

The Times of India, 3 November 2008

Indonesia on high alert ahead of Bali bombers execution

JAKARTA: Police tightened security across Indonesia as authorities braced for potential terrorist attacks ahead of the executions of three Islamic militants convicted in the 2002 Bali bombings that left 202 people dead. Tourist destinations, vital installations and Western oil companies were under heavy guard on Friday, national police spokesman Abubakar Nataprawira said. The government has said the three men ---sentenced to death five years ago for planning and helping carry out the October 12, 2002, twin nightclub attacks -- will go before a firing squad within days.

International Herald Tribune, 3 November 2008

Thaksin addresses his supporters via telephone

BANGKOK: Former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, exiled from Thailand, told tens of thousands of supporters in his homeland that he cannot return as long as he has a jail sentence hanging over him. Thaksin, who served as the country's elected leader from 2001 until he was ousted by a military coup in September 2006, was this year convicted in absentia to two years in prison on conflict-of-interest charges. He spoke in a phone call broadcast to his supporters attending a rally Saturday at a Bangkok stadium.

The Jakarta Post, 3 November 2008

Malaysia detects Indonesian Islamic militant's movement

A Malaysian council has detected activities of the Indonesian Islamic State Movement (GNII, Gerakan Negara Islam Indonesia) in Selangor State. Selangor Council of State Security said in its report that the GNII was a popular and active underground movement in the state. Saad Khiruddin, chairman of the council, said that the group's secretive character has made it difficult for local authorities to stamp out the movement, Antara reported.

Bangkok Post, 3 November 2008

Government 'ready to talk' with PAD leaders

Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat said on Sunday the government was ready to hold talks with the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) if it will be a creative talk, leading to the peace and order of the country. Responding to PAD core leader Chamlong Srimuang's statement that the PAD is ready to hold talks with the government, the premier said negotiation is a good solution in principle. Asked who would be the government's representatives to talk with the PAD, he said "Anyone who can do this job well. The government agrees with the idea."

The Manila Times, 3 November 2008

Spratlys not in Senate bill

Fourteen members of the Senate Committees on Foreign Relations and on National Defense have recommended the passage of a law defining the country's archipelagic baselines that excludes the disputed Spratly Islands and Scarborough Shoal. The Philippines is claiming the Kalayaan Island Group, which is part of the Spratlys -a group of 100 reefs, islets and islands that are also claimed in part or in whole by China, Malaysia, Brunei, South Vietnam and Taiwan. All claimant countries, including the Philippines, believe there are some 200 billion barrels of oil, natural gas, minerals and polymetals-such as gold, silver, iron and nickel-under the sea surrounding the Spratlys.

Viet Nam News, 3 November 2008

PM encourages long term foreign investors

HA NOI : Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung yesterday pledged to grant favourable conditions to long-term foreign investors as he received members of the Russel 20-20 Association. The Russel 20-20 Association is based in the US and represents some of the world's most prestigious institutional investors, managing total assets of over US\$12 trillion. The group has brought over 60 members to Viet Nam to explore the investment environment. Each year Russel 20-20 selects two countries to visit and look for investment opportunities.

Bangkok Post, 4 November 2008

Thai shares jump 7.84 pct

Thai shares jumped 7.84 per cent Monday on good news for banks and energy stocks and the avoidance of political violence in Bangkok over the weekend. The Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) index ended at 449.19, up 32.66 points, on modest trade amounting to 17 billion baht (494 million dollars). "Thai stocks were following other markets today," said Asia Plus Securities analyst Phuwadon Larpudomsuk. Investors snapped up bank shares on growing confidence in the sector worldwide and energy shares on news that oil prices were up.

The Manila Times, 4 November 2008

Exclusion of Spratlys from Senate baseline bill 'unconstitutional'

Lawmakers would be violating the Constitution if they exclude the Spratly Islands in a new Senate archipelagic baseline bill, a legal expert said Monday. "It is a wrong move for our senators if they exclude the Kalayaan Island Group [KIG] in the new Senate baseline bill," lawyer Harry Roque, a law professor at the University of the Philippines' Law Center, told The Manila Times. "Not including it in the baseline bill will weaken our claim to the disputed territories."

Viet Nam News, 4 November 2008

VN, Cambodia strengthen links

HA NOI : The Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, Hun Sen, is on an official visit to Viet Nam today and tomorrow to re-inforce traditional friendship and comprehensive co-operation between the two neighbours. The Cambodian PM is making the visit at the invitation of his Vietnamese counterpart, Nguyen Tan Dung. The two PMs will discuss measures to boost co-operation in all fields, particularly the economy, trade and investment; accelerate land-border demarcation and placing markers; and promote co-ordination at regional and multilateral forums

Viet Nam News, 4 November 2008

Central bank trims prime interest rate

HA NOI : In an effort to promote credit and prop up the slowing national economy, the State Bank of Viet Nam cut the prime interest rate yesterday by an additional percentage point to 12 per cent, the bank's second trim to interest rates in the past two months. Effective tomorrow, the refinancing rate was also lowered from 14 to 13 per cent, while the discount rate and overnight rate for electronic payments were each cut one point to 11 and 13 per cent, respectively. Meanwhile, the maximum interest rate lenders can charge to borrowers was also lowered, from 19.5 per cent to 18 per cent.

Bangkok Post, 5 November 2008

Police forward case against PAD leaders to prosecutors

Police investigators forwarded a case against nine core leaders of People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) for allegedly causing chaos in the country to public prosecutors on Wednesday. Police of Nang Loeng station delivered four boxes of document to the Office of the Attorney-General for further indictment. The nine PAD core leaders are accused of violating Articles 16, 215, and 216 of the Criminal Code on treason and for assembling more than ten people to provoke the people to disobey the government. The accused include the group's five core leaders: Sondhi Limthongkul, Maj-Gen Chamlong Srimuang, Somkiat Pongpaiboon, Pibhop Thongchai, and Somsak Kosaisuk; the group's coordinator Suriyasai Katasila; Chaiwat Sinsuwong, Amorn Amornrattananont, and Therdpum Jaidee.

The Manila Times, 5 November 2008

Is Thai Asean chief's confidence about December summit justified?

The secretary-general of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) said Tuesday, according to an Agence France-Presse report, that he was confident Thailand could pull off a successful summit despite it grappling with ongoing anti-government protests. Surin Pitsuwan, a former Thai foreign minister, said he expected December's regional group meeting, recently moved from the capital to the northern city of Chiang Mai, to pass without conflict. "I don't think Thailand's domestic political issues will prevent it being a good host of the Asean summit," Surin told reporters after a meeting with Thai Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat.

