Yeoville, central Johannesburg, in a storm last night, according to Johannesburg emergency services. Divisional

Commander Malcolm Midgley said that the aircraft, believed to be a Piper PA-28-140 (Cherokee), had crashed into the basement of the four-storey building at the corner of Harley and Hendon streets at about 2100 hrs during a heavy thunderstorm. Nobody on the ground was injured, although the occupant of the flat that was hit was shaken. Police suspect that the heavy storm caused the crash. Midgley said that the aircraft appeared to be on course for the Lanseria International Airport area in northern Johannesburg.

CRASH, MBEYA REGION, TANZANIA

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated today, states: A small plane crashed through the roof of a house in northern Tanzania today, killing one passenger and injuring six others, including a Tanzanian Cabinet minister, police said. No one in the house was believed to be injured. The plane went down in northern Tanzania's Mbeya region, about 560 miles from Dar es Salaam, just minutes after taking off, Regional Police Commander Suleiman Kova said. Theresia Nyantori, a photographer working with the government news agency, was killed on impact, police said. Juma Akukweti, the minister for emergency matters, was undergoing surgery for burns. The extent of the others' injuries was not immediately known. The Civil Aviation Authority is investigating.

EMERGENCY LANDING, COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated Dec 15, states: A personal air filter sparked a fire today on a Continental Airlines jet with 160 people on board, forcing an emergency landing. Six people were taken to a hospital, officials said. Their condition was not immediately known. Flight attendants put out the flames, and the plane landed safely at around 1700 hrs, Continental spokeswoman Julie King told The Associated Press. The battery-powered device, which is worn around the neck and filters air near the person wearing it, malfunctioned and sparked a fire, King said. Flight 1065 had 154 passengers and six crew members aboard and was en route from Houston to Portland, Ore., King said. Damage to the aircraft was minimal.

EMERGENCY LANDING, NEWQUAY AIRPORT, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Dec 15 — A press report, dated Dec 13, states: An Air South West aircraft had to make an emergency landing at Newquay Airport this afternoon after one of its wheels fell off after take off. The Dash 8 aircraft had taken off for Gatwick at 1445, GMT when ground staff saw that the inner of two wheels on the starboard wing had fallen off. The pilot turned the aircraft around and

landed without injuries among the 33 passengers and four crew. The Air Accidents Investigation Branch has been informed. Emergency alert Ground staff alerted the pilot, who circled the airport a number of times before landing successfully at 1520, GMT. Emergency services were alerted while the passengers and crew were taken off. A relief flight took off later in the afternoon. Air South West's managing director, Malcolm Naylor, said: "The passengers were not in danger. The plane is perfectly capable of landing without one of these wheels." The twin turbo prop airliner involved is still at Newquay Airport.

EXPLOSION IN MID-AIR OVER NIZHNYE OSELKI, RUSSIA

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated today, states: A small passenger aircraft blew up in mid-air over the Leningrad region on Saturday (Dec 15), killing all three people on board, Interfax reported. The privately owned Yakovlev Yak-52 was flying over a stadium in the town of Nizhniye Oselki, 25 km from St. Petersburg, when the explosion occurred. Two men and a 14-year-old girl died in the accident, an official at the regional branch of the Emergency Situations Ministry told Interfax. The official said one of the victims was Igor Samylin, a senior postal official in St. Petersburg. Local postal officials confirmed that Samylin had died in the accident, Interfax reported. Nothing was known yesterday about the second man apart from his name, Viktor Popov. The identity of the girl had not been established, the Emergency Situations Ministry official told Interfax. "According to eyewitnesses, the aircraft caught fire in the air. The pilot tried to land the aircraft, but he wasn't able to control it. The aircraft broke apart on impact," the official said. The official added that the Yak-52 was designed to hold a maximum of two people. Investigators are currently working to determine the cause of the explosion.

