

Business Standard, 1 October 2007

### **Indo-Asean FTA talks may slip on palm oil**

Negotiations on the proposed Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and the 10-member Asean are stuck over tariff cuts on palm oil. In addition, Asean countries like the Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia have not submitted the timeline for tariff cuts on items on the "highly sensitive list" of products. A resolution to these issues could come during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Singapore for the 13th Asean summit in November, when observers expect an announcement on the FTA...

The Times of India, 1 October 2007

### **Myanmar strife: Europe puts moral onus on India**

Forty-one days after the protests began in Myanmar and blood once more was spilt on its streets, the talk in European capitals is all about bringing pressure to bear on India to "do something". From the UK PM downwards, there are ever-louder calls for New Delhi to speak out and suffer the financial pain of losing the trust of Myanmar's military junta. New Delhi, it's argued, has a special responsibility as the world's largest democracy, to export its values to its eastern neighbour. Europe believes, with some justification, that forcefully-expressed Indian disapproval would be a powerful antidote to the junta's rising repressiveness because it sells guns, gives loans and gladly does deals with Myanmar's generals...

Business Standard, 1 October 2007

### **Philippines president to visit India**

Philippines President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will be making her first state visit to India on October 4 and 5 to negotiate the purchase of affordable quality medicines. Arroyo will be bringing with her senior Cabinet ministers and a trade delegation to bolster India-Philippines trade and investments. The Philippines has identified India as a major source of affordable quality medicines, in line with Arroyo's programme to make quality medicines accessible and affordable to all Filipinos...

The Jakarta Post, 1 October 2007

### **UN envoy meets Suu Kyi, but not junta leader as troops lock down Yangon**

YANGON (AP): A U.N. envoy held back-to-back meetings Sunday with detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and the Myanmar junta in his bid to defuse the political crisis that has engulfed the country. But Ibrahim Gambari, the U.N.'s special envoy to Myanmar, failed to see either the junta leader, Senior Gen. Than Shwe, or his deputy early Sunday, and was returning late Sunday to the junta's headquarters for a possible third meeting. Gambari "looks forward to meeting ... Than Shwe," before he leaves the region, a U.N. statement said...

Bernama, 1 October 2007

### **ASEAN Fully Supports UN Myanmar Mission: Singapore PM**

SINGAPORE, Oct 1 (Bernama) -- Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has written to Myanmar top leader Than Shwe to express ASEAN (The Association of Southeast Asian Nations) leaders' firmly support to the mission by United Nations envoy Ibrahim Gambari, China's Xinhua news agency reported Monday. In a letter to Chairman of the Myanmar State Peace and Development Council Senior-General Than Shwe released by the Foreign Ministry on Monday, Lee said, "I would like to emphasise the importance which the ASEAN countries, and indeed the whole international community, attach to Gambari's mission"...

Bangkok Post, 1 October 2007

### **Bomb explodes in Bangkok**

A bomb blew up while being disarmed next to the Army Survey Department just off Rajdamnoen Avenue Sunday night, injuring the two ordnance disposal officers at the scene. No one claimed responsibility for the bomb which exploded the night before Gen Anupong Paochinda was set to replace army chief and coup leader Sonthi Boonyaratkalin as commander of the army. The explosive was in a black cardboard box placed at a phone booth in front of a small soi between the Army

headquarters and the Army's Survey Department...

The Times of India, 2 October 2007

### **India asks Myanmar to expedite political reform process**

NEW YORK: India has conveyed to Myanmar its concern over the current situation there and hoped that the "process of national reconciliation and political reform" initiated by its government would be taken forward expeditiously. External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee met his Myanmar counterpart U Nyan Win here on Monday and suggested that the Myanmar government should consider undertaking an inquiry into recent incidents and the use of force on pro-democracy protesters in that country...

Business Standard, 2 October 2007

### **Bharat Forge plans facility in SE Asia**

Bharat Forge, the country's largest auto component maker with manufacturing facilities in five countries, plans to expand its footprint in southeast Asia. Executive Director Amit B Kalyani told Business Standard that the plans to this effect were at the drawing board. The Bharat Forge board, however, has not yet decided on whether it would take over an existing company in the region or set up a greenfield unit. Bharat Forge, the world's second largest auto component maker after the German giant Thyssenkrupp, has manufacturing operations across ten locations and six countries - three in India, three in Germany and one each in Sweden, the UK, the US and China...

The Jakarta Post, 2 October 2007

### **Myanmar violence has ASEAN worried**

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is drifting toward the view that the military crackdown in Myanmar is threatening security within the entire region. In a letter dated Sept. 29 to Myanmar's junta leader Gen. Than Shwe, Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loon, who currently chairs ASEAN, wrote that all of the grouping's leaders were "most disturbed" by reports of the violence authorities in Myanmar had deployed against protesters...

The Manila Times, 2 October 2007

### **General: Philippine army lacks strength to defeat communists**

A TOP Philippine general conceded Monday the military lacked the manpower and equipment needed to defeat the nation's communist insurgents. Philippine troops have been battling Muslim militants, draining the military of resources vital to put down the long-running and separate communist insurgency, Major General Jogy Leo Fojas said in a report published in the broadsheet The Philippine Star. The newspaper quoted the general as saying he doubted whether the military could "wipe out communist insurgents" by 2010...

Bangkok Post, 2 October 2007

### **Sonthi resigns as CNS chairman**

Gen Sonthi Boonyaratkalin's resignation as chairman of the Council for National Security (CNS) is the final step in clearing the way for the former army chief to take up the cabinet post of deputy prime minister in charge of security, a source close to him said yesterday. Gen Sonthi's announcement came as problems within the government led by Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont intensified with two more cabinet ministers called it quits as the premier decided on a cabinet reshuffle. The latest departures brought the total of cabinet ministers who have stepped down in less than two weeks to five...

The Hindu, 3 October 2007

### **India asks Myanmar to consider a probe into crackdown**

New York, Oct. 3 (PTI): Amid a global outrage over a violent crackdown on pro-democracy protests in Myanmar, India told its military regime to consider launching a probe and said any sanctions from the UN Security Council should only be as a "last resort". External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee conveyed India's concern over the situation to his Myanmar counterpart U Nyan Win during a meeting here in the first level contact between the two neighbouring countries since the

crisis broke out in Myanmar. The meeting took place on Monday on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly summit...

The Financial Express, 3 October 2007

### **SBI, ICICI Bank in Singapore**

Singapore has agreed to allow SBI and ICICI Bank to launch full banking operations in Southeast Asian countries under the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement with India. "Two of our banks (SBI and ICICI) and nine from Singapore will be granted a qualified full banking (QFB) licence by the two countries," a senior commerce ministry official said...

The Jakarta Post, 3 October 2007

### **Massive quake rattles Sumatra**

A powerful undersea earthquake rocked Sumatra on Tuesday, prompting authorities to issue a brief tsunami alert. There were no immediate reports of injuries or damage in the earthquake. The temblor, which struck at 10:43 a.m. and measured 6.4 on the Richter scale, caused panic in the region, which was hit by a deadly quake last month and has experienced a string of strong aftershocks...

The Jakarta Post, 3 October 2007

### **Political maneuvering begins for '09 election**

The 2009 presidential election is still two years away but candidate hopefuls are already making the rounds trying to drum up political support. After departing Jakarta governor and presidential hopeful Sutiyoso paid a visit to the South Jakarta residence of Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) chairwoman and former president Megawati Soekarnoputri on Monday, it was the turn of former president Abdurrahman "Gus Dur" Wahid on Tuesday...

The Manila Times, 3 October 2007

### **Arroyo cancels broadband deal**

President Gloria Arroyo told China's president she will "stop" the controversial National Broadband Network deal awarded to ZTE Corp. of China, according to a report by the TV network GMA-7. President Hu Jintao, whom Mrs. Arroyo met Tuesday in Shanghai, "understood and accepted the decision of the Chief Executive," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye was quoted as saying by the TV network, which posted the story on its website late Tuesday...

The Manila Times, 3 October 2007

### **No MILF accord after meeting**

ZAMBOANGA CITY: Government peace negotiators and Muslim rebels again failed to arrive at an agreement that would help end the more than three-decade fighting in Mindanao. The latest talks were brokered by Malaysia and held in Kuala Lumpur on September 25 and 26. Malaysia is an influential member of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC)...

Bangkok Post, 3 October 2007

### **What next for the long-suffering people?**

Now that the military junta in Burma has brutally cracked down on the protesters in the streets of Rangoon and Mandalay, beating up monks and hauling them off in horrific scenes that have shocked the world, the big question is: What next for this country's long suffering people? Can the army, which has ruled the country for 45 years, force all this popular anger back into the bottle? What will they do this time to keep the cork in place? The army managed to do just this in 1988 after killing at least 3,000 people. But that was then. Today might be different for several reasons...

The Jakarta Post, 3 October 2007

### **Time for five-party talks on Myanmar**

The Myanmar junta's announcement of a manifold increase in oil and gas prices sparked a popular protest in Yangon in August. Since then, the protest has emerged as the biggest mass-movement in the last two decades, encompassing almost all of southern and central Myanmar and representing every spectrum of society. The ongoing humanitarian crisis in Myanmar has emerged as

a litmus test for the credibility of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a regional community. Today Myanmar stands on the brink of economic disaster, mass-starvation and political genocide, and is a possible security threat to neighboring countries...

The Jakarta Post, 4 October 2007

### **Japan may cut aid to Myanmar; Cambodia calls for regional role**

TOKYO (AP): Japan said Wednesday it was considering cutting aid to Myanmar, while Cambodia's prime minister urged Myanmar's neighbors to work as a group to help find a democratic solution to the country's political crisis. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen called for the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations to play a role resolving the tensions in Myanmar and urged the junta to refrain from further violence. Hun Sen said the involvement of Myanmar's Buddhist monks in recent pro-democracy protests showed problems had reached a new level of seriousness...