Vietnam News, 5 November 2008

Viet Nam, Cambodia boost ties, speed up co-operation

HA NOI: Party General Secretary Nong Duc Manh told Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen that his visit to Viet Nam was an important event, further developing relations between the two countries. Speaking at a reception for his guest in Ha Noi yesterday, Manh also applauded the consensus that Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung and his counterpart Hun Sen had reached at an earlier meeting, which was aimed at speeding up the implementation of high-ranking agreements between the two sides.

Vietnam News, 5 November 2008

Officials discuss draft law on managing public debt

HA NOI: Policy makers proposed to alter the National Assembly's draft law on public debt management yesterday to include the debts of State-owned companies. The move is also intended to make the Ministry of Finance the Government's sole agency responsible for loan and debt payments. However, according to the draft, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Planning and Investment, the State Bank of Viet Nam, the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Justice would be permitted to function as debt managers. Dong Thap deputy Nguyen Huu Nhon agreed with the Government's report, saying that Viet Nam's current debts were small enough to guarantee its place in the world's economic scene.

Jakarta Post, 5 November 2008

Indonesia tightens security after threat against SBY

JAKARTA: The presidential Cabinet is remaining vigilant after a terror threat against President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono was posted on the Internet, allegedly by the three Bali bombers who are facing imminent execution. Presidential spokesman Andi Mallarangeng told reporters in Jakarta on Tuesday that the state would prevent any attacks and would take appropriate action against the persons who posted the threat. "Threats against the President and state officials should not be underestimated. It is terror," he said. "The state will definitely take appropriate action to protect the officials and go after anyone involved in the threat."

The Manila Times, 6 November 2008

Lawmaker assails administration for the arrest of militant leader in Cavite

A militant lawmaker on Tuesday assailed what he described as a looming crackdown by the Arroyo government forces against mass leaders of the progressive people's movement in the Southern Tagalog Region. Rep. Rafael Mariano of Anak Pawis party-list issued the statement after the police Monday night arrested Anak pawis party-list provincial coordinator Rogelio "Ka Mamay" Galit. Galit, 49, is also the spokesperson of the Kalipunan ng mga Magsasaka sa Kabite, the provincial chapter of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas which Mariano chairs

The Straits Times, 6 November 2008

Mekong meeting in Vietnam

HANOI: LEADERS from South-east Asia's five Mekong river countries were due to meet in Vietnam's capital from Thursday for two days of talks that aim to boost economic ties and trade across the developing region. The prime ministers of the communist host nation Vietnam as well as Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar were set to meet on Thursday, then be joined by Thailand's new premier Somchai Wongsawat on Friday for a wider summit. Except for middle-income country Thailand, the other four nations remain among the region's poorest and hope to build prosperity through closer regional transport and commercial links, both with each other and with China.

The Jakarta Post, 6 November 2008

City wants 10% increase for budget next year

JAKARTA: The Jakarta administration plans to increase its budget by 10 percent in 2009 and allocate 23 percent of the total budget toward education. The draft 2009 city budget stands at Rp 22.420 trillion (US\$) up from Rp 20.396 in 2008. The administration will focus its spending on five

sectors: education, public works, environment, health and transportation. More than Rp 5.1 trillion has been allocated toward education, which is almost 6 percent higher than this year's budget of Rp 4.9 trillion, while Rp 3.84 trillion has been allocated to public works, or almost 52 percent more than the 2008 budget of Rp 2.51 trillion.

The Jakarta Post, 6 November 2008

Kadin wants more funds for real sector

The Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Kadin) has asked the government to add Rp 10 trillion (US\$950 million) to the funds set aside for next year to help cushion the real sector from the impact of the global economic slowdown. In the 2009 state budget, the government has allocated Rp 10 trillion (US\$950 million) worth of waived income and value-added taxes and Rp 2.5 trillion worth of waived import duties and taxes to help generate growth in the private sector. The waived payments would then be covered by the Finance Ministry so as not to reduce the government's tax revenue target.

The Economic Times, 7 November 2008

Singapore Air profit drops 36%

SINGAPORE: Singapore Airlines, the world's largest airline by market value, on Thursday reported a better-than-expected 36 percent fall in quarterly profit and warned of weakness in its advance passenger bookings. Singapore Air has seen declining passenger demand this year as the global economic slowdown crimps corporate and leisure travel, forcing it last week to announce a cut in flights from the city-state to other Asian cities. "The financial turmoil around the world and weak consumer confidence are impacting demand for air transportation," said Singapore Air in a statement.

The Jakarta Post, 7 November 2008

Six countries to launch Coral Triangle in Manado

JAKARTA: Six countries plan to officially launch the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) at a summit to be held in Manado, North Sulawesi, in May next year. The initiative is aimed to retard degradation of coral colonies and safeguard vulnerable species from the impact of global warming. CTI summit committee secretary Indroyono Soesilo said heads of state from countries bordering the triangle -- Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, the Solomon Islands and Timor Leste --- would attend the first-ever coral summit. "Ministers from the six coral-rich countries are expected to first adopt the CTI action plan in Papua New Guinea in January, paving the way for coral initiative launch." Indroyono told reporters Thursday.

Bangkok Post, 7 November 2008

Somchai off again, for visit to Vietnam

Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat left here for the Vietnamese capital of Hanoi on Thursday afternoon, on a visit aimed at strengthening the relationship between the two neighbouring countries and to attend the third Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) summit. The premier's trip is his first official visit to Vietnam since assuming the premiership in mid-September. Accompanied by his wife, a media aide and Secretary-General to the Prime Minister Chusak Sirinil, Mr. Somchai left by Royal Thai Air Force aircraft.

Vietnam News, 7 November 2008

Lawmakers focus on infrastructure needs

HA NOI : National Assembly deputies yesterday reviewed the implementation of policies and laws on State investment in infrastructure for the three years lasting from 2005 to 2007. But many agreed that infrastructure in particular, such as roads, ports and hospitals in big cities, still faced overload. They said many projects were implemented with complicated procedures, which led to low efficiency and wastefulness.

Vietnam News, 7 November 2008

Party leader greets global trade union representatives

HA NOI :Party General Secretary Nong Duc Manh has warmly welcomed foreign delegates to the 10th national trade union congress, saying their participation is a huge endorsement of Viet Nam's renewal process. The Party leader told the international labour unionists during his reception yesterday that their presence was evidence of the warm brotherhood and international solidarity shown towards the Vietnamese working people and trade unions.

Space Daily, 10 November 2008

Ukraine, Indonesia Sign Space Cooperation Deal

KIEV, Russia: Ukraine and Indonesia have signed an intergovernmental space cooperation agreement, Unian news agency said, citing Ukraine's National Space Agency. Areas of cooperation will include space research, rocket technology, satellite launches, earth remote sensing, and other uses of space for peaceful purposes. "The agreement will create a legal framework for mutually beneficial cooperation between Ukrainian and Indonesian enterprises in the space industry," the space agency said.