LV-WRA

London, Dec 19 — Swearingen SA.227AC Metro III LV-WRA, operator Baires Fly, was taking-off from runway 17, Buenos Aires/Ezeiza-Ministro Pistarini Airport, when it suddenly banked, causing the wing to strike the runway at 1520, Dec 15. The aircraft swerved off the runway. Damage to aircraft was substantial. There were two crew on board. There were no fatalities.

N1100J

London, Dec 19 — Beechcraft Bonanza A36 N1100J crashed near Fayetteville, Arkansas, at 0101, Dec 18, while on a flight from Ardmore, AR, to Fayetteville. The aircraft was destroyed. One of the four persons on board was killed and the other three were seriously injured.

N144PG

London, Dec 19 — Beechcraft King Air D95A N144PG crashed into a

waste water-treatment facility near Gilroy, California, at 2350, Dec 18, while on a flight from San Jose, CA. The aircraft was destroyed. The three persons on board were killed.

N30799

London, Dec 15 — A press report, dated Dec 14, states: An Illinois pilot is lucky to be alive today after his six-seat Beechcraft, N30799, crashed in a corn field near the Greater Peoria Regional Airport shortly after 0800. Authorities say 61-year-old Gary Newt was flying from East Dubuque, Illinois to Centralia, Illinois when a motor caught fire and his landing gear wouldn't work. The aircraft crashed in a corn field three miles from the airport. Authorities say the pilot tried to make an emergency landing at the airport but didn't make it. Police, fire and emergency crews responded within minutes. Amazingly the pilot of the aircraft walked away after the crash. Newt was treated on the scene for smoke inhalation. Newt told police he began having problems with his aircraft 10 miles from Peoria. The Federal Aviation Administration and National Transportation Safety Board are investigating the crash.

N335AK

London, Dec 14 — De Havilland Canada DHC-3 Otter, N335AK, crashed on takeoff near Andros Island, Bahamas, Dec 9.

N39858

London, Dec 17 — A press report, dated today, states: Authorities say a small airplane carrying four people crashed into Grand Lake in northeastern Oklahoma yesterday evening, killing three of the occupants and injuring another. Federal Aviation Administration spokesman Roland Herwig says the plane went down in the lake just after 1800 hrs. The pilot — identified by the Oklahoma Highway Patrol as 30-year-old Pryor resident Brent Caldwell — survived and was taken to Saint John Hospital Medical Center in Tulsa, where he's listed in good condition. Fifteen-year-old Pryor resident Mariano Carlos, and 20-year-old Eduardo Ortiz Robles and 33-year-old Campos Gonzalez — both of Mexico — were pinned under water and died at the scene of the crash. Herwig says he doesn't know where the aircraft was coming from or going because it wasn't under air traffic service. Witnesses told the patrol they saw the plane flying very low but could hear no engine noise before it struck the water on the north bank of a creek on the lake. Caldwell told troopers the plane lost power before it hit the water.

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated Dec 17, states: A pilot who survived the crash of a small aircraft that killed three passengers was arrested today and charged with manslaughter, authorities said. Brent Caldwell did not have a valid pilot's license and was under the influence of alcohol at the time of the crash yesterday evening, said Trooper Kera

Philippi, an Oklahoma Highway Patrol spokeswoman. The fixed-wing, single-engine Bellanca aircraft registered to Caldwell crashed into Grand Lake, the Federal Aviation Administration said. Witnesses said they saw the aircraft flying very low but heard no engine noise before it struck the water. The pilot told police the aircraft lost power before it hit the water. The aircraft was found in 10-12 feet of water, Philippi said. The pilot stated he was flying to Tulsa, but his aircraft was travelling eastbound away from Tulsa when it went down, Philippi said. Killed were Mariano Carlos, 15, and Eduardo Ortiz Robles, 20, and Campos Gonzalez, 33, the patrol said. They were pinned under water and were pronounced dead at the scene. Caldwell was hospitalised with head and internal injuries, authorities said. He was being held in jail today. Authorities said no bond was set for him and that he was scheduled to appear before a judge tomorrow. London, Dec 18 — Bellanca 17-30A crashed into Grand Lake, Oklahoma, at 0047, Dec 17. The aircraft was destroyed. Three of the four persons on board were killed and one was seriously injured.

