

# SABATINO PIZZOLANTE

## *Circular for P & I Clubs*

DATE: 9<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2006

**Correspondents for:**

**North of England (through Globalpandi), Steamship Mutual, British Marine Managers (through Globalpandi), Nordisk Defence Club, Charterers Mutual Assurance Association Limited, Axa Corporate Solutions (through Globalpandi), Through Transport Club (TTC), ITIC, Raets P&I and InterCoastal P&I.**

### *Main highway between Caracas and La Guaira closed*

Viaduct 1 of the highway linking Caracas to the Venezuelan largest international and national airport (Maiquetia) and the second largest seaport (La Guaira) collapsed on 4th January 2006. The collapse was produced as the slope supporting its western foundations slid by 25 centimetres, causing cracks in the bridge, allegedly because of heavy rains fallen in the area in the last few days, as explained by the Infrastructure Minister.

Despite the fact that the government said that a group of engineers were actively working trying to extend the life of the structure, governmental officials have now admitted that the viaduct cannot be rehabilitated, for which reason a new one will be built in the coming months. In the meantime, the highway has been closed for traffic of persons and cargoes until new notice. Therefore, the 20 minutes journey between Caracas and La Guaira is over, as vehicular traffic is being diverted to the so-called old road Caracas-La Guaira, built in the 1930s. Heavy load traffic has been suspended during daytime to prevent traffic jams, under a stringent security operation by the National Guard, local police and terrestrial traffic officers.

Although operations at the Simón Bolívar International Airport, in Maiquetía, is to continue to operate normally, airlines have reorganised their itineraries, diverting some flights to Valencia airport (located 200 kilometres far from the port) and re-scheduling flights to daylight for

security reasons. This is not the case of the Ferry route between La Guaira and Margarita island operated by Conferry, which has been suspended, and it is said to be re-opened shortly from Puerto Cabello, as reported by the President of the cruise terminal of this port.

Regarding operations at the port of La Guaira, this terminal is working under normal conditions and cargoes are being dispatched subject to the vehicular traffic restrictions; there is no reported cancellations of calls to this port by major shipping lines, and some shipments are changing destinations only at the receivers' request.

Non confirmed reports state that cargoes will be diverted to the port of Puerto Cabello, which is able according to public and private spokesmen to handle an extra 15%-20% without problems of congestion.

Updates of the current situation can be found in the section News of our website at [www.sabatinop.com/home.php](http://www.sabatinop.com/home.php).

**Should you need any assistance or further information regarding the topic stated above, please feel free to contact:**

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