The Jakarta Post, 10 November 2008

Contest exposes schisms in Malaysia ruling party

KUALA LUMPUR: Three politicians have qualified to contest the No. 2 post in Malaysia's ruling party - a key job that has usually been filled by unanimous nomination and never in a three-cornered fight. During month-long party caucuses that ended Sunday, an unprecedented three candidates secured enough nominations to contest the deputy leader's post of the United Malays National Organization party on March 26, 2009. The winner will also become Malaysia's deputy prime minister.

Bangkok Post, 10 November 2008

Border temple talks start today

Two days of talks aimed at ending the dispute between Thailand and Cambodia over the disputed area near the Preah Vihear temple begin today, but an early agreement is unlikely, according to Foreign Ministry officials. After the recent violence on the border and an ongoing diplomatic spat, Thailand and Cambodia have moved their problems to the negotiating table - a meeting of the Joint Boundary Commission (JBC) in Siem Reap. At the centre of the dispute is sovereignty over a 4.6-square-kilometre area between Kantharalak district in Si Sa Ket province and Preah Vihear province in Cambodia, adjacent to the ancient Khmer temple.

Viet Nam News, 10 November 2008

Deputies agree to hold trial elections

HA NOI : Most lawmakers agreed yesterday that the planned trial abolition of district and ward People's Councils and the popular election of commune People's Committee chairmen should be restricted. Deputy Danh Ut, Kien Giang Province, said a restricted trial was needed to avoid unnecessary panic in the electorate. The models could be extended to more localities at the appropriate time, he said. The Government wants the assembly to allow the abolition of People's Council at 10 localities in 10 cities and provinces and the popular election of People's Committee chairmen at 385 of Viet Nam's 9,100 communes.

The Asian Age, 11 November 2008

Indonesia alert after executions

JAKARTA: Indonesian security forces were on high alert on Monday after the execution of three Islamists over the 2002 Bali bombings, amid fears of a violent extremist backlash, the police said. "We're still on alert for any security disturbances after the executions," national police spokesman Abubakar Nataprawira said, adding that the readiness level was at its highest. Indonesia stepped up security at tourist spots and embassies ahead of the execution of the bombers behind the 2002 attack on the resort island of Bali which killed 202 people, mostly foreigners.

The Manila Times, 11 November 2008

Don't drag our soldiers into politics

In a forum last week, some bishops called for intervention of soldiers in our political system. That was clearly intended to sell the idea that the armed forces should grab power from the elected officials and run this country by decree. The four bishops, a minority in the Catholic Bishops Conference, made a call for political change, without specifying what kind of government would replace the present. At the end of questioning by reporters, it became clear that they wanted a government that would rule outside the constitution.

Viet Nam News, 11 November 2008

Legislators tighten belts for upcoming 2009 budget

HA NOI : The National Assembly overwhelmingly passed a State budget resolution on Saturday that calls for a reduction in spending in face of the global financial crisis. Under the resolution, budget revenues for 2009 were estimated at VND389.9 trillion (US\$23.6 billion), accounting for 21.5 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) -a figure VND28.1 trillion (\$1.7 billion) less than the Government's estimates. Meanwhile, overall spending was authorised at VND491.3 trillion (\$29.8 billion), for a State budget deficit of VND87.3 trillion (\$5.3 billion), equal to a substantial 4.82 per cent of GDP.

The Phnom Penh Post, 11 November 2008

Government rejects IMF's gloomy economic report

Government officials have rebuffed a gloomy economic forecast by the International Monetary Fund, saying the nation's predicted growth slowdown would not be as dire as the world body suggests. At the culmination of a two-week mission Friday, the IMF announced that lower foreign investment, as well as runoff effects from the global financial crisis, would push Cambodia's economic growth down to 4.8 percent in 2009, from a previously predicted rate of nine percent

Bangkok Post, 12 November 2008

Senate finds police, govt guilty

Senate panels on Tuesday found the government and police guilty of violating human rights for the crackdown on the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) on October 7. The Senate committee on human rights, freedom and consumer protection chairman Somchai Sawaengkarn said violent crowd dispersal tactics - which left two people killed and more than 400 people injured - could have been avoided. Mr Somchai also said government officials could have used alternative routes to enter parliament while meetings could have been postponed or relocated.

Viet Nam News, 12 November 2008

C African Republic sets up diplomatic ties

HA NOI : Viet Nam and the Central African Republic (CAR) issued a joint communique to establish diplomatic relations at the end of the CAR Minister of Foreign Affairs Dieudonne Kombo Yaya's official visit at the Governmental Guest House in Ha Noi yesterday. Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Pham Gia Khiem held talks with Kombo Yaya during his official visit. Deputy Foreign Minister Nguyen Xuan Son and other senior ministry officials made up the Vietnamese hosts, while the guest delegation included Diplomatic Advisor to the Presidency of the CAR and personal representative to the CAR President in the Francophone Standing Council Joseph Kiticki Kouamba, and economist and programme manager of the Francophone organisation Chekou Oussouman.

The Phnom Penh Post, 12 November 2008

Government aims to create first export-import bank

Cambodia is looking to launch its first government-backed export-import bank to boost trade, officials said, with the UN Development Program being asked to help with the project. Cambodia's ex-im bank would offer loans to companies exporting abroad, with a special focus on the rice industry. Officials hope to launch the bank in two years. Export-import banks, such as the one in the United States, help exporters obtain credit in transactions that private lenders deem too risky.

The Phnom Penh Post, 12 November 2008

First trading course offered

Cambodia's first online currency trading course is being offered in preparation for next year's proposed stock market launch, a company representative told the Post. The financial services firm Phnom Penh Trust Asset Management Company (PPTAM) is offering the course, which it says has already seen more than 300 Cambodians obtain certification.

The Manila Times, 12 November 2008

AFP, rebels trade charges of truce violations

ZAMBOANGA : Military officials and Moro rebels on Tuesday traded accusations of ceasefire violations and propaganda, with both sides claiming to have killed dozens of soldiers and mujahideen in fierce fighting in Mindanao. The Philippine Army said at least 10 members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) were slain and 15 more wounded in Monday clashes in the town of Wao in Lanao del Sur province. And the MILF, the country's largest Muslim rebel group, claimed that at least 26 government soldiers perished in the fierce firefight that lasted several hours.