N407JJ

London, Dec 15 — Bell 407 N407JJ crashed near Sussex County, Delaware, Dec 14. The aircraft was destroyed. The two persons on board were killed.

N5434C

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: A small propeller aircraft crashed near a high school today, killing one person on board and injuring another, emergency medical officials said. The two-seat single-engine Cessna went down behind Connally High School near a football stadium, said Warren Hassinger, spokesman for Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Services. The school, which was not in session, was not hit. The injured person was taken to hospital, Hassinger said. Travis County sheriff's deputies got the call about the crash at 0819 hrs. Some deputies were already in the area when the aircraft went down near them, Hassinger said. "The crash scene is spread over quite an area," he said. Authorities were searching to make sure there were no other victims. It was not immediately known where the aircraft originated, and the names of those on board were not immediately released.

London, Dec 20 — Cessna T210N (Centurion II) N5434C crashed near Austin, Texas, at 1418, Dec 19, while on a flight from Hillsboro, TX, to Austin. The aircraft was destroyed. The one person on board was killed.

N8361Q

London, Dec 15 — Piper PA-32-301 N8361Q crashed near Port Heiden, Alaska, Dec 14 while on a flight from Port Heiden to King Salmon, AK. The aircraft was destroyed. The two persons on board were killed.

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated Dec 15, states: Two people were killed when a small plane crashed near Port Heiden on the Alaska Peninsula, the Coast Guard said today. The wreckage of the PenAir plane was found yesterday night by a Coast Guard helicopter crew sent to the site after the plane was reported overdue and a signal from an emergency beacon was received. A second PenAir flight also was sent to help out. Late today troopers said Andrew Simonds, 25, of Anchorage was the pilot. Renee Matson, 45, was listed as the only passenger. The state medical examiner will perform autopsies on the victims and confirm their identification, Alaska State Troopers said. The wreckage of the six-seat Piper Cherokee was spotted by a Coast Guard helicopter crew in slightly hilly terrain about 18 northeast of Port Heiden. The single engine, propeller-driven airplane crashed on land about four miles from shore, said Lt. Mara Booth-Miller with the Coast Guard in Juneau. The plane had left Port Heiden for King Salmon about 150 miles away. An emergency beacon directed the Coast Guard Command Center in Juneau to the location northeast of Port Heiden. The signal from the plane's emergency beacon was received about 1830 hrs, yesterday. Authorities were told 30 minutes later that the PenAir plane was overdue. The wreckage was spotted about four hours later. There were only routine communications between the pilot and the ground before the crash, according to Danny Seybert, president of PenAir. The pilot had been working with the company for three years. The cause of the crash was not immediately known, the Coast Guard said. Plans were to retrieve the bodies as soon as possible from the crash site. However, Booth-Miller said bad weather was moving into the area so there could be a delay.

N8FH

London, Dec 15 — A press report, dated Dec 14, states: An elderly male was killed after his Cessna 310 aircraft crashed this afternoon near Neelytown Road and Route 416 in the Town of Montgomery. The aircraft had just taken off when it crashed. There is no air traffic control tower at OCA and no distress signal was sent. There was a post-crash fire which was put out by fire rescue crews. The site of the crash is within a mile of Orange County Airport. Fire departments had responded to the scene crash, and investigators from the NTSB were headed there this afternoon.

London, Dec 15 — Cessna 310Q N8FH crashed near Montgomery, New York, at 1810, Dec 14, following take-off from Montgomery. One of the two persons on board was killed and the other was seriously injured.