The Hindu, 4 October 2007

### **Tension grips a quiet Myanmar**

SINGAPORE: Tension-filled calm reigned across Myanmar on Wednesday, with the ruling junta making no comment on United Nations Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari's just-concluded mission to begin "a peaceful transition to democracy". Western diplomats in Yangon on Wednesday spoke about the unaccounted disappearances of Buddhist monks and a creeping climate of fear among the other civilians. Some monasteries were said to wear a deserted look now. While this raised suspicions about the fate of the monks, a few other places remained barricaded by security forces. Monks were in the vanguard of the recent waves of anti-junta protest in Yangon and many other places across Myanmar...

Bernama, 4 October 2007

### **Good China-Asean Ties To Facilitate Integration Of East Asia**

SINGAPORE, Oct 4 (Bernama) -- Good relationship between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) will facilitate the integration of East Asia and benefit the rest of the world, said a Singapore scholar said. China-ASEAN relations, one of the highlights of China's foreign relations with neighboring countries, have also become the most vibrant and fruitful partnership between ASEAN and the dialogue partners, said Zhao Hong, visiting research fellow of the East Asian Institute (EAI), National University of Singapore (NUS)...

The New Straits Times, 4 October 2007

### **Singapore, UK in landmark open skies pact**

Singapore and Britain have concluded a landmark agreement allowing their airlines freewheeling access to each other's markets, the city-state's Transport Ministry said yesterday. The "Open Skies Agreement", which removes all restrictions on air services operated by the airlines of both countries, was signed on Tuesday, nearly 20 years after Singapore asked Britain for such a pact, the ministry said in a statement. Under the accord, flag-carrier Singapore Airlines (SIA) can "operate as many services as the Singapore-UK market could support" from the end of March next year, the statement said...

Indo-Burma News, 4 October 2007

### **Myanmar crisis hits trade with NE**

The ongoing crisis in Myanmar has made a huge impact on the bilateral trade with North East India and this year the volume of trade is likely to drop to a large extent. This region has close trade links with Western Myanmar through Moreh point, but the traders of Myanmar are not willing to pursue export and import in the wake of political turmoil in the country. According to available information, the day-to-day trade between North East and Myanmar has dropped nearly 20 per cent during the last 15 days following heavy movement of military personnel in Western Myanmar. The traders of Myanmar are now apprehensive about involvement with the North East traders fearing harassment from their military personnel...

The Hindu, 5 October 2007

### **India seeks release of Suu Kyi**

For the first time in many years, India has joined the West in seeking release of the pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi but insisted that the tone of a resolution on Myanmar by a United Nations body should have been less minatory. India in the past had sought release of Ms. Suu Kyi during private engagements with the authorities in Myanmar, but this is probably the first time since reversing its policy towards Myanmar in 1992 that it has publicly said Ms. Suu Kyi's release would be "helpful" in furthering democratisation of Myanmar and that she can "contribute" to Myanmar's emergence as a democratic country...

The Financial Express, 5 October 2007

### **Philippines invites Indian pharma cos**

Bullish on Indian economy in the 21st century, President of Socialist Republic of Philippines Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on Thursday invited Indian pharma companies to set up manufacturing base in Philippines to tap markets in North East Asia and Asia Pacific. "We encourage Indian pharma companies to set up production base in Philippines not only for the domestic market but also as a base to export to North East Asia, Australia and New Zealand," she said during a CII Interactive Session in Mumbai...

The Jakarta Post, 5 October 2007

### **RI, Malaysia relationship seen surviving the odd bump**

Despite the incidents that have caused tensions between Indonesia and Malaysia, diplomats say harmony reigns in the relationship between both countries. The director for East Asia and the Pacific from Indonesia's Foreign Affairs Ministry, Yuri Thamrin, said the two countries had experienced ups and downs for the last 50 years. "Indonesia's relationship with Malaysia is basically stable, but problems that lead to tensions do pop up from time to time," he said Thursday in a discussion on creating a harmonious relationship between the two countries...

Bernama, 5 October 2007

### **PM's Visit To UN A Big Success, Says Malaysian Envoy**

Malaysian ambassador to the United Nations, Datuk Hamidon Ali, has described the recent visit of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to the United Nations General Assembly in New York as a "big success". Hamidon said the visit had ended on a "happy note". "Our Prime Minister met with key world leaders in New York. We accomplished the goals we had set for this year's General Assembly," he told Bernama in an interview at the Malaysian permanent mission in New York...

Bangkok Post, 5 October 2007

### **Asean FMs may head to Rangoon**

Thailand and Singapore have agreed on the idea of sending foreign ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) to Rangoon to negotiate with the Burmese junta to end the pro-democracy crackdown there. Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont told Czech Republic ambassador Ivan Hotek, who paid a courtesy call at Government House yesterday, that Thailand was closely monitoring the situation in Burma and trusted that negotiations, not the use of force, could restore peace...

The Hindu, 6 October 2007

### **Manila keen on security ties**

India and the Philippines on Friday signed a number of agreements to promote economic and security cooperation, including information sharing between their law enforcing agencies to combat terrorism. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, accompanied by seven Cabinet Ministers and a 41-member business team, is here on a three-day visit. The first visit to India by a Philippines President in a decade is intended to improve ties with New Delhi. Ms. Arroyo held talks with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and agreed to set up a Joint Commission on bilateral cooperation, co-chaired by the Foreign Ministers. Meeting twice a year, it will aim at developing trade, economic, science and technology and other fields of bilateral cooperation...

Vietnam News, 6 October 2007

### **Cambodia, Laos, Viet Nam battle poverty with trilateral tourism plan**

The tourism ministers of Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam issued the Ministerial Declaration on Trilateral Tourism Co-operation after their first meeting to set up the "Three Countries - One Destination" plan yesterday. The ministerial declaration aims to ensure the sustainability of tourism development and to alleviate poverty in the three countries. The declaration was signed by the Minister of Tourism of Cambodia Thong Khon, the Chairman of Laos. National Tourism Administration Somphong Mongkhonvilay and the Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Viet Nam Hoang Tuan Anh...

Vietnam News, 6 October 2007

### **Ha Noi hosts ACMECS regional business forum**

As many as 400 businesses from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam will gather at a forum in the capital city on October 26, said the Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry. At the first ever Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya Mekong Economic Co-operation Strategy (ACMECS) Business Forum, participants will discuss initiatives aimed at facilitating trade, investment and tourism activities as well as strengthening their economic ties. The initiatives will then be submitted to the prime ministers of the ACMECS member countries at a dialogue held between ACMECS leaders and business circles...

Bangkok Post, 6 October 2007

### **Ample incentives in India's Northeast**

Thai companies looking to invest in the subcontinent are being encouraged to look to India's Northeast. Attractive government incentives and nearly \$50 billion in planned road and highway upgrades make this one of the region's most lucrative areas, says an Indian delegation. "What we have done is try to give subsidies in various forms to companies that invest in the region, and they are part of the overall incentives to promote the region," Ashwani Kumar, minister of state for industries for the government of India told Thai investors in Bangkok during a seminar...

The Hindu, 7 October 2007

### **Solution must include military: ASEAN**

SINGAPORE: The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has proposed that Myanmar's military establishment must be "part of the solution" to the current crisis in that country. Myanmar is a member of the 10-nation forum. And, Singapore, in its capacity as the ASEAN Chair, has articulated this position at the United Nations Security Council during its session on the current situation in Myanmar. The ASEAN's proposal acquires importance, in the context of calls by Myanmar's opposition groups and major countries for a power shift in that country from the military rulers to civilian leaders under a democratic framework...

The Times of India, 7 October 2007

### **Typhoon Lekima: Death toll in Vietnam rises to 32**

Floods and landslides triggered by typhoon Lekima, which battered Vietnam's central coast last week, claimed at least 32 lives and left 16 more missing, and a disaster official warned the death toll could rise. Nine bodies were recovered on Saturday in the worst-hit central province of Nghe An, said provincial disaster official Tran Gia Danh...

Channel News Asia, 7 October 2007

### **Myanmar trumpets release of protesters ahead of UN meet**

Myanmar's state press on Sunday trumpeted the release of monks and demonstrators ahead of a UN Security Council meeting to discuss how to handle the military government following its crackdown on street protests. Security Council members -- under pressure to condemn the military rulers after 13 people were killed in its drive to end the escalating pro-democracy rallies -- were to meet on Monday to debate a draft statement on Myanmar...

Indo-Burma News, 7 October 2007

### **Why does India not intervene in Burma?**

India's less than emphatic response to the violent upheaval in neighbouring Myanmar has raised questions over its foreign policy stance in dealing with the repressive junta. In a today's published article in NST Online, Mahendra Ved defends India's non-interventionist stance towards Burma. While agreeing to "work with like-minded countries to make a peaceful outcome possible" in Myanmar, India has refused to be part of any move, even if sponsored by the United Nations, to impose sanctions on the military junta that rules its "close and friendly" eastern neighbour...

Bernama, 7 October 2007

### **Knowledgeable Human Capital Key To M'sia's Continued Progress, Says Abdullah**

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi expressed confidence that Malaysia would continue to achieve greater heights with a pool of knowledgeable human capital acting as the catalyst for the country's growth. "Throughout our 50 years of independence, we have placed emphasis on education of our children. They will be the ones who will continue our efforts to bring greater progress to the country," he said when breaking fast with the people at Masjid Jamek Lahar Kepar here Sunday...