Business Standard, 14 November 2008

GSPC-Essar to invest \$ 8 million in Indonesian block

MUMBAI: Signed MoU with BPMIGAS on Thursday. State owned Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation has bagged an onshore block in Indonesia in collaboration with Essar. GSPC-Essar consortium has signed an MoU with Badan Pelaksana Kegiatan Usaha Hulu Minyak and Gas Bumi (BPMIGAS) on November 13. The South East Tungal Block is spread in an area of 2309.59 sq km and has been bagged on direct offer negotiation basis, said an official of GSPC. Essar as a partner holds 49 per cent stake in the block while GSPC is the operator with 51% stake.

The Economic Times, 14 November 2008

POSCO eyes new Vietnam sites after plan rejected

HANOI: Vietnam has rejected a proposal by South Korean steel maker POSCO to build a \$5 billion steel mill due to fears it would hurt the environment in Vietnam's most popular resort area, state media reported. Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung asked authorities in the southcentral province of Khanh Hoa to request POSCO choose another site for their project, the online newspaper VietnamNet (vietnamnet.vn) quoted a government directive as saying.

Viet Nam News, 14 November 2008

Malaysia keen on expanding co-operation with Viet Nam

HA NOI : The Malaysian Government attaches huge importance to the expansion of co-operation with Viet Nam, affirmed Malaysian Foreign Minister Rais Yatim. The Malaysian Foreign Minister made the statement while meeting with Vietnamese President Nguyen Minh Triet in Ha Noi yesterday.

Bangkok Post, 14 November 2008

BoI adopts single-zone system

Thailand will become a single investment zone, with the exception of Bangkok, with maximum privileges offered for six industries by the Board of Investment (BoI). The incentives will be offered for investment projects submitted from now until the end of 2009, in a bid to revive the industrial sector. However, only six industries considered hardest hit by the global recession are eligible for the universal zoning privileges: energy efficiency, high-tech innovation, environmentally friendly products, government infrastructure megaprojects, tourism and real estate, and high-tech agriculture.

The Manila Times, 14 November 2008

Slowdown, not recession, faces Philippines, says ADB

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) allayed fears of recession in the country-but warned of an economic slowdown in 2009. Neeraj Jain, the ADB country director for the Philippines, on Thursday, or a day after the country's economic managers downgraded their marcoeconomic assumptions, said that the Philippines "will not be in a recession" next year.

Business Standard, 15 November 2008

Indonesia blacklists 30 edible oil firms

Indonesia's edible oil associations, including GAPKI, have blacklisted 30 Indian companies for defaults and have suggested that public-sector firms such as MMTC, PEC and STC should not encourage these companies to import edible oil on their behalf. The Solvent Extractors' Association (SEA) is however reluctant to interfere. In response to GAPKI's letter, the SEA has suggested that the matter should be sorted out by the two trade parties independently.

The Economic Times, 15 November 2008

BPO: A bright spot in global gloom

MANILA: Business outsourcing may not be the most glamorous industry in the world but it is one of the few bright lights amid the doom and gloom of the global financial crisis. The two countries which have benefited the most from outsourcing, India and the Philippines, expect to see some initial pain from the financial turmoil but the industry is confident it will ride out the storm.

Bangkok Post, 15 November 2008

Indonesia urges upgraded ties with US

Washington (AFP): Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has called for a strategic partnership with the United States to confront 21st century challenges, saying he found president-elect Barack Obama's foreign policy "refreshing". The leader of the world's most populous Muslim nation said such a relationship would have to be for the long term and based on "equal partnership" and "common interests" with strong people-to-people content.

The Manila Times, 15 November 2008

Dollar surplus to fall further-BSP

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said the country's dollar surplus might fall further this year on the back of the continued decline in foreign portfolio investments and weak export earnings. BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the country's balance of payments (BOP) surplus would end the year below the central bank's forecast of \$2-billion surplus.

International Herald Tribune, 16 November 2008

Indonesians recount role in communist slaughter

SURABAYA, Indonesia: The men bound the thumbs of dozens of suspected communists behind their backs with banana leaves and drove them to a torch-lit jungle clearing. As villagers jeered, the prisoners were killed, one by one. "There was no resistance," remembers Sulchan, then the 21-year-old deputy commander of an Islamic youth militia. "All of them had their throats cut with a long sword."

Bangkok Post, 16 November 2008

Nine killed in new Narathiwat violence

Narathiwat, Thailand (dpa): Suspected militants attacked three homes belonging to Thai-Moslems early Wednesday in a remote village in Thailand's troubled Narathiwat province, killing nine people and injuring seven others including four children, police said. The attack occurred at 1 a.m. local time Wednesday in Rang Ngae district, 790 kilometres south of Bangkok, and was carried out by an unknown number of assailants bearing war weapons such as AK-47 and M-16 rifles, said a report issued by the Rang Ngae Police Station.

The Times of India, 16 November 2008

22 Filipinos arrested in Nigeria over oil theft

WARRI, Nigeria: Nigeria's military has arrested 22 Filipinos on suspicion of stealing thousands of tons of crude oil, officials said. The men were arrested on their vessel as it left a channel late Friday and headed toward open water off the coast of the oil-producing state of Delta in southern Nigeria, regional army spokesman Lt. Col. Rabe Abubaker said on Saturday. The ship was carrying up to 13,400 tons (12,000 metric tonnes) of crude oil believed to have been stolen from a sabotaged pipeline further inland and transported to the vessel on barges, he said.

The Economic Times, 17 November 2008

Singapore could see negative growth in 2009, PM warns

Singapore: Singapore, which is already in recession, could experience negative growth next year, the city-state's premier has warned. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said the recession will probably last a year but beyond that there could be several years of slow growth. "Let us prepare for the worst while hoping for the best," he told a conference of his People's Action Party on Sunday.

Hindustan Times, 17 November 2008

Malaysian court orders prominent blogger released

A Malaysian court ordered the editor of an anti-government news Web site released from detention on Friday, ruling that his arrest under a law allowing indefinite incarceration was unlawful, a lawyer said. Shah Alam High Court Justice Syed Ahmad Helmy Syed Ahmad ruled that the home minister acted outside his powers in having Raja Petra Kamaruddin arrested on September 12 for allegedly causing racial tensions, said Raja Petra's lawyer, Malik Imtiaz Sarwar.

Bangkok Post, 17 November 2008

Thailand may lag Asian stock revival next year

Despite signs that the global fire sale of all asset classes is slackening, as shown by foreign funds returning to the Thai stock market on some occasions, Thailand could lag the expected resurgence of Asian stocks next year if its political troubles drag on, says Theeranat Rujimethapass, head of private fund business at Tisco Asset Management. Asian stocks, including those in Thailand, have started to rebound after central banks calmed investors by guaranteeing bank deposits and foreign debts. The US Federal Reserve has even helped financial institutions borrow.