N9073P

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Residents of a small town about 100 miles south-west of Cleveland said they heard a loud

boom last night, and later learned an aircraft had crashed nearby. A single-engine aircraft went down at about 1900 hrs in an open field near a residential neighbourhood in Bucyrus, killing at least one person on board, authorities said. After the aircraft hit the ground, debris struck a nearby building that was part of an apartment complex, said Lt Thomas Bradshaw of the State Highway Patrol. No injuries were reported in the complex. Investigators were still trying to determine where the flight originated and how many people were on board, Bradshaw said. "There don't appear to be any survivors," he said. The aircraft's destination was unknown. The National Weather Service in Cleveland reported light rain and overcast skies in the area when the crash occurred.

London, Dec 18 — Piper PA-24-260 (Comanche) N9073P crashed at Bucyrus, Ohio, at 0010, Dec 17. The aircraft was destroyed. The four persons on board were killed.

ST-ASJ

London, Dec 19 — Fokker 50 ST-ASJ, operator Sudan Airways, reportedly had a nose gear collapse at Kenana, Sudan, Dec 12. It swerved off the runway. None of the passengers and crew was injured, but a blade from the No. 1 engine penetrated the fuselage.

SUSPENSION OF AIR MADRID FLIGHTS

Madrid, Dec 15 — Privately owned carrier Air Madrid suspended all its flights today, leaving tens of thousands of passengers stranded over Christmas and blaming its action on a development ministry threat to suspend its licence. The budget carrier, which has nine aircraft and flies mainly between Spain and Latin America, said ticket sales had fallen dramatically since the development ministry statement on Tuesday and suppliers had refused its credit. "Air Madrid has decided to suspend its activities from today," the airline said in a statement. "The development ministry ... has managed to completely destroy Air Madrid's commercial image and has placed our company in a very serious crisis which prevents us from carrying on our work," it added. No one was available to comment at the ministry, which is responsible for transport policy and which said on Tuesday (Dec 12) that it might suspend Air Madrid's licence following a series of long delays in flight departures and near-riots at airports. The delays of up to 60 hours resulted in stormy protests at airports and forced some passengers to spend the night sleeping on their aircraft while waiting for it to take off. The airline said the vast majority of its suppliers were refusing to provide goods and services on credit because of the wide media coverage of the ministry's threat. State radio said between 200,000 and 300,000 passengers could be stranded as a result of the airline's action. The ministry said on Tuesday that Air

Madrid had not fully carried out an action plan to cut delays, and gave the airline until yesterday to present new information to support its case to keep flying. In response, the airline promised to cut its flights by 20 percent, scrap some routes and offer discounts to delayed passengers. — Reuters.

Product Recalls



CLARION VEHICLE NAVIGATION & ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM BATTERIES, UNITED STATES

Washington, DC, Dec 14 — The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with Clarion Corporation of America, of Cypress, Calif., today announced a voluntary recall of about 2,500 Batteries in Clarion N.I.C.E. P200 Navigation and Entertainment Systems. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. The lithium-ion batteries in these units can melt or overheat posing burn and fire hazards to consumers. Clarion has received four reports of the unit melting or overheating. No injuries have been reported. The N.I.C.E. P200 is a black portable navigation and entertainment device that can be attached to a vehicle's windshield. The device has a 4-inch touch screen LCD monitor and contains one lithium battery. "Clarion" and "N.I.C.E. P200" are printed on the device. "Clarion NAVBATTERY," "Rechargeable Li-Polymer Battery," and "Made in Korea" are printed on the battery. Only N.I.C.E. P200 units with serial numbers ending in "UE" or "UF" are affected by this recall. The serial number is located on a white label on the back of the device. Sold at Car audio and mobile electronics stores from May 2006 through December 2006 for about \$900. Manufactured in South Korea. Consumers should stop using the recalled batteries immediately and contact Clarion Corp. to receive a free replacement battery and a postage-paid envelope to return the recalled battery. — Consumer Product Safety Commission.