The Manila Times, 8 October 2007

### **Poverty looms as threat to Myanmar junta**

For now the streets of Yangon are quiet after Myanmar's bloody crackdown on protesters, but simmering public discontent over crushing poverty is likely to spark more civil unrest, experts say. The sharp fuel price hike that triggered the first demonstrations in August has hit people hard who were already struggling with soaring food costs, and the future looks grim for many families in one of Asia's poorest countries...

The Times of India, 8 October 2007

### **S Korea, ASEAN reach free trade pact on services**

South Korea and Southeast Asian nations have reached an agreement on services, the foreign and trade ministry said Monday, raising hopes for a comprehensive free trade deal by year's end. Asia's third largest economy and nine of the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have been negotiating to complete free trade talks on services and investment by December 31. The deal on services was agreed to in talks with ASEAN in Laos last week, the ministry said in a statement...

The Indian Express, 8 October 2007

### **'India, China should help bring peace in Myanmar'**

India and China, which have close ties with Yangon, should play their roles in bringing peace and stability to Myanmar, Malaysia has said. Noting that the issue should be tackled through diplomacy, Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar said that Malaysia was not in favour of more economic sanctions against fellow Asean member Myanmar as that would hit the people who were already suffering from deprivation. China and India should play their roles in bringing peace and stability to Myanmar, the Minister said over the weekend...

The Manila Times, 8 October 2007

### **India commits to help develop Philippine livestock industry**

The Department of Agriculture said the Indian government will assist the Philippines in developing its livestock industry. Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said that Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has committed to support the Philippines' need for genetic materials to help the country build its dairy stock. "We need to bring in livestock genetic materials right now. And [the] Indian government is very gratifying that Prime Minister Singh was very definite when he said that [they'll] support the need [for] livestock genetic materials [in] the Philippines," Yap told reporters...

Channel News Asia, 8 October 2007

### **Singapore to put in better bid to host Youth Olympic Games**

Singapore now has a greater understanding of the requirements for the Youth Olympic Games, and

will put in a better bid to host the event. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said this after meeting IOC President Jacques Rogge in Lausanne, Switzerland. Singapore is one of 11 cities bidding to host the Games. Other candidates include Athens, Greece, Moscow, Russia and Malaysia. Mr Rogge met Mr Lee and the two took a stroll to the Olympic Museum. They toured the museum and also held a lunch discussion where Mr Lee learnt more about the Youth Olympic Games...

The Financial Express, 8 October 2007

#### **Thai firms keen to invest in India**

Several Thai firms are interested in investing in north-east states of India after their executives visited several vital industrial plants in the region recently, Thai Commerce Minister Krirkkrai Jirapaet said. Ch Karnchang Pcl has expressed desire to invest in infrastructure projects such as road and dam construction, and hydroelectric plants, said Krirkkrai. The minister further added that the Indian government has a policy to allocate about USD 1.5 billion on these projects as well as granting special privileges to private investors who would undertake the projects...

The Times of India, 9 October 2007

#### **India to train Singapore armed forces**

India will now be a regular host for the training of Singapore's small but high-tech armed forces. The two countries are poised to ink a unique five-year defence cooperation pact to allow the city-state's armed forces to exercise regularly on Indian territory and airspace. The comprehensive agreement, along with a detailed logistical pact, is likely to be signed when Singapore defence minister Teo Chee Hean and permanent secretary (defence) Chiang Chie Foo come visiting over the next few days, say sources...

Business Standard, 9 October 2007

#### **Malaysian palm oil may drop on higher Indian output**

Palm oil futures in Malaysia may fall 4.7 per cent in the next three weeks as above-average rainfall increases oilseed production in India, probably reducing overseas purchases of the commodity, TransGraph Consulting said. Prices may decline as low as 2,450 ringgit (\$723) a metric ton, M Somasekhar, an analyst at TransGraph, said by phone from the southern city of Hyderabad on October 5. "The beginning of the harvesting season in India will lead to some weakness." Reduced imports by India, the biggest palm oil buyer after China, may further boost Malaysian stockpiles, which rose 11 per cent in August to 1.45 million tons, a six-month high...

The Financial Express, 9 October 2007

#### **Food shortfalls loom in Myanmar, warns UN**

High food prices helped drive Myanmar's people onto the streets, and the junta's bloody crackdown has only worsened the threat of hunger and malnutrition, UN aid workers and rights groups say. Food prices spiked after the regime hiked fuel prices in August and, combined with the recent turmoil that has disrupted food distribution, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) has warned that more people will go hungry. "Malnutrition, particularly childhood malnutrition is quite severe," WFP Asia director Tony Banbury said. "More than one third of children in the country are suffering from one form of malnutrition or another..."

The Financial Express, 9 October 2007

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The Jakarta Post, 9 October 2007

#### **RI-Malaysia ties somewhat sensitive, minister warns**

Foreign Minister Hassan Wirayuda warned Monday that the good relationship between Indonesia and Malaysia could be strained by problems including migrant workers, illegal fishing and logging, human trafficking and pollution. But he praised the two countries' leaders, saying they had remained "wise and rational" and had developed direct communications to tone down tensions...

Hindustan Times, 9 October 2007

### **Malaysia: Over 200 Indian workers claim being abused**

More than 200 Indian nationals working in a Malaysian factory have alleged that they were being abused by their employment agent and are desperate to return home after three of their colleagues were brutally beaten up. The 264 Indian workers, employed at a factory in Senai in Johor state, claimed their agent started abusing them when they arrived in Malaysia two years ago...

The Irrawaddy, 9 October 2007

### **Chinese Consulate in Mandalay Attacked**

While the Chinese government has been attacked verbally by the international community, the Chinese consulate in Mandalay was the scene of a hit and run gunshot attack by an unknown motorcyclist on Sunday, according to sources. A local resident said that gunfire was heard early on Sunday morning. Several shots hit the embassy, but nobody was wounded, the resident added. Security around the consulate has been beefed up since the attack and the authorities are currently investigating the incident, according to sources in Mandalay...

Business Standard, 10 October 2007

### **India, Myanmar to sign deal on Kaladan port**

In a significant development, India and Myanmar will be signing a formal agreement on the Kaladan sea port project in just a few weeks, signalling a major coup for India. Sources in the foreign ministry say that despite the political turmoil in Myanmar, India's pragmatic engagement with the government of the day has led to a break in the deadlock over the sea port project. The Sitwee port situated on the Kaladan river in Myanmar will open India's landlocked north-eastern states "Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura, Sikkim, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh" to the international trading routes through the Bay of Bengal...

The Manila Times, 10 October 2007

### **Military clash with MNLF, Abu**

Army troops clashed late Monday with a faction of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Abu Sayyaf in a remote village in Sulu, killing one gunman, the military said Tuesday. The military is verifying whether two Indonesian members of the Jemaah Islamiyah, Dulmatin and Umar Patek were with the group that fought the military. Dulmatin is the suspected brains behind the Bali bombing in October 2002, when more than 200 people, mostly Australian tourists, were killed. The US government has offered \$10-million and \$1-million rewards for information leading to the capture of Dulmatin and Patek, respectively. The Abu Sayyaf is believed to be sheltering the two suspected Indonesian terrorists...

Bangkok Post, 10 October 2007

### **Thai troops to join UN force**

Thailand will despatch 800 troops on a one-year mission to join the African Union and United Nations peacekeeping force in Sudan's western province of Darfur. The move was approved by the cabinet yesterday, assistant government spokesman Chotichai Suwannaporn said. The Thai force will leave on Dec 31. An under-equipped African Union (AU) force of about 7,000 troops from 26 countries is currently patrolling Darfur, an arid region the size of Thailand, but will be replaced later this year by a 26,000-strong joint AU-UN force...

Bangkok Post, 10 October 2007

### **The junta plays a new ball game**

Burma's ongoing crisis already has exhibited significant differences compared to its antecedent from 19 years ago. The roots of the crises from both periods are fundamentally similar. They emanate

now, as then, from the military junta's monopoly of the political space, its oppression of the Burmese people, its misallocation and exploitation of public resources for personal benefits. The outcome from a generation ago was a spontaneous public protest leading to a brief political opening followed by complete closure and relative isolation...

Channel News Asia, 10 October 2007

**First Malaysian astronaut to lift off into space**

Malaysia's first astronaut was to blast off on Wednesday on a space voyage seen as breaking new boundaries for the Asian nation and for space travel by Muslims. Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor was to lift off from the Baikonur cosmodrome at 1322 GMT in a Russian Soyuz rocket headed for the International Space Station (ISS) with Russian cosmonaut Yury Malenchenko and American Peggy Whitson...

Vietnam News, 10 October 2007

**Viet Nam, India leaders meet to affirm future co-operative relations**

President Nguyen Minh Triet met with Indian Minister of Home Affairs Shivraj V Papol yesterday, who was visiting Viet Nam at the invitation of Minister of Public Security Le Hong Anh. Both Triet and Papol affirmed that Viet Nam and India were ready to share what the two nations have and to further boost relations in the future. This determination manifested mutual belief and aspirations to strengthen co-operation between the two countries, they said...

Vietnam News, 10 October 2007

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Business Standard, 11 October 2007

**Barun Roy: A lament for Suu Kyi**

With economics rather than politics driving foreign policy, the Myanmar pro-democracy movement is really on its own. Once again, we are witnessing a cat-and-mouse game in Myanmar between world opinion and its military junta. Once again, the mouse "the junta" is enjoying the way the game is playing out, without an outcome. And once again, we know how much the political will of nations has succumbed to pure economic self-interest...

The Indian Express, 11 October 2007

**Myanmar unrest stalls Dhaka-Yangon deals: Report**

The unrest in Myanmar has stalled several proposed deals between Dhaka and Yangon, upsetting Bangladesh's recent initiatives to explore economic opportunities in the South-East Asian country, a report said on Thursday. At least three bilateral agreements and a number of negotiations on "ground-breaking" deals between Bangladesh and Myanmar have come to a grinding halt due to the recent protests against the military junta in Yangon, the Daily Star reported...