The Manila Times, 17 November 2008

Firms scramble for liquidity amid global credit crunch

CASH is king during these uncertain times, as the size of one's war chest will determine which companies will emerge from the current crisis with the least battle scars, and which firms would have to cede leadership. As the global credit crunch hits closer to home, Philippine companies are bracing for the worst in the next couple of months. Analysts say the full impact of the worldwide turmoil will be felt only after Christmas, adding that only then can companies have a clearer view of how they will survive in the coming year

Viet Nam News, 17 November 2008

Projects left languishing in central region

Viet Nam's central region has seen many investment projects remain incomplete as investors fail to finish the work they started. In the ancient city of Hue in Thua Thien-Hue Province, a dozen projects involving residential areas and tourist and greenery parks are left only half-complete after several years of construction. Examples include the 199-ha urban area in An Dong Ward, the 32-ha urban area in An Tay Ward, the 84-ha Xuan Phu Urban Area and the 31-ha Dong Nam Thuy An.

The Economic Times, 18 November 2008

Singapore banks have sufficient liquidity: Finance Minister

SINGAPORE: Singapore said on Tuesday its banks have been able to obtain funding in the interbank market despite the ongoing global credit crisis, and that borrowing costs have started to ease. "As far as the interbank market is concerned, there has been sufficient liquidity in our system. We've not seen the market freeze up as happened in other global financial centres in recent months," said Finance Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam in parliament.

The Economic Times, 18 November 2008

Malaysia says may introduce more stimulus measures

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia may introduce more measures to stimulate economic growth and counter the worsening global financial crisis, Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak said Tuesday. The government earlier this month announced a 7.0 billion ringgit (2.0 billion dollar) stimulus

programme, warning that growth would slow substantially in 2009. "We are open to additional measures from time to time... we are watching and monitoring the situation very carefully and closely," Najib said, according to the state Bernama news agency.

Bangkok Post, 18 November 2008

BoT will likely cut policy interest rate: Tarisa

The Bank of Thailand (BoT) will likely adjust its economic forecast and key economic indicators and cut the policy interest rate because of the grave global economic crisis, BoT governor Tarisa Watanagase said on Tuesday. According to Mrs Tarisa, the central bank on October 8th projected that Thailand's economy in 2008 and 2009 would expand by 4.3 to five per cent and 3.8 to five per cent respectively. The assessment was based on the information from the second quarter, but the figures could lessen because many factors had changed in the third quarter, she noted.

International Herald Tribune, 19 November 2008

Maritime hijackings decrease in Asia

HONG KONG: The hijacking of a Saudi supertanker has not led to alerts and alarms in Asia, which has weathered its own previous storms of piracy. "It will be very difficult to copycat the Somalia situation in Asia," said Noel Choong, head of the Piracy Reporting Center at the International Maritime Bureau in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. "The governments here are more committed and have more resources. In fact, the attacks here are coming down." A regional piracy-monitoring agency in Singapore said maritime attacks in Asia in the first nine months of the year dropped 11 percent compared to 2007 and 32 percent from 2006.

International Herald Tribune, 19 November 2008

Neptune Orient Lines to cut 1,000 jobs

SINGAPORE: Neptune Orient Lines of Singapore said Wednesday that it will axe 1,000 jobs as part of moves to save \$200 million in costs next year to help ride out an expected severe downturn in the shipping sector. NOL said it would reduce its global workforce by 1,000, with the largest impact being in North America. There will also be 50 jobs cut in the Singapore office

International Herald Tribune, 19 November 2008

Oil steady near 22-month low in Asia

SINGAPORE: Oil prices were steady near 22-month lows Wednesday in Asia as investors paused to examine the extent of global economic weakness, which has sent crude down more than 60 percent in four months. Light, sweet crude for December delivery was up 8 cents to \$54.47 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange by midafternoon in Singapore. The contract Tuesday fell 56 cents to settle at \$54.39, the lowest since January 2007.

The Times of India, 19 November 2008

Three soldiers, eight Muslim rebels killed in Philippine clashes

COTABATO, Philippines: Three soldiers and eight Muslim separatist rebels have been killed in fresh fighting in the southern Philippines, local and military officials said on Tuesday. Soldiers clashed with Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels near the town of Mamasapano on Mindanao Island on Sunday evening after the guerrillas attacked an army base. "The rebels attacked the army base while they (troops) were eating," town mayor Akmad Tato Ampatuan told reporters, adding that there were overnight exchanges of mortar fire between the two sides.

The Jakarta Post, 19 November 2008

Rupiah tips 10-year low before BI intervenes

The rupiah bounced back from its weakest level in 10 years on Tuesday as demand for the corporate sector to pay off any year-end overseas obligations begins to build. The local currency fell to 12,225 per U.S. dollar, its weakest level since September 1998, before regaining some ground to 11,850 at 5:24 p.m. in Jakarta on speculation the central bank had intervened to halt its decline, Bloomberg reported. Bank Indonesia (BI) governor Boediono said the central bank would maintain the rupiah at a "realistic level".

Viet Nam News, 19 November 2008

Garment biz faces tougher competition

HA NOI : Viet Nam's garment and textile will face new challenges as the world is witnessing a shift of the industry into Asian countries, a seminar heard yesterday. In an attempt to deal with these challenges, Vietnamese garment and textile companies had to be able to grasp the movements to keep pace with common trends, said Le Quoc An chairman of the Viet Nam Textile and Garment Group (Vinatex) at the meeting. The seminar was held to evaluate impacts on the garment and textile industry two years after the country's accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Business Standard, 20 November 2008

Reliance Capital AMC gets nod to operate in Malaysia

Anil Ambani-promoted Reliance Capital Asset Management Company (AMC) has been given approval to commence operations in Malaysia, a top official of the Securities Commission, Malaysia, said today. "The permission to Reliance Capital Asset Management Company for beginning operations in Malaysia was granted by the authorities two days ago" Securities Commission of Malaysia Chairperson Zarinah Anwar said at the India-Malaysia Capital Market Forum held here. The day-long forum held in Mumbai is being jointly organised by the SEBI and Securities Commission of Malaysia.

Business Standard, 20 November 2008

Indonesia approves Nalco's Rs 17,000 cr FDI for smelter

India's second largest aluminium producer Nalco has received a green signal from the Indonesian government for setting up a Rs 17,000 cr aluminium smelter and captive power project in the count. "The Indonesian government cleared our FDI proposal in September," the company's Director, Finance, B L Bagra told. Navratna PSU Nalco had entered into a memorandum of understanding with the government of Indonesia in January this year for setting up a five lakh tonne aluminium smelter and 1,250 Mw captive power plant.