GAME CONSOLE STRAPS, WORLDWIDE

London, Dec 15 — Nintendo has said it will recall 3.2 million hand straps for its new Wii games console after reports of enthusiastic users inadvertently throwing the motion-sensing controller into their TV screens. "We are announcing the recall of 3.2 million straps for the Wii computer remote controllers," Nintendo spokesman Yasuhiro Minagawa said. "The decision comes

after reports that some users in the United States threw their controllers when playing with Wii sports software," he said. By waving or swinging the controller, it can serve as a sword, tennis racket or car steering wheel.

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated today, states: Nintendo is recalling 3.2 million straps to replace them with a stronger version. The console's motion-sensitive remote controller can be swung like a tennis racket, golf club or sword, depending on the game. But soon after the Wii went on sale last month, the excesses of overzealous players became apparent. Nintendo will allow customers to exchange the old straps, which have a 0.024 inch diameter, for a stronger strap that has a diameter of 0.04 inch, company spokesman Yasuhiro Minagawa said.

HOBBY LOBBY CHRISTMAS LIGHT SETS, UNITED STATES

Washington, DC, Dec 14 — The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with Hobby Lobby Stores Inc., of Oklahoma City, Okla., today announced a voluntary recall of about 2.3 million sets of Hobby Lobby Christmas Light Sets. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. The lights have undersized wires which can separate from the plugs and/or the light sockets, posing an electric shock and fire hazard to consumers. CPSC has received one report of a minor shock when a consumer touched a light string. Hobby Lobby has received one report of melting wires. Sold at Hobby Lobby stores nation-wide from June 2006 through early December 2006 for between \$2.50 and \$10. Manufactured in China. Consumers should stop using the lights immediately and return them to the nearest Hobby Lobby store to receive a Hobby Lobby exchange card. — Consumer Product Safety Commission.

PRESSURE WASHERS AND AIR COMPRESSORS, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 16 — A press release issued by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, dated Dec 15, states: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with DeVilbiss Air Power Company, of Jackson, Tenn., today announced a voluntary recall of approximately 620,000 DeVilbiss Air Power Company Pressure Washers and 72,000 Air Compressors with pneumatic tires and plastic hubs. The pressure washers and air compressors have pneumatic tires with plastic hubs that can burst, posing a laceration or fracture hazard to consumers. However, DeVilbiss has received 26 reports of injuries including fractures, lacerations and bruises. Manufactured in the United States, the recalled pressure washers

were sold at home centre and hardware stores nationwide from January 2004 through to November 2005 for between \$300 and \$1,400. The recalled air compressors were sold at home centre and hardware stores nationwide between December 2004 and October 2006 for between \$300 and \$500.

SAFETY SWITCHES, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 16 — A press release, issued by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, dated Dec 15, states: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with Square D Co., of Palatine, Ill., today announced a voluntary recall of approximately 27,600 General Duty Safety Switches. The safety switch can continue to supply electricity even after being placed in the OFF position. This poses the risk of an electric shock or electrocution hazard to consumers. No incidents or injuries have been reported. The recall includes General Duty 30 and 60 ampere, 240 volt, 1 phase and 3 phase NEMA 3R safety switches. The switches are typically used to control the flow of electricity to outdoor motorized units that are hardwired to a household or business electrical system such as outdoor air conditioning and heating (HVAC) equipment. The switches contain ON and OFF positions. The OFF position is designed to cut the flow of electricity to an outdoor motorized unit to protect the person who is servicing the unit. The recalled switches have the following date codes and catalog number printed on bottom of the wiring label inside the front cover or on bottom of the package label. Manufactured in Mexico, the switches were sold at electrical distributors and retailers from September 2006 through to November 2006 for between \$120 and \$300.

Port Conditions



AUSTRALIA

See "Queensland, Australia" under "Railway Accidents".

ITALY

Genoa, Dec 18 — Port situation Dec 18: Genoa: One vessel awaiting berth, average delay 12-24 hours. Savona: Two vessels awaiting special berths. La Spezia: No vessels awaiting berths. — Lloyd's Agents.

TURKEY

Istanbul, Dec 16 — Traffic will be suspended north to south at 2330, Dec 16, and will be open around noon, Dec 17.—Turkish Straits.com.