The Jakarta Post, 11 October 2007

**Malaysia to hire maids from South Asia, Laos and Vietnam to fill shortage**

A federation of agencies that supply foreign maids in Malaysia on Wednesday welcomed a government plan to allow recruitment from India, Nepal, Laos and Vietnam to fill a shortage caused by low wages and reports of abuse. "We were waiting" for this decision, said Raja Zulkepley Dahalan, president of the Malaysian Association of Foreign Housemaids Agencies. "Of course we support this"...

The Jakarta Post, 11 October 2007

**House mulls reporting Malaysia to UN Human Rights Commission**

The Indonesian House of Representatives is looking into the possibility of reporting Malaysia to the United Nations Human Rights Commission over a recent spate of violent acts against Indonesian nationals in the neighboring country. "If such cases continue to happen, the House of Representatives will consider to report the cases to the UN Human Rights Commission," House Speaker Agung Laksono told the press at the Parliament Building on Wednesday...

Vietnam News, 11 October 2007

### **Viet Nam, India leaders meet to affirm future co-operative relations**

President Nguyen Minh Triet met with Indian Minister of Home Affairs Shivraj V Papatil yesterday, who was visiting Viet Nam at the invitation of Minister of Public Security Le Hong Anh. Both Triet and Papatil affirmed that Viet Nam and India were ready to share what the two nations have and to further boost relations in the future. This determination manifested mutual belief and aspirations to strengthen co-operation between the two countries, they said

The Irrawaddy, 11 October 2007

### **Singapore and Burma: Such Good Friends**

When protesters dared to show up in Singapore's Istana Park earlier this week to protest Burma's crackdown, authorities promptly arrested them, a reminder that Singapore isn't just skilled at mandatory executions of drug traffickers, running an excellent airport and selling cameras to tourists. It also does a very useful trade keeping Burma's military rulers and their cronies afloat. The five, members of the Singapore Democratic Party, were arrested, police said, for staging an unlawful demonstration. Singapore and Burmese nationals, the police said, have been allowed to protest "in a lawful manner," along with some expatriate women wearing red...

Vietnam News, 11 October 2007

### **India's Tata Group seeks opportunities in Viet Nam**

Deputy Prime Minister Pham Gia Khiem said a visiting delegation from one of Indian giant Tata Group would be a catalyst for developing relations between the two countries, especially in economy and trade and business co-operation. Speaking at a meeting with group executive director Alan Rosling in Ha Noi yesterday, Khiem said he believed that Viet Nam-India traditional relations were based on a solid foundation and would continue to develop in the near future. He also said he hoped the visit would lead to many co-operation opportunities for businesses in the two countries, especially in the tourism, hotel, auto, and information technology industries...

The Hindu, 12 October 2007

### **Myanmar lashes out at Western powers**

At least one anti-junta protester, a pro-democracy activist, has "died in custody" in Myanmar, according to dissident sources in neighbouring Thailand. Noting that the death, for which the Myanmar military regime gave "no reason," was indeed "confirmed," dissident spokesman Soe Aung told The Hindu over telephone from Bangkok that "no autopsy" was done. According to Mr. Soe Aung, the junta merely informed the family of Win Shwe, an activist belonging to Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD), that he died while in detention...

The Jakarta Post, 12 October 2007

### **Australia's Howard to protest Indonesian party for terrorists**

Australia's prime minister said Friday he was disgusted that Indonesia's counterterrorism chief had hosted convicted terrorists at a party, and that the Australian government would formally object. Brig. Gen. Surya Dharma, the head of Indonesia's anti-terror unit, threw a party last month whose guests included two Islamic extremists convicted in the 2002 Bali nightclub bombings that killed 202 people, including 88 Australians...

The Jakarta Post, 12 October 2007

### **Indonesia says 'soft approach' yields dividends in Southeast Asia's war on terror**

Indonesia's anti-terrorism chief was relaxed as he mingled with guests on his lawn. Muslim hard-

liners swapped tales of al-Qaida training camps in Afghanistan and the Philippines. Convicted Bali nightclub bombers feasted on kebabs. The unusual gathering last month was a striking example of what has emerged as a key plank in Indonesia's anti-terror campaign: co-opting former militants as informers or preachers of moderation...

The Manila Times, 12 October 2007

### **Indian drug firm to give multinationals a run for their money**

DR. Reddy's Laboratories Ltd. has entered the Philippine market and plans to give multinational drug companies a run for their money, an official of the Indian company said Thursday. Rajesh Kumar, Dr. Reddy's senior director, said the local market has a big gap for affordable medicines, adding the company sees the opportunity to offer reasonably priced drugs that have long been available in India. "People can hardly access inexpensive medicine because the market is dominated by high-priced drugs patented to multinational companies," Kumar said...

Channel News Asia, 12 October 2007

### **New impeachment complaint against Philippine President Arroyo**

A Manila lawyer made an impeachment complaint on Thursday against Philippine President Gloria Arroyo - the third in three years. The complaint was made this time over allegations of corruption surrounding a contentious now-cancelled telecommunications deal with a Chinese state firm. It was filed by Roel Pulido, who represented alleged military coup plotters in a trial and also ran for a House of Representatives seat against an Arroyo ally in a Manila district in 2004, and lost...

Burma News International, 13 October 2007

### **Bomb explodes in guest house in Myawadi**

12, injuring two people. Initial investigations suggest the explosive was planted in the hotel, although investigators are yet to reveal who they suspect. The explosion occurred in the first floor, in room number 11 at the Shwe-Pyi-San-Yar guest house. The four-story guest house is located close to the Myanmar-Thailand Friendship Bridge, which links the two countries. Although there are conflicting reports, it is believed between two and five people were injured, including an elderly man...

Bangkok Post, 13 October 2007

### **Thai investment applications down sharply, says BoI**

Applications for investment promotion privileges by Thai investors fell 32.8% in the first nine months from the same period last year, according to the Board of Investment. Thai investors submitted applications for projects worth 100.4 billion baht for the year to Sept 30, compared with 149.5 billion in the same period last year. But the value of foreign investors' applications over the same period rose to 132 billion baht from 95.2 billion. Applications by Thai-foreign joint ventures rose 82% to 213 billion baht from 117.5 billion...

Business Standard, 13 October 2007

### **Sunanda K Datta-Ray: Singapore Airline's lucky**

Backing out of the deal to buy a part of Air India's equity has served it well. The nightmare of last weekend's journey from Singapore to Guwahati recalled Singapore Airlines backing out of its bid for a share of Air-India's equity. The defence agreement signed since then confirms that the Singaporean objection is not to investing in India - indeed, some in Delhi's corridors of power grumble that Singaporean companies are buying up too much stock here - but to throwing good money after bad...

The Hindu, 14 October 2007

### **Myanmar junta arrests more activists**

A high-ranking leader of the "88 Students Generation," Htay Kywe, and a prominent woman activist of the same group, Mie Mie, were among the four arrested by the Myanmar junta in Yangon on Friday night in its continuing crackdown on pro-democracy protesters. This was announced by Amnesty International on Saturday, and Soe Aung, spokesman of the National Council of the Union

of Burma, told The Hindu from Bangkok that 11 students from Bassein University were also arrested. These present-day students are not linked to the "88 Students Generation," which consists of the surviving activists of the 1988 pro-democracy uprising...

Business Standard, 14 October 2007

### **Thailand lures Indian auto companies with tax sops**

Access to the lucrative South-East Asian market and the low cost of importing products back home are amongst the key reasons which are attracting Indian auto players to set shop in Thailand. Thailand is among the ten countries of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA). AFTA has eliminated many trade tariffs among its member nations to help boost investments. The free trade zone has created a strong auto market in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Vietnam, among others. Access to Thailand means access to South-East Asia. India also has a free trade agreement with Thailand the cost of moving goods between the two countries is minimal...

The Jakarta Post, 14 October 2007

### **House tells govt to get tough on Malaysia**

The House of Representatives has asked the government to take action over continued immigration raids against Indonesians in Malaysia. A group of government volunteers has been rounding up Indonesians in Malaysia, taking them to police stations and checking their work permits. The wife of the Indonesian ambassador was recently caught in such a raid...

Channel News Asia, 14 October 2007

### **Good governance, sound judiciary contribute to Singapore's stability: MM Lee**

Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew listed on Sunday some key attributes such as good governance and a sound judicial system that have resulted in stability and economic growth for Singapore. Addressing some 3,500 lawyers and participants at the International Bar Association's conference, Mr Lee "a lawyer by training" also emphasised the importance of the rule of law for investors and for economic growth. The gathering of lawyers from around the world was an apt occasion for MM Lee to reflect on what made Singapore the thriving business hub it is today...

Channel News Asia, 14 October 2007

### **Philippines says rebels must agree to a ceasefire to resume talks**

Communist rebels waging a bloody campaign in the Philippines must agree to a ceasefire if they want to resume negotiations with the government, the country's national security chief said on Sunday. The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) should order its armed unit, the New People's Army (NPA), to immediately cease attacks as a show of goodwill, Norberto Gonzales told reporters. "There should be a cessation of hostilities if they are really sincere in returning to the peace table," Gonzales said. "There's no point in their expression of resuming the talks without a ceasefire"

Vietnam News, 14 October 2007

### **Chinese business contributes to Viet Nam's development**

The achievements that Viet Nam has gained over 20 years after doi moi (renewal) process witnessed contributions made by a group of Vietnamese of Chinese origin and Chinese enterprises, said the Viet Nam Fatherland Front (VFF) Central Committee President Pham The Duyet yesterday. On receiving the delegation of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in Ha Noi, the president expressed his happiness over the Chinese economy's renewal and growth...