Business Standard, 20 November 2008

Malaysia, India to develop mutual capital mkt investment

Terming India an important market player in the region, Malaysia has expressed keen interest to strengthen financial ties with the country as the momentum of global business and growth shifts to Asia. A high-profile 40 member delegation left for Mumbai today to attend the first ever India-Malaysia Capital Market Forum, set up to develop capital market investment opportunities and partnerships between India and Malaysia. The forum, to begin tomorrow, has been organised by India's SEBI and Malaysia's Securities Commission (SC).

The Times of India, 20 November 2008

Grenade attack kills 1, wounds 23 at Thai PM's office

BANGKOK, Thailand: A grenade attack on anti-government protesters occupying the Thai prime minister's office killed one person and wounded at least 23 early Thursday, an army official and protesters said. Grenade attack in Bangkok. There have been several bomb attacks against the anti-government movement but Thursday's blast was the first deadly attack at the Government House compound, which the protesters have occupied for three months.

The Economic Times, 20 November 2008

GM plans 2-mth shutdown at Thai plant, job cuts

BANGKOK: The Thai unit of troubled US carmaker General Motors said on Thursday it would shut down its Rayong plant for 2 months from mid-December due to falling demand caused by the global economic slowdown. GM Thailand also planned to cut 258 jobs at the plant, which produced about 100,000 vehicles last year, director of public relations Chartchai Suwanasevok said.

The Financial Express, 21 November 2008

Now, Singapore joins the recession club

Singapore's economy is seen growing around 2.5 per cent this year and could shrink next year, as financial services and its exports are expected to be hit by a weaker global economy, the government said on Friday. Singapore's gross domestic product shrank a worse-than-forecast 6.8 per cent in the third quarter on a seasonally adjusted annualised basis, final data showed, confirming the country entered into a recession.

The Economic Times, 21 November 2008

Singapore announces \$1.5 bn in loan support

SINGAPORE: Singapore announced a 1.5-billion US dollar package on Friday to help businesses gain access to credit amid a recession in the city-state and a global financial crisis.

The Jakarta Post, 21 November 2008

ICW unveils unrecorded taxes of Rp 21.3t from subsidized fuel sales

Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW) on Thursday unveiled findings of alleged state losses of Rp 21.32 trillion (US\$1.7 billion) from unrecorded tax revenue from sales of subsidized fuels by state oil and gas company Pertamina. Firdaus Ilyas, coordinator of the ICW's data and analysis center, said the recorded tax revenue from sales of subsidized fuels between 2006 and 2007 was far lower than it should have been. Firdaus said audits from the Supreme Audit Agency (BPK) for the 2006-2007 fiscal year found total tax revenue from subsidized fuel sales in that period was only Rp 107.25 billion, while, according to the ICW, total revenue should have been Rp 21.43 trillion.

The Manila Times, 21 November 2008

Reenacted budget may push economy into recession

The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) on Thursday warned of a recession next year if Congress fails to pass the P1.4-trillion proposed 2009 budget. Director General Ralph Recto, also Socioeconomic Planning secretary, told reporters that a "recession is possible" next year in a scenario that includes a reenacted budget.

The Vietnam News, 22 November 2008

PM to attend 5th Indochina development meet in Laos

HA NOI: Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung will attend the 5th Cambodia-Laos-Viet Nam Development Triangle Summit in Vientiane next Wednesday. The Prime Ministers of the three Indochina countries and senior advisors will use the summit to focus on deepening economic development in the triangle.

The Economic Times, 22 November 2008

Japan, ASEAN to mull economic monitoring body: Report

TOKYO: The ASEAN and three East Asian countries including Japan will consider establishing a new body to monitor the financial system and economic policies in the region, a media report said on Saturday. Leaders of the ASEAN countries, Japan, China and South Korea are expected to launch discussions on the possible new body when they meet in Thailand in December, the report said.

The Times of India, 22 November 2008

Malaysia's top Islamic body bans yoga for Muslims

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's top Islamic body on Saturday banned Muslims from practicing yoga, saying the Indian physical exercise contains elements of Hinduism and could corrupt Muslims. The National Fatwa Council, which has the authority to rule on how Muslims must conduct their faith, issued a fatwa, or edict, saying yoga involves not just physical exercise but also includes Hindu spiritual elements, chanting and worship.

The Jakarta Post, 22 November 2008

Century Bank executives banned from going overseas

The immigration office, with the request from the Finance Ministry, has banned eight executives of the financially troubled Century Bank from traveling overseas. "The Finance Ministry sent its request last night. It did not mention for what purposes," Director for Immigration Investigation R

Muchtor said as quoted by tempointeraktif.com. The eight executives are: President Commissioner Sulaiman A.B., Commissioner Poerwanto Kamajadi, Commissioner Rusli Prakarsa, President Director Hermanus Hasan Muslim, Vice President Director Hamidy, Marketing Director Lila K. Gondokusumo, Compliance Director Edward M. Situmorang, dan Shareholder Robert Tantular.

The Economic Times, 22 November 2008

Singapore second largest FDI source

NEW DELHI: Singapore has become the second largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) into India, surpassing the US and the UK. Tax-haven Mauritius continues to lead the charts. Until July this year, the US was the second largest source followed by the UK. FDI from Singapore soared by \$1 billion in July and August this year whereas long-term investment flow from the US and the UK was \$300 million and \$50 million, respectively.

The Jakarta Post, 23 November 2008

Opponent accuses Philippine leader of impropriety

A former key ally of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo accused her Sunday of committing "a major impropriety" for allegedly socializing with officials from a Chinese company that was seeking a contract with her government. The House of Representatives is currently considering an impeachment complaint against Arroyo that maintains she approved the granting of a \$300 million national broadband contract to China's ZTE Corp. in 2007 despite knowledge that the deal was tainted with bribery allegations.

Bangkok Post, 23 November 2008

Tight security for House-Senate meet on Monday

The committee for monitoring the national situation resolved that the joint meeting between MPs and senators on Monday will start at 9.30am Monday, according to government spokesman Nattawut Saikua. He said if the situation is not normal during the meeting, House speaker Chai Chidchob will decide whether it would be adjourned. The meeting will not cover constitutional amendments, he added.

The Manila Times, 23 November 2008

Myanmar, 'bats' for 'roadmap' to democracy

YANGON: The head of Myanmar's military junta made a rare call Saturday for all citizens to back a controversial "road map" to democracy. Writing in an article on the front page of the state-run New Light of Myanmar newspaper Senior General Than Shwe said it was every citizen's national duty to support the political process.

The times of India, 24 November 2008

Thai PM says he will not quit, expects no coup

LIMA: Thai Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat said on Sunday in Peru he has no intention of resigning in the face of major protests demanding his ouster "We came in through democratic elections, so I am not thinking of resigning at all," he said in an interview in Lima after a Pacific Rim economic summit. "I will exercise restraint to the utmost. We have to talk and try for reconciliation," said Somchai, who added that he saw no need to use stronger measures to quell the protests.