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	21-12-2006	Coal: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 5 waiting; 7 vessels due by 8/1.
Brisbane	21-12-2006	Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth: 11 vessels due by 1/3. Grain: 1 vessel due 29/12 to load wheat; no delays expected.
Dalymple Bay	21-12-2006	Coal: DBCT berth 1: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 2 waiting; 1 vessel due 22/12; DBCT berth 2: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 3 waiting; 1 vessel due 22/12; DBCT berth 3: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 3 waiting; 1 vessel due 22/12; other vessels not scheduled: 4 vessels waiting; 39 vessels due by 10/1.
Dampier	21-12-2006	Iron ore: Parker Point berth 1: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 3 waiting; 12 vessels due by 2/1; Parker Point berth 2: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 2 waiting; 11 vessels due by 2/1; Parker Point berth 3: 2 vessels waiting; East Intercourse Island: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 5 waiting; 6 vessels due by 27/12.
Esperance	21-12-2006	Iron ore: 3 vessels due by 25/12. Grain: 1 vessel due 22/12 to load unknown grain; no delays expected.
Geraldton	21-12-2006	Iron ore: 1 vessel berthed; 2 vessels due by 26/12; regular maintenance shutdowns are expected at berth No. 4 from January to February 2007 during construction of a new iron ore berth No. 5.
Gladstone	21-12-2006	Coal: R.G. Tanna (Clinton) coal terminal: 3 vessels berthed, 9 waiting; 38 vessels due by 19/2; Barney Point: 1 vessel berthed, 1 waiting; 11 vessels due by 19/1.
Hay Point	21-12-2006	Coal: Berth 1: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 3 waiting; 5 vessels due by 29/12; Berth 2: 1 vessel berthed and loading; 5 vessels due by 28/12; 9 other vessels due by 6/1, not yet scheduled.
Newcastle	21-12-2006	Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: 3 vessels berthed and loading, 32 waiting; 54 vessels due by 16/1; 17-20 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; approx. 32 vessels off port awaiting berths; Dykes 4+5: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 14 waiting; 16 vessels due by 17/1; 17-20 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; 15 vessels off port awaiting coal. One vessel due 15/1 to load wheat; no delays expected.
Port Hedland	21-12-2006	Iron ore: BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Mt. Newman (Nelson Point), "A" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 3 waiting; 4 vessels due by 29/12; "B" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loaded, 4 waiting; 4 vessels due by 31/12; 7 other vessels due by 5/1, no e.t.a. received; BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Goldsworthy (Finucane Island) "C" berth: berth undergoing refurbishment and closed until further notice; Goldsworthy (Finucane Island) "D" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 2 waiting; 6 vessels due by 1/1; Cockatoo Island: 2 vessels due by 3/1.
Port Kembla	21-12-2006	Coal: 12 vessels due by 22/1.
Port Walcott	21-12-2006	Iron ore: 13 vessels waiting; 10 vessels due by 4/1; shippers may experience product shortage which might affect berthing schedules.
Whyalla	21-12-2006	Iron ore: 1 vessel waiting; 6 vessels due by 12/1.
Azerbaijan		
Apsheron	21-12-2006	Oil products: One vessel loading fuel oil at berth, 1 discharging crude oil at berth; 1 vessel due 19/12 to discharge gasoline.
Baku	21-12-2006	Oil products: Azertrans terminal: Nobel Avenue: Three empty vessels completed discharging at berth; Sangachal District: port open; no vessels.
Israel		
Ashdod	26-12-2006	No labour problems; One vessel loading general cargo at berth, 8 discharging at berth (5 general cargo, 3 bulk cargo), 4 loading/discharging containers at berth; 3 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge general cargo, 1 car carrier waiting at anchorage to load/discharge; 19 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Eilat	26-12-2006	No labour problems; One vessel discharging general cargo at berth; 3 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge general cargo; 2 vessels due, with no delays expected.
Haifa	26-12-2006	No labour problems; Three vessels discharging at berth (1 general cargo, 2 bulk cargo), 7 loading/discharging at berth (4 containers, 2 tankers, 1 passenger vessel); 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to discharge bulk cargo, 1 tanker waiting at anchorage to load/discharge; 7 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; 24 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.

