North Sea tidal surge brings flood risk Storms across northwest Europe - caused by the remnants of Hurricane Noel coinciding with a tidal surge - prompted German, Dutch and British governments to issue flood warnings. Strong winds and the highest tides for 50 years sliced down the North Sea, threatening low-lying coastal areas **NORWAY** NORTH SEA 100km Shetland Oil production of 60 miles 220,000 bpd Islands BP Valhall expected to be Gusts of up to platform slashed by 145km/h in closed 10% Orknev Orkney and Gusts of up Shetland Islands **Ekofisk** to 125km/h islands Five in Germany platforms and Denmark closed DENMARK **NETHERLANDS** Flood warnings Flood warnings Ems River London Flood warnings Amsterdam London: Thames **GERMAN** Barrier closed Rotterdam: Thursday and Maeslant Barrier closed for first time Friday ever to protect Europe's largest port Thames Barrier: Each 61-metre-wide 1. Barriers, stowed in docks, float as gate holds back 90,000 tonnes of water water level rises, allowing doors to be swung shut 3,200-tonne steel gate 10m ball and socket ioints Gate stands 15m above river bed. When 2. Ballast tanks in not in use gate lies flat in concrete base doors flooded - doors sink © GRAPHIC NEWS