New Straits Times, 14 October 2007

### **UN envoy heads to Asia as Myanmar rounds up activists**

Myanmar's military rulers are still rounding up activists, rights groups said Sunday, even as UN envoy Ibrahim Gambari was due in Bangkok for an Asian tour aimed at piling pressure on the generals. As security forces in Yangon detained more pro-democracy campaigners, the junta however eased restrictions put in place at the height of last month's mass protests, relaxing a curfew here and restoring Internet access...

The Indian Express, 15 October 2007

### **Myanmar: UN envoy heads back to Asia, to rope in neighbours**

The ruling junta on Sunday lashed out at global efforts to bring democracy to the tightly controlled nation, timing its message for the day a UN envoy headed to Asia to rally Myanmar's neighbours for help with the country's crisis. Meanwhile, a total of six activists were rounded up by the Myanmar authorities in a raid on a safehouse over the weekend, Amnesty International said on Sunday, as the junta continued to hunt for protesters. The London-based human rights watchdog had on Saturday reported that four political dissidents, including two prominent leaders of recent anti-junta rallies, had been arrested in Yangon. New information confirmed that in fact six people were arrested in a raid early on Saturday by security forces on a house in Myanmar's commercial hub, an Amnesty spokesperson in Bangkok said...

The Jakarta Post, 15 October 2007

### **Investment seen driving economic growth**

Rising investment and an in-check inflation rate are seen pushing Indonesia's economy toward the 6.3 percent growth targeted by the government for the year. The Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM) reported last week that actual foreign direct investment (FDI) had by the end of September nearly doubled to US\$8.54 billion -- mostly in the transportation and communications sectors -- from \$4.29 billion in the same period last year...

New Straits Times, 15 October 2007

### **UN envoy presses Myanmar's neighbours to toughen stance**

UN envoy Ibrahim Gambari met with Thai officials Monday on the first stop of an Asian tour to increase pressure on Myanmar as the junta accused the West of trying to replace it with a puppet government. Despite international condemnation of its deadly crackdown on protests led by Buddhist monks last month, the regime arrested six more key dissidents over the weekend, according to Amnesty International...

The Indian Express, 16 October 2007

### **Myanmar regime change could 'create another Iraq'**

Pushing through a sudden regime change in Myanmar could "create another Iraq" leaving the country engulfed in violence, the head of the ASEAN group of Southeast Asian nations warned on Monday. Ong Keng Yong said regime change would have dire regional implications and that the best outcome was to thrash out a consensus between the military and the political opposition led by Aung San Suu Kyi. Ong, who is secretary general of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations which includes Myanmar, said sudden change was not a realistic solution...

The Indian Express, 16 October 2007

### **Philippines militants raise funds on YouTube: police**

Al-Qaeda-linked extremists under military siege in the Philippines have obtained fresh funding through the popular video-sharing website YouTube, police said on Monday. But they said they had so far prevented the Abu Sayyaf group, responsible for some of the worst terror attacks in the Philippines, from using the funds to launch fresh bombing attacks in the country. The government's National Intelligence Coordinating Agency has obtained "significant reports of new money received by the Abu Sayyaf's financial network" on the southern island of Mindanao," police spokesman Chief Superintendent Samuel Pagdilao said in a statement...

The Manila Times, 16 October 2007

### **GMA revives Charter change**

Amid fresh calls for her impeachment and allegations of bribery to foil another attempt to remove her from office according to the law, President Gloria Arroyo has renewed her call for Charter change or "Cha-cha." Mrs. Arroyo ordered the creation of a panel that would draft a "roadmap to federalism by 2012" when she spoke at the regional workshop on the Establishment of National Human Rights Institutions in Asia in Manila on Monday...

Bangkok Post, 16 October 2007

### **Thailand won't match UN demands to Burma**

United Nations special envoy Ibrahim Gambari told Burma on Monday to stop the "extremely disturbing" programme of arresting dissidents. Thailand proposed a regional forum including China and India to gently nudge the reclusive military junta towards democratic reform. Kick-starting a regional tour to push Asian nations to pressure the regime, Gambari said he hoped to return to Burma for more talks by mid-November, or earlier if possible...

Bangkok Post, 16 October 2007

### **Expert urges speedy Thai-Laos bridge work**

Thailand should accelerate the construction of the third Thai-Laos bridge crossing Mekong River so that it is finished by mid-2010 to prevent the loss of trade opportunities, says a logistics expert. Thailand and China are jointly building the two-billion-baht bridge and splitting the construction cost, said Pongchai Athikomrattanakul, a logistics affairs adviser to the Commerce Minister. Construction on the Thai side of the river has begun and is projected to finish in 2011...

The Financial Express, 16 October 2007

### **ASEAN will never suspend Myanmar'**

Southeast Asian countries will never suspend Myanmar from their 10-nation bloc despite its bloody crackdown of mass protests, Malaysia's foreign minister said today after talks here with a UN envoy. The military regime in Myanmar has come under heavy international pressure since quelling last month's peaceful rallies, but Syed Hamid Albar dismissed suggestions the ASEAN club could suspend its membership...

Vietnam News, 16 October 2007

### **Deputy PM rolls out red carpet for ASEAN business**

Opening the two-day ASEAN Capitals Business Forum in Ha Noi yesterday, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Gia Khiem reiterated the Government's policy to create the most favourable possible conditions for foreign businesses, particularly those from member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). "The Government of Viet Nam is determined to boost national development and wants to expand co-operation," Khiem said, adding that great opportunities were awaiting ASEAN businesses as well as those from other regions...

Nhan Dan, 16 October 2007

### **Vietnam elected non-permanent member of UN Security Council**

With 183 out of 190 votes, the UN General Assembly on October 16, elected Vietnam as non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the 2008-09 term. In the first round of voting, Vietnam, Burkina Faso and Libya were elected to the non-permanent member seats. Two seats for the groups of Eastern European and Caribbean Latin American countries had to be re-voted as candidates did not win two-thirds of voting. At the main hall of the General Assembly, representatives of many countries warmly congratulated the Vietnamese representative on the event...

The Jakarta Post, 17 October 2007

### **Indonesia raises alert level at volcano, orders evacuation**

Indonesia warned Tuesday that one of its most deadly volcanos was poised to erupt and ordered nearly 30,000 villagers on the mountain's slopes to evacuate. Mount Kelud, which has been rumbling for weeks, was placed on the highest alert level, meaning scientists believe a major eruption is imminent, said a posting on the government-run volcanology center Web site. The status requires local authorities to evacuate people living on the slopes...

The Manila Times, 17 October 2007

### **Weak exports to cut GDP**

WEAK exports caused by the rapid appreciation of the peso is likely to temper the country's

economic expansion this year, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) said, dashing its hopes of attaining its dream growth goal. "Because of the slowdown in exports and if the trend continuous, the projected 11 percent growth may go down to 8 percent this year," Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Augusto B. Santos, who is also NEDA director general told reporters. "The declining exports will likely have a significant impact on GDP growth," he said, referring to gross domestic product, the usual measure of the amount of goods and services produced locally...

The Indian Express, 17 October 2007

### **Japan cuts aid to Myanmar**

Japan cut aid to Myanmar on Tuesday, a day after the European Union stiffened its sanctions and US President Bush threatened to follow suit in response to the junta's crackdown on pro-democracy protesters. However, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown offered economic help if it began moves towards democracy. And Thailand proposed a regional forum, including China and India, to nudge the reclusive junta towards democratic reform...

Bangkok Post, 17 October 2007

### **Burma admits holding 468 protesters**

The Burmese junta has confirmed that it continues to imprison at least 468 of the 2,927 people it admits to having arrested for participating in last month's peaceful protests. State-run media said Wednesday, in a short announcement on Burmese TV at 10 pm Tuesday, that the regime had rounded up 2,284 people in Rangoon for their role in last month's anti-military protests, while another 643 were arrested in the provinces. Of those arrested in Rangoon, the epicentre of the recent protests, some 190 remain under detention in Rangoon and 278 in the provinces...

Bernama, 17 October 2007

### **Malaysia's FDI Surges 53 Pct To US\$6.1 Bln In 2006**

Malaysia surpassed Indonesia to come in seventh among top economies in the South, East and Southeast Asian region to draw foreign direct investment (FDI) last year. FDI into Malaysia surged by 52.8 percent to reach US\$6.1 billion (RM20.6 billion) last year, compared to US\$3.97 billion in 2005, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Unctad) World Investment Report 2007. Meanwhile, Malaysia's FDI outflow more than doubled to US\$6.04 billion (RM20.56 billion) as corporations secured strategic investments abroad, it said...

Vietnam News, 17 October 2007

### **VN and Cambodia armies plan ties**

The Armies of Viet Nam and Cambodia should promote co-operation to protect and develop both countries and contribute to keeping peace in the region and all over the world, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung stated yesterday. Dung made the remark in a meeting with General Ke Kim Yan, Commander-in-Chief of the Cambodia Royal Army, who was paying an official visit to Viet Nam at the invitation of senior Lieutenant General Nguyen Khac Nghien, Chief of General Staff of the Viet Nam People's Army...

The Hindu, 18 October 2007

### **World's largest aircraft touches down in Singapore**

SINGAPORE: The world's largest commercial aircraft, A380, landed at the Changi airport here on Wednesday from Toulouse, France, to an impressive water salute from fire tenders, a colourful Chinese lion dance and the beating of traditional drums. The touchdown was witnessed by Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and a host of invitees...

The Economic Times, 18 October 2007

### **'UN should intervene if Myanmar plays hardball'**

The US has sought UN Security Council intervention in case Myanmar's military rulers rebuff plans by a UN special envoy to push for democratic rule in the Southeast Asian state. Washington also called for global pressure on Myanmar to allow the swift return of special envoy Ibrahim Gambari to

pave the way for a dialogue between the military junta and democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi and ethnic minorities...