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

Port Conditions

Russia

Novorossiysk	25-12-2006	Twenty-six vessels in port operating of which 24 loading (1 HBI, 1 cement, 1 bulk NPK, 1 DRI, 2 scrap, 1 pipes, 2 wheat, 2 copper, 1 pig iron, 2 coils, 1 coils/steel sheets, 1 pipes/steel billets, 2 barley, 2 slabs, 1 aluminium, 2 vegetable oil, 1 D/O), 2 discharging bulk sugar; 31 vessels in roads of which 28 to load (7 wheat, 1 soda ash, 3 bulk NPK, 1 DRI, 3 slabs, 1 aluminium, 2 copper, 2 pipes, 3 steel billets, 2 vegetable oil, 3 D/O), 2 to discharge (1 meal products, 1 bulk sugar), 1 to discharge/load containers; 60 vessels due of which 55 to load, 5 to discharge (1 debars, 1 vegetable oil, 1 equipment, 2 bulk sugar); Oil terminal: 3 tankers loading crude at berth; 2 tankers in roads, both to load (1 crude, 1 diesel oil); 12 tankers due, all to load (11 crude oil, 1 diesel oil).
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Turkmenistan

Aladja	25-12-2006	Oil products: One vessel loading crude oil at berth; 1 vessel in roads to load crude oil.
Okarem	25-12-2006	Oil products: One vessel loading crude oil at berth; 1 vessel in roads to load crude oil.
Turkmenbashi	25-12-2006	Oil products: Port open; Ten vessels in roads, all to load (1 gasoil, 3 fuel oil, 2 jet fuel, 1 gasoline, 3 others); 1 vessel due 25/12 to load.

Ukraine

Illichevsk	25-12-2006	Seven vessels in port operating of which 4 loading (2 steel products, 1 iron ore concentrate, 1 ethanol), 1 discharging manganese ore, 2 discharging/loading containers; 3 vessels in roads of which 1 to discharge slabs, 2 to discharge/load containers; 22 vessels due of which 14 to load (8 steel products, 2 pig iron, 2 wheat, 1 project, 1 sunflower oil), 1 to discharge ore, 7 to discharge/load containers.
Mariupol	25-12-2006	Ten vessels in port operating, all loading (6 steel, 1 fire-clay, 1 coal, 1 sulphur, 1 sunflower beans); 15 vessels in roads of which 14 to load (13 steel, 1 coal), 1 to discharge heavy lifts/containers; 76 vessels due of which 70 to load (44 steel, 3 coal, 9 fire-clay, 2 coke, 8 coal, 1 sunflower beans, 3 slag, 3 sulphur), 3 to discharge (2 equipment, 1 ferroalloy), 3 to load /discharge (1 containers/fire-clay, 1 magnezite/steel, 1 equipment/slag).
Odessa	25-12-2006	Twenty-nine vessels in port operating of which 13 loading (7 metal, 1 scrap, 1 oil, 1 pig iron, 1 pellets, 1 sunflower seeds, 1 wheat), 14 discharging (4 citrus, 2 passenger vessels, 2 bananas, 3 baggage, 3 general cargo), 2 discharging/loading containers; 7 vessels in roads of which 5 to load (1 scrap, 2 timber, 1 metal, 1 grain), 1 to discharge oil, 1 to load/discharge containers; 91 vessels due of which 33 to load (20 metal, 2 pig iron, 2 scrap, 1 soy, 2 pellets, 1 coal, 1 wheat, 1 oil, 1 ore, 1 timber, 1 ferroalloy), 15 to discharge (2 metal, 7 citrus, 1 oil, 2 sugar, 1 general cargo, 1 bananas, 1 fish), 43 to load/discharge containers.

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