The Times of India, 24 November 2008

Thai parliament session postponed amid protests: Speaker

BANGKOK: A joint parliament session of elected MPs and senators was postponed Monday after thousands of anti-government demonstrators surrounded the building, house speaker Chai Chidchob said. Parliament had been due to convene at 9:30am (0230 GMT), but early Monday thousands of supporters of the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) protest movement blocked all the entrances to the building, witnesses said.

The Jakarta Post, 24 November 2008

Malaysian fishermen visit Aceh

Ten members of a Malaysian fishermen organization arrived Monday in Aceh for a three-day visit to build fish trade cooperation with local fishermen, Tempointeraktif.com reported. Secretary General of Aceh Marine Customary Council, Adli Abdullah said the visit was also to strengthen ties between the two fishermen communities, who have been having relationship throughout the history.

Bangkok Post, 24 November 2008

Thailand almost ready to sign Asean-S. Korea pact

Thailand is ready to sign the Asean-South Korea free trade agreement at the Asean Summit in Chiang Mai next month if the plan wins endorsement from Parliament today. According to Noppadon Sarawasi, deputy director-general of the Trade Negotiations Department, the agreement is likely to be the only free trade deal Thailand could achieve this year.

The New Straits Times, 24 November 2008

Malaysian firm starts building Vietnam's biggest steel plant

HANOI: Malaysia's Lion Industries and Vietnamese shipbuilder Vinashin have started building the country's biggest steel plant, set to cost USD9.8 billion, state-run Vinashin said Monday. The complex will be located on 1,650 hectares in central Ninh Thuan province, about 300km northeast of the business capital Ho Chi Minh City, Vinashin said in a statement. Once operational, in 2011, the complex is set to produce 4.5 million tonnes of steel a year. At full capacity, from 2025, it is scheduled to produce 14.4 million tonnes, the statement said.

The Times of India, 25 November 2008

Vietnam's first privately-owned airline launched

HANOI, Vietnam: Vietnam's first privately-owned airline began flights on Tuesday, aiming to tap growing demand for air travel in the fast-growing Southeast Asian nation. Indochina Airlines, owned by a group of Vietnamese businessmen, is operating four daily flights between the southern commercial center of Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, said company spokeswoman Nguyen Thi Thanh Quyen.

The Jakarta Post, 25 November 2008

Editorial: Tough for workers, employers

It is certainly a very difficult time for companies in Indonesia now and will continue to be so next year, as our economy begins to feel the devastating impact of the financial crisis and recession in the world's economic powerhouses -- the United States, Europe and Japan. Worse still, the consensus forecast among analysts is that the situation will get worse before it gradually gets better, probably late in 2010. In fact, our businesses are already feeling the pinch, as evidenced by the massive worker layoffs made or planned by companies already hit by the global economic downturn.

Bangkok Post, 25 November 2008

Parliament paralysed

Protests on Monday forced parliament to cancel its planned joint session, and left anarchy on the streets from Government House all the way to the old Don Mueang airport. The People's Alliance for Democracy declared victory, but failed to gain its objective. Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat resolved to stay in office, and the military showed no sign it intended to seize power.

The Manila Times, 25 November 2008

Govt sees economy slowing down in Q3s

The Philippine economy is likely to slow in the third quarter owing to weak exports and rising food and fuel prices, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) said Monday. Dennis Arroyo, director of the authority's National Planning and Policy Staff, told reporters that the agency projected that the economy, as measured by gross domestic product (GDP), would expand at a slower pace of between 3.8 percent and 4.6 percent. GDP is the total value of final goods and services produced in a country in a year

Indian Express, 26 November 2008

Indian Navy sank our vessel, says Thai fishing firm

New Delhi: A Thailand-based fishing company has claimed that the pirate 'mother ship' the Indian Navy destroyed in the Gulf of Aden last week was one of its deep sea fishing trawlers and was being hijacked by pirates when it was blown up by INS Tabar. The Navy was flooded with queries after Wicharn Sirichaikawat, manager of Bangkok-based Sirichai Fisheries, told local reporters that the warship hit the company's Ekawat Nava 5 vessel which was being chased and attacked by pirates. He said a crew member was dead and 14 were still missing.

Indian Express, 26 November 2008

Bangkok airport under siege, thousands stranded

Bangkok: Thai protesters on Wednesday tightened their hold on Bangkok airport, where two people were wounded in a blast and thousands of travellers left stranded by demonstrators vowing to topple the government. Two grenade attacks elsewhere in the capital deepened the sense of lawlessness after demonstrators stormed the airport last night, dramatically stepping up their campaign against Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat.

Business Standard, 26 November 2008

Tata Chemicals S\$ 25 mn in JOil Singapore

Tata Chemicals, the Tata group's soda ash and fertilizer maker, has entered into definitive agreements for investing S\$ 25 mn in JOil (Singapore) - a jatropha seeding company based in Singapore, which has been set up by the Temasek Life Science Laboratory Ltd. Jatropha is considered an ideal starting material for biodiesel production for countries like India as it can be grown in wastelands.

The Economic Times, 26 November 2008

Singapore's Temasek cancels sale of power company

SINGAPORE: Singapore's state-owned investment company Temasek Holdings Pte Ltd said it canceled an auction of electricity generator PowerSeraya Ltd because of a lack of investor interest. "We launched the tender process early last month based on indications of interest from investors," Temasek's investment director Gwendel Tung said in a statement late Tuesday. "In light of the market conditions, we have decided not to proceed further."

Indian Express, 27 November 2008

Thai airport closure is a huge blow for tourism: experts

Bangkok: The political strife that shut down Thailand's main international airport could devastate the kingdom's massive tourism industry, which is already battered by global financial woes, experts say. Media around the world carried the footage on Wednesday of glum tourists trying to sleep on baggage carousels while protesters massed outside - images likely to be hugely damaging to a country marketed overseas as the land of smiles.

Business Standard, 27 November 2008

Malaysia's AirAsia X unveils 99-pound fare to London

Malaysian budget carrier AirAsia X said it will fly to London from next March with fares starting at \$150, and that the cost could halve if the service is popular. AirAsia X will fly five times a week between the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur and Stansted Airport on the outskirts of London, it said yesterday. Tony Fernandes, founder of the long-haul airline's affiliate AirAsia, said he hoped to attract Europeans who would explore the region through AirAsia's extensive route network in Southeast Asia.