The Jakarta Post, 18 October 2007

### **Myanmar junta reassures SBY on cooperation**

Myanmar's military junta leader Senior Gen. Than Shwe promised President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in a letter sent last week to continue cooperating with UN special envoy Ibrahim Gambari to find a peaceful solution to the country's problems. Presidential spokesman Dino Patti Djalal said the letter showed there was continued communication between both leaders...

Channel News Asia, 18 October 2007

### **Philippine leader says insurgency holding the country back**

The Philippines will never be a wealthy country while a decades-old communist insurgency rumbles on, President Gloria Arroyo said on Wednesday. Speaking to local officials during a visit to this southern city, Arroyo said the 39-year-old Maoist rebellion "impedes the progress and development of a number of rural areas" where the majority of the poorest Filipinos live. "So if we are to become a first world country, we'll have to put a stop to this ideological nonsense and criminal acts once and for all and we want to defeat them by 2010"...

Channel News Asia, 18 October 2007

### **Thai coup leader heads voting panel**

Thailand's coup leader, General Sonthi Boonyaratglin, will head a new panel to prevent voting fraud during December's general elections, the cabinet said on Wednesday. Army-installed Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont appointed Sonthi to the post to ensure that the polls - intended to restore democracy - are free and fair, the cabinet said in a statement. Sonthi's panel will investigate voting fraud and report cases to the Election Commission, Surayud said...

The Times of India, 18 October 2007

### **Malaysia urged to look after Indian workers**

Malaysia and India are working on a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the recruitment and welfare of Indian workers. "We are working on the draft of the MoU, including internal formalities," Indian High Commissioner to Malaysia Ashok K. Kantha said on Wednesday. Kantha said the agreement would enable authorities to keep track of the employment and welfare of Indian workers, the New Straits Times reported...

International Herald Tribune, 18 October 2007

### **Sweden's sale of fighter jets to Thailand generates controversy**

Thailand has announced that it would purchase six Swedish-made jet fighters, with an option to buy another six, generating both relief and skepticism here. The deal for the six Gripen-JAS 39C/D multi-role fighters, valued at 3.7 billion kronor, or \$600 million, was a long-awaited boost to the efforts by the Swedish government, and the airplane maker Saab, to market the plane internationally. Previously, Gripen fighters have been sold to South Africa and leased to the Czech Republic and Hungary...

The Economic Times, 19 October 2007

### **Aban Singapore IPO to be India's largest abroad**

Aban Singapore, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Aban Offshore, is to hit the Singapore stock exchange with India's largest IPO abroad for a subsidiary company. The \$4-billion company, which acts as Aban's hub for its international activities, is to offload around 13-15% for \$500 million, and the IPO is slated for December 2007, say sources...

The Jakarta Post, 19 October 2007

### **Myanmar junta forms committee to draft new constitution**

Myanmar's ruling junta claimed to have taken another step in its "road map" to democracy that is supposed to lead to free elections with the creation of a committee to draft the country's long-delayed

constitution. The announcement late Thursday came amid a barrage of international pressure on the junta to halt a crackdown on government opponents and hold talks with detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi...

The Jakarta Post, 19 October 2007

### **Tribal violence kills eight in Papua**

Eight people have been killed and 19 others injured in ongoing violence involving four tribes in Tembagapura district, Mimika, Papua. The situation remained explosive Wednesday in the Banti rural sub-district, the site of the violent clashes. More than 120 armed police officers have been deployed to the area to try and bring the violence under control...

Bangkok Post, 19 October 2007

### **Asean's credibility is on the line**

For those within the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean) hoping to celebrate 40 years of non-interference during the organisation's 40th anniversary, the timing of recent events within Burma could hardly have been worse. The peak of the protests within Burma occurred just as senior government officials from around the globe were coming together for the UN General Assembly in New York and the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva...

Nhan Dan, 19 October 2007

### **Vietnam ranks sixth among world top attractive locations for FDI**

Vietnam is ranked sixth among the most attractive locations for FDI in the 2007-2009 period, according to the World Investment Report released on October 18 by the UN Conference on Trade and Development. China and India were the top two most favoured trans-national corporations (TNCs) FDI destinations. The results were based on UNCTAD's survey of TNCs all over the world...

The Times of India, 20 October 2007

### **US imposes new sanctions on Myanmar's military government**

In further tightening the noose around military rulers in Myanmar, the US President George W Bush has announced more sanctions targeting individuals and entities and has asked countries like India and China to review their policies and law vis-a-vis the regime in Yangon. Bush ordered the Treasury Department to freeze the financial assets of additional members of the junta. The new executive Order, signed by Bush, has designated an additional 12 individuals and entities for sanctions; and the Commerce department has been instructed to tighten export control regimes...

The Jakarta Post, 20 October 2007

### **Abbas to visit Jakarta to rally support**

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas will meet with President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in Jakarta on Monday to discuss the potential role Indonesia could play in resolving the Middle East crisis. "President Abbas will probably follow up including Indonesia in the upcoming U.S.-sponsored Palestine-Israel meeting as he proposed in New York," Presidential spokesman Dino Patti Djalal told The Jakarta Post on Friday...

The Jakarta Post, 20 October 2007

### **Proposed ASEAN rights body unlikely to get tough on violators like Myanmar, officials say**

A proposed Southeast Asian human rights body is unlikely to be empowered to impose sanctions or take a tough approach to violators like Myanmar, human rights officials said Wednesday. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which includes military-ruled Myanmar, has been hailed for recently deciding to create a regional human rights body under a landmark charter that its heads of state were expected to sign in Singapore next month...

The Jakarta Post, 20 October 2007

### **Indonesia migrant workers score big**

Indonesian migrant workers continue to make major contributions to the country's economy through their remittances home. During the second quarter, migrant workers sent home US\$1.5 billion, a 5.4

percent increase from the same period last year, according to Bank Indonesia. The central bank said it expected the full-year figure to reach \$4.9 billion...

The Manila Times, 20 October 2007

### **Explosion kills 8 in Glorietta**

At least eight persons were killed and 129 others injured when a huge bomb ripped through an upscale shopping mall in the financial district of Makati on Friday afternoon, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said. "This was a bomb," PNP Director General Avelino Razon said. "But beyond that we can't say anything else yet because we are still investigating." As of press time, no group has claimed responsibility for the attack...

Channel News Asia, 20 October 2007

### **Singapore-Kunming Rail Link project making good progress**

Agreements on linking up the transnational Singapore-Kunming Rail Project have been reached. This update was given at the latest meeting in Singapore among ASEAN countries involved in the project. Officials say the project is coming along. In Cambodia, the missing link between the towns Sisophon and Poipet is expected to cost US\$73 million and will be completed in three years. Four rail links in Vietnam are being built or upgraded with rails replaced, and bridges and signal systems modernised...

Vietnam News, 20 October 2007

### **PM Dung pledges to strengthen economic co-operation with Russia**

The Government of Viet Nam will boost co-operation with Russia in the areas of trade, investment and the economy, to lift relations between the two countries to a new stage, said Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung. The Prime Minister met with Russian Minister of Industry and Energy Boris Khristenco in the capital yesterday. Dung said Khristenco's visit reflected both sides confidence in and active implementation of agreements made between the two countries' leaders during the Prime Minister's recent visit to Russia...

The Irrawaddy, 21 October 2007

### **Monks Might Resume Demonstrations in Late October, Says Leading Monk**

A leading monk one of four being hunted down by the junta told The Irrawaddy from his hiding place that monk-led demonstrations may resume in Burma in late October, in spite of at least 100 monks killed during pro-democracy demonstrations and about 1,200 monks arrested. "Our people are in poverty," said U Obhasa. "How can monks be silent about the real situation in the country?"...

Indo-Burma News, 21 October 2007

### **Mizoram urges India to pressure Burmese junta**

Singed by the heat of the political turmoil in neighbouring Burma, people in India's northeastern state of Mizoram today appealed to the government of India to use its influence to pressurise the Burmese junta to implement changes in the country. The Mizoram Committee for Democracy in Burma (MCDB), formed with several civil societies, human rights activists, intellectuals, and concerned citizens of Mizoram at a press conference today reiterated the need for India's intervention in Burma's political crisis...

BurmaNet News, 21 October 2007

### **Talking Nonsense on Burma- Kyaw Zwa Moe**

Several ministers and diplomats of Asean countries warned recently a sudden regime change in Burma could lead to an Iraq-type anarchy with rival factions battling each other for power. Are such people that ignorant of Burma, which belongs to the 10-member Asean grouping. "We should not think of a so-called regime change," said Asean Secretary-General Ong Keng Yong of Singapore, which could lead to another Iraq. "Such change implies a dramatic power vacuum," he said. Singapore Foreign Minister George Yeo said the same...

The Hindu, 22 October 2007

### **Singapore can be a bridge between India and growing economies: Nathan**

The City-State can "become a bridge between India and other fast-growing economies," said Singapore President S.R. Nathan here on Saturday. Profiling Singapore as a potentially vibrant link within the globalising network of major and emerging economies, Mr. Nathan urged the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SICCI) "to start building bridges linking India, through Singapore, to other dynamic economies in the [Southeast Asian] region and beyond"...

The Indian Express, 22 October 2007

#### **Look Northeast policy**

Amidst the Incredible India@60 blitzkrieg in New York was an event that didn't attract the attention it should have. The one-day "North East India Investment Conference" of September 26 "aimed at putting the Northeast on the international investment map" was certainly unprecedented. For the first time in 60 years, the Indian government was signalling that it was ready to showcase a region marked by insurgencies, militarisation and alienation "and which it had always kept under wraps" as an investment destination and a paradise for tourism...

The Jakarta Post, 22 October 2007

#### **IMF: RI economy to grow by 6.1 percent in 2008**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has predicted economic growth in Indonesia will reach 6.1 percent in 2008, lower than the 6.2 percent growth rate predicted in 2007. The IMF's regional economic projection for the Asia Pacific region predicts that Indonesia will be affected by tightened policies in several of the region's countries and by the slowing down of global demands and global economic development in 2008...

The Manila Times, 22 October 2007

#### **World Bank calls for more agri investments**

THE Philippine agriculture sector must be placed at the center of the development agenda to mitigate extreme poverty and hunger by 2015, the World Bank said. In its latest World Development Report, the multilateral lender said that there should be greater investment in agriculture in developing countries like the Philippines, adding that the sector has high potentials for growth and poverty reduction. "But it may take some adjustments in the overall rural and agricultural development strategy for these potentials to be realized," it said...

Channel News Asia, 22 October 2007

#### **East Asia Summit to discuss Myanmar situation: George Yeo**

Foreign Minister George Yeo said the upcoming East Asia Summit which will be held in Singapore on November 21, will discuss the Myanmar situation. Speaking at a conference organised by the Lee Kuan Yew School for Public Policy, Minister Yeo said the leaders will discuss how the summit can support UN special envoy Ibrahim Gambari's mission in Myanmar. Both China and India are also members of the East Asia Summit...

International Herald Tribune, 22 October 2007

#### **A systematic silencing of dissent has achieved its aim in Myanmar**

Worshipers have begun returning to the Shwedagon Pagoda, the towering gold-coated landmark that had been cordoned off with soldiers and barbed wire only days before. But at its four entrances, pictures of what appeared to be detainees, their faces harried or bruised from beatings, were posted as a warning. Soldiers in green uniforms lurked in the shade with their rifles. The surrounding area looked deserted, with the monks having fled and many shop workers, witnesses to the bloody crackdown, hauled away for questioning or told to relocate...

Bernama, 22 October 2007

#### **Malaysia Aims For Stronger Trade Linkages With OIC Countries**

Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) aims to create stronger trade linkages between Malaysia and the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) member countries, its chairman Tan Sri Halim Mohammad said Monday. He said Matrade has been actively organising trade

promotion activities in OIC countries in recent years, including participation in trade fairs and bringing government representatives and businessmen through trade and investment missions...

The Jakarta Post, 23 October 2007

### **RI vows to do more for Middle East talks**

Indonesia is set to do more to support the latest round of U.S.-sponsored peace talks between Palestine and Israel, which visiting Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas says could be wrapped up by the end of 2008. In a meeting with Abbas at the State Palace on Monday, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono said Indonesia along with South Africa and other Asian countries would arrange a conference for capacity-building for Palestinians, in line with the peace negotiations, in November or December in Annapolis, Maryland...

The Jakarta Post, 23 October 2007

### **RI to propose REDD scheme at Bogor meeting**

Indonesia will use a two-day informal meeting in Bogor this week to present its greenhouse gas reduction proposal. Ministers and senior officials dealing with environmental issues from 40 countries will hold a two-day informal ministerial meeting to discuss Indonesia's paper on Wednesday in Bogor, West Java. The proposal outline includes a new commitment to a post-2012 Kyoto Protocol, financial schemes for adaptation and technology transfer and a blueprint for reducing emissions from deforestation in developing nations (REDD)...

Channel News Asia, 23 October 2007

### **ASEAN to keep engaging Myanmar, sanctions won't work: George Yeo**

ASEAN will continue to pursue diplomatic channels in trying to resolve the Myanmar issue, said Foreign Affairs Minister George Yeo in Parliament on Monday. Mr Yeo said that Singapore's priority is to support the efforts of UN special envoy Ibrahim Gambari, who is playing a critical role as a catalyst as he has gained the trust of Myanmar's military rulers and pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi...

Bangkok Post, 23 October 2007

### **Time for Asean and China to act**

The clock is ticking on Burma's neighbours to reach consensus on a framework to push the junta's generals forward on allowing peaceful transition to democracy. The announcement of a constitutional drafting committee in Burma may look like another step along the military junta's seven-step road map, but in fact it is more bad news for the international community's determined effort to encourage a peaceful transition to democracy in the country...

The Times of India, 23 October 2007

### **UN envoy to Myanmar meets Shivshankar Menon in New Delhi**

UN's special envoy to Myanmar Ibrahim Gambari on Monday met Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon to discuss issues related to restoration of democracy in the military-ruled country. Gambari, who arrived in New Delhi on Sunday night, is also expected to meet External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee...

Mizzima News, 23 October 2007

### **Is Dialogue a game for Generals?**

Following the deadly crackdown of the monk-led peaceful demonstrations on the streets of Rangoon, junta Senior General Than Shwe announced an offer to hold dialogue with detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Many observers and politicians welcomed that as a significant move, even though they knew well Than Shwe's real attitude for the past two decades. Why? The statement was announced on October 4th after the General's meeting with the UN Special Envoy for Burma, Ibrahim Gambari, at the isolated jungle outpost of Naypyitaw. Moreover, Than Shwe also appointed a deputy labor minister, Aung Kyi, to be a "go-between-person" with Aung San Suu Kyi...

The Indian Express, 23 October 2007

### **Opinion: Is it the Shwe gas reserves talking?**

Burmese refugees and the international community incessantly blame India for overlooking Myanmar's human rights account in order to access its natural gas. Indeed, gas represents a major stake in India's rapprochement with Myanmar from the mid-nineties, and the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) Videsh and Gas Authority of India Ltd (GAIL) acquired shares in the Shwe gas field in 2002. In May 2000, the Yetagun pipeline was inaugurated, opening the way for 525 million cubic feet of natural gas being transported daily to a Thai power plant in Ratchaburi.

The Hindu, 24 October 2007

### **Gambari seeks concrete action for democracy in Myanmar**

Seeking concrete action for bringing about democracy in Myanmar, U.N. special envoy Ibrahim Gambari on Tuesday asked India to act in this direction. Mr. Gambari, who met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh earlier in the day, said he had conveyed a message from U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon with regard to an early solution to the problem in Myanmar. "Theoretically, all of us can do more," he told reporters here, when asked about his expectations from India in resolving the crisis...

The Jakarta Post, 24 October 2007

### **Trade expo opens with an attitude of optimism**

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono opened the annual Trade Expo Indonesia at The Kemayoran fair grounds here Tuesday amid fears of a weakening global economy that could dampen international demand for the country's commodities. The President cited the International Monetary Fund's downward revision of world economic growth from 5.2 to 4.8 percent next year and the steep rise in oil prices, warning "this could affect our exports, the state budget and the whole economy"...

The Manila Times, 24 October 2007

### **MILF: Fighting could erupt if new talks fail**

Muslim rebels negotiating peace with Manila on Tuesday resumed talks with their government counterparts, but warned hostilities may erupt in Mindanao should the talks fail. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels are fighting for a separate homeland in South, whose 16-million population includes about four million Muslims. The rebels and the government peace negotiators are holding talks in Malaysia in an effort to sign a deal on the Muslim homeland...

The Jakarta Post, 24 October 2007

### **Religious leaders to help in Fatah-Hamas row**

Indonesian religious leaders, including renowned Muslim, Christian, Buddhist and Hindu scholars, have told Palestinian President and Fatah leader Mahmoud Abbas to reconcile with Hamas to strengthen the nation's fight for independence. During a meeting with Abbas at the Foreign Ministry here on Tuesday, the religious leaders pledged their support for an independent Palestinian state, and conveyed their willingness to help mediate a dialog between Fatah and Hamas...

The Manila Times, 24 October 2007

### **Singapore economy more diversified**

Singapore's economy, the most advanced in Southeast Asia, has become more diversified over the past decade as growth of the biomedical and chemical industries cut dependence on electronics, a trade official said Tuesday. Minister of State for Trade and Industry, Lee Yi Shyan, said that as the city-state's economic base diversifies, growth will become more stable and sustained. Tourism, financial, business and transport services have become strong growth engines, while new industries such as energy, environment and water technologies and digital media are emerging, Lee said in parliament...

Channel News Asia, 24 October 2007

### **Malaysia may allow offshore ringgit trading: report**

Malaysia may scrap its remaining capital controls, introduced during the 1997 financial crisis, and allow offshore trading of the ringgit, the central bank chief said according to a report Wednesday.

Bank Negara governor Zeti Akhtar Aziz told the New Straits Times that the move was designed to attract investment to Malaysia, but she did not say when the change would be introduced. "Malaysia will consider removing this non-internationalisation of its currency when we have a very developed and vibrant foreign exchange market," she said in an interview in Washington...

Mizzima News, 24 October 2007

### **India has nothing to loose**

India needs to read the writing on the wall -- the Burmese military junta is on its way out. For those of us who value our democracy and human rights, India's policy on Burma should have changed a long time ago. India cannot aspire to be a proud democracy if it backs all kinds of dictatorships in the neighborhood. The double standards that we have learnt from the Americans, does not work in the long run. But those who govern India now don't share our values. They are the defenders of our national interests -- the smart diplomats, the tough generals, the men who run our chambers of commerce and push for more trade with Burma...

The Hindu, 25 October 2007

### **China, Russia support Indian stand against sanctions on Myanmar**

India on Wednesday opposed imposing sanctions on Myanmar and called for encouraging all stakeholders to advance political reforms and national reconciliation, a move jointly supported by China and Russia. "We believe that the initiative taken by the U.N. Secretary-General [Ban-Ki Moon] to open dialogue amongst the various stakeholders in Myanmar should be encouraged," External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee said at a joint press conference after the end of the third standalone meeting of Foreign Ministers of India, China and Russia here...