Business Standard, 27 November 2008

Singapore Tourism Board targets tier-II cities to fuel growth

Singapore Tourism Board (STB) plans to target tier-II cities, including Jaipur, Chandigarh and Jalandhar, for bolstering the growth of tourist arrivals in the city-state. STB Area Director Northern and eastern India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal Kenneth Lim said that the board, besides pitching aggressively in primary markets like Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi, Pune and Bangalore is planning to

comb the market potential of tier-II cities like Jaipur, Chandigarh, Mohali, Jalandhar and Lucknow

The Times of India, 27 November 2008

Thailand shuts down second airport

BANGKOK, Thailand: Thai authorities shut down Bangkok's second airport Thursday after it was overrun by anti-government protesters, completely cutting off the capital from air traffic as the prime minister rejected their demands to resign, deepening the country's crisis. Thailand's powerful army commander, who has remained neutral in the conflict, stepped into the fray Wednesday, urging Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat to step down

The Times of India, 27 November 2008

Philippine president survives 4th impeachment bid

MANILA, Philippines: President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's dominant allies in the Philippine Congress on Wednesday dismissed the fourth impeachment complaint filed against her in as many years. Opposition leaders vowed to try to impeach her again in 2009, a year before her term ends, and some warned of other options, including a nonviolent "people power" revolt, to remove her from office.

Hindustan Times, 27 November 2008

Thai PM rejects army chief's call to quit, mulls protest measures

Thai Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat rejected his army chief's call on Wednesday to quit in the face of anti-government protests which threaten to spiral out of control across the country. Speaking on national television, Somchai said his government was democratically elected and would continue to work for the "good of the country", despite claims by the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) it is the puppet of ousted leader Thaksin Shinawatra.

The Times of India, 28 November 2008

Bangkok puts airports under emergency

BANGKOK: Thai Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat declared on Thursday a state of emergency at two Bangkok airports besieged by anti-government protesters, as rumors of a coup swirled round the capital. In an address to the nation, Somchai said police and some military units would try to end the blockades by the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) at the Suvarnabhumi and Don Muang airports which he said was causing massive damage to the economy.

The Times of India, 28 November 2008

Thailand asks airlines to use naval base

BANGKOK: Thai aviation authorities on Thursday gave airlines the green light to use a naval base in the east of the country after protesters blocked off both of Bangkok's airports. Several planes had already landed at the U-Tapao airbase following the seizure by demonstrators of Don Mueang domestic airport on Thursday and the main Suvarnabhumi Airport on Tuesday night.

The Manila Times, 28 November 2008

Supreme Court orders transfer of transmission line

MASSIVE blackouts threaten to pull the plug on Christmas festivities across Metro Manila after the Supreme Court ordered the removal of a power transmission facility in a posh village in Makati. Carlito Claudio, National Transmission Corp. (TransCo) vice president for operations, said the company would have to shut down the 230-kilovolt Sucat-Araneta-Balintawak transmission line owing to the High Tribunal's decision favoring residents of Dasmarinas Village.

The Straits Times, 28 November 2008

\$422m loan for Indon roads

MANILA: THE Asian Development Bank said on Friday it will lend 280 million dollars (\$422.9 million) to Indonesia to build roads, bridges and other critical infrastructure. The loan will finance the second segment of an infrastructure programme launched by Jakarta in 2006. The government has estimated it would need 65 billion dollars in new infrastructure investments between 2005 and

2009, a bank statement said. Japan is expected to co-finance the segment. The first section was supported by a 400 million dollar ADB loan plus 100 million dollars from Tokyo, the ADB added.

The Jakarta Post, 29 November 2008

Govt to renegotiate Merpati-Xi'an deal

The government will send a team to China to renegotiate the terms and conditions of a US\$200 million contract between state airline PT Merpati Nusantara Airline and China's Xi'an Aircraft Industry, amid Merpati's current financial difficulties. State Minister for State Enterprises Sofyan A. Djalil said Friday Indonesia and China had been in touch on this matter and that the team would be leaving for China soon. "We have to find a solution otherwise China's lawyers will hit us with lawsuits," Sofyan said.

The Jakarta Post, 29 November 2008

Pertamina moves to acquire Verenex's Libya oil field

PT Pertamina is moving ahead with an expansion plan, with the state oil and gas company in talks with Verenex Energy Inc. to buy the Canada-based firm's stakes in an oil field in the Ghadames Basin, Libya. The field, known as Area 47, is operated by Verenex and Indonesia's largest publicly listed oil company, PT Medco Energi, with each holding 50 percent of the interest. "Verenex may pull out from the block. As the drilling has been done, we think why not to enter into this block," said Pertamina's upstream director Karen Agustiawan Friday.

The Manila Times, 29 November 2008

Atlas unit, Chinese mining firm to build plant

ATLAS Consolidated Mining and Development Corp. announced on Friday that its subsidiary has signed a deal with a Chinese mining firm to develop a demonstration nickel-cobalt leaching plant within the joint venture nickel laterite deposit in Ipilan, Palawan. In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Atlas said the memorandum of understanding between Berong Nickel Corp. (BNC) and Jiangxi Rare Earth and Rare Metals Tungsten Group Co. Ltd. (JXTC) would allow its 25.2-percent owned unit to become a mid-tier, vertically integrated nickel producer.

The Times of India, 30 November 2008

Malaysia to assist Indian investigators in Mumbai terror probe

KUALA LUMPUR: Concerned over reports that some terrorists involved in audacious terror attacks in Mumbai had used Malaysian addresses to rent apartments in the city, Malaysia's police chief said his office will assist their Indian counterparts in investigating the matter. Inspector General of Police Musa Hassan said that the Indian police had not yet provided details on the gunmen identity and the addresses, Star online newspaper said here.

The Times of India, 30 November 2008

100,000 stranded in Thailand after airports shut

THAILAND: The vacation is over for tens of thousands of tourists in Thailand. But they can't go home. The Hotel California-like drama began on Tuesday when anti-government protesters shut the country's primary international airport. The following day they moved in on the capital's domestic airport, grounding all commercial flights in and out of the city. About 100,000 people have been stranded by the closures, dealing a severe blow to the country's reputation as a safe and reliable vacation destination. Officials project the tourism industry's losses from now until the end of the year will balloon to about 150 billion baht (\$4.2 billion), equal to 1.5% of gross domestic product.

International Herald Tribune, 30 November 2008

Stranded planes begin to leave Thai airport, but protesters remain

BANGKOK: Thousands of protesters continued to occupy Bangkok's two airports Monday, although the demonstrators agreed to allow pilots to fly away 90 aircraft that had been stranded at Thailand's main international gateway. After prolonged negotiations between protest leaders and the Thai airport authorities, some 18 aircraft had been flown out of Suvarnabhumi airport by Monday morning. There had been worries that the planes might be vandalized in the airport, which has been

occupied by protesters since last Tuesday night.