The Times of India, 25 October 2007

### **Malaysia to review visa on arrival policy**

With the number of illegal overstayers swelling in the country, Malaysian authorities are considering a review of its visa on arrival policy. Malaysia has extended the visa on arrival to nationals of several countries, including India, to boost tourism during the Visit Malaysia 2007 campaign. However, the facility was scrapped for visitors from Chennai a few months back after authorities found that several Indian nationals had allegedly failed to return home after the expiry of their social visit visas...

The Jakarta Post, 25 October 2007

### **Emissions cuts should be voluntary, says Yudhoyono**

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has maintained Indonesia's stance that developing countries should reach emissions reduction targets voluntarily, despite objections aired by Australia and the United States. Yudhoyono made the statement on the first day of the two-day ministerial meeting ahead of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference in Bogor, West Java on Wednesday...

Channel News Asia, 25 October 2007

### **Former Philippine leader Estrada wins pardon**

Former Philippine president Joseph Estrada was given a full pardon on Thursday just weeks after he was jailed for life on charges of stealing tens of millions of dollars from the nation's coffers. The announcement came just days after Estrada, a former action movie hero, asked his successor - President Gloria Arroyo - to grant him a pardon in what his lawyers called the "national interest". Arroyo's spokesman said the pardon was granted after the popular 70-year-old agreed not to pursue any other elective office...

Channel News Asia, 25 October 2007

### **S'pore set for tourism record-breaking year, unveils \$360m tourism talent plan**

Singapore is on target to achieve another record breaking year in the tourism industry. Manpower Minister Ng Eng Hen said the sector is set to achieve 10.2 million visitor arrivals and some \$13.6 billion in tourism receipts this year. According to the Singapore Tourism Board (STB), this is the

first time double-digit growth is being achieved for the sector in Singapore...

The Irrawaddy, 25 October 2007

### **Suu Kyi Meets Junta's Official**

Pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi "under house arrest for 12 of the last 18 years" met for about one hour with a Burmese military government official Thursday afternoon, a diplomat said. Suu Kyi was driven a few minutes from her home to a government guest house, where she held talks with newly appointed liaison minister, Aung Kyi. The information came from a diplomat who did not want to be identified for political reasons...

The Economic Times, 26 October 2007

### **US data: Singapore dollar hits 10 year high**

The Singapore dollar and Malaysian ringgit hit fresh 10 year highs on Friday after weak US data led to renewed selling of the dollar and spurred some Asian central banks to step into the market. The Philippine central bank (BSP) was suspected of buying dollars to keep the peso from hitting the 44-per-dollar level. The currency stalled at Thursday's seven-year high of 44.03 per dollar...

The Jakarta Post, 26 October 2007

### **Bogor meet ends in new green policy**

At the closing of the two-day informal ministerial climate change meeting at the Presidential Palace in Bogor, West Java, environment ministers from 36 countries agreed to finalize a new green policy in 2009. The commitment states that rich countries will take the lead in reducing greenhouse gas emissions beyond the expiry date of the Kyoto Protocol, the global agreement on efforts to curb pollution, which expires in 2012...

The Manila Times, 26 October 2007

### **Erap freed, gives up politics**

Former President Joseph Estrada announced on Friday his support for President Gloria Arroyo after his successor granted him pardon from a life sentence stemming from plunder charges. As this developed, the country stood divided over the pardon move. Estrada said he will "support from hereon" programs of President Arroyo that "are intended to attack generational poverty and hunger"...

Channel News Asia, 26 October 2007

### **UN envoy in Japan for talks on Myanmar**

The UN mediator on Myanmar on Friday held talks in Japan, which has slashed but not ended aid to the military government over its bloody crackdown on demonstrations. Ibrahim Gambari is in Japan on a six-nation Asian tour after Myanmar government crushed the protests, killing at least 13 people including monks and a Japanese journalist. He held talks with Deputy Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka, who himself travelled to Myanmar to lodge a protest after the shooting of Japanese journalist Kenji Nagai, a UN spokeswoman said...

Indo-Burma News, 26 October 2007

### **Ban Ki-Moon speaks to Manmohan, discusses Myanmar situation**

United Nations, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon on Monday spoke to Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, over phone and discussed the situation in Myanmar where the military junta has cracked down on pro-democracy street protests. The telephonic talk, initiated by Ban and Singh, came a ahead of the UN Secretary General's special envoy Ibrahim Gambari's meeting with the Prime Minister and External Affairs Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, here on Tuesday. Gambari met Foreign Secretary, Shiv Shankar Menon, Monday...

Channel News Asia, 26 October 2007

### **PM Lee congratulates new PM of Myanmar**

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has congratulated Lieutenant-General Thein Sein on his appointment as the new Prime Minister of Myanmar. In his letter to the new Premier, Mr Lee said

Singapore and Myanmar enjoy friendly and long-standing ties, and with the new Premier's support, Mr Lee is confident both countries will be able to bring bilateral relations to a higher level...

The Times of India, 27 October 2007

### **One dead, 12 wounded in bomb attack in Thailand**

At least one woman was killed and 12 others were wounded when a bomb exploded in front of a food stall early Saturday in Thailand's restive Muslim-majority south, police said. A 75-year-old Buddhist woman was killed by the bomb, which weighed seven kilograms (15 pounds) and was detonated by a mobile phone. Police suspected Islamic militants were behind the attack in Narathiwat, one of three provinces hit by a separatist insurgency...

Bangkok Post, 27 October 2007

### **Fighting the pirates**

Thailand agreed to join a US-initiated regional network to combat intellectual property crimes after a US-led meeting in Bangkok this week. The US Department of Justice and the US Patent and Trademark Office teamed up with Asean countries at the four-day meeting to establish the regional Intellectual Property Crimes Enforcement Network (IPcen). Its stated aim is to build on the success of the G-8 collaboration a decade ago, said Sigal Mandelker, the department's deputy assistant attorney-general for the criminal division...

Bangkok Post, 27 October 2007

### **Monarchy in the modern age**

Chulalongkorn University Political Science professor Chaiyan Chaiyaphorn strongly condemned the effort of certain National Legislative Assembly (NLA) members who wanted to submit a new bill to revise the present law on lese majeste, saying the bill would be "contrary to the idea of Thailand having a modern monarchical institution in the eyes of the global community", noted Nithi Eaowsriwong, a famed academic writing for Matichon...

Bernama, 27 October 2007

### **Malaysia Well Placed As Forerunner In Alternative Medicine Industry**

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said Malaysia is well placed as a forerunner in the increasingly popular alternative medicine industry which has a global market exceeding RM200 billion. He said there was potential for the industry to grow by leaps and bounds, given the integration of the first ever traditional and complementary medicine unit with conventional medical healthcare in a government hospital in Kepala Batas yesterday...

The Jakarta Post, 27 October 2007

### **RI won't raise Myanmar at UNSC**

Indonesia says it fully supports the work of UN special envoy Ibrahim Gambari in mediating the talks between Myanmar military junta and Aung San Suu Kyi, and has no plans to table the Myanmar issue at the UN Security Council during its presidency in November. "We have no program of discussing Myanmar during our presidency in November although the issue is still on the UN Security Council's agenda," Foreign Ministry director for international security and disarmament affairs Desra Percaya said during a press briefing Friday...

Channel News Asia, 27 October 2007

### **Civil society groups call for quick ratification of ASEAN Charter**

With some three weeks left to the ASEAN Summit in Singapore, the task force crafting the ASEAN Charter has completed its "legal scrubbing", says Secretary-General Ong Keng Yong. The Charter is now being sent to leaders of ASEAN member countries ahead of the summit in Singapore next month. But civil society groups hope ASEAN member governments will not just give the Charter lip service after its been signed...

Bangkok Post, 27 October 2007

### **Singaporeans tap India**

Singapore's gold standard of health-care has drawn patients not only from the rest of Asia but as far afield as Russia, making the island a regional health-care hub. But even for a market where most hospitals are accredited by the US-based Joint Commission International, attracting patients is just the tip of the iceberg. Vast opportunities in the region remain untapped. Being a small country, Singapore can pull in only so many patients. And it's mostly the well-heeled who can afford to make the trip...

The Manila Times, 28 October 2007

### **Philippine press, opposition angry over Estrada pardon**

Leading newspapers and groups opposed to President Gloria Arroyo expressed anger on Saturday over her decision to pardon her disgraced predecessor Joseph Estrada despite his conviction for massive graft. Many critics said Mrs. Arroyo's decision was intended to divert attention away from corruption allegations being hurled at her in congressional hearings and by the opposition...

The Jakarta Post, 28 October 2007

### **RI to promote products at China-ASEAN Expo in Naning**

Indonesia will take the opportunity of the China-ASEAN Expo (CAEXPO) taking place in Nanning, Guangxi, China on Oct. 28-31 to promote its potential products abroad. "The expo will be focused on the trade and investment sectors and several Indonesian companies will take part in the event," Indonesian Ambassador to China Sudrajat said Saturday. He made the statement before leaving for Nanning to attend the annual expo...

Bernama, 28 October 2007

### **Malaysian Firms Showcase Brand Names At Two-day Fest In New Delhi**

Fourteen leading Malaysian companies are showcasing their brand names at the two-day Malaysia Fest here aimed at promoting deeper awareness on India-Malaysia trade and cultural relations. Hosted by the Malaysian High Commission in India to mark the 50th anniversary of Malaysia-India diplomatic ties, the event also includes a travel mart to promote Malaysia as a must-visit tourist destination to Indian holidaymakers, "We want to showcase Malaysian companies' presence in India. About 14 companies from IJM, MAS (Malaysia Airlines) to a balloon manufacturer, a joint-venture concern between Malaysia and India, are exhibiting their products..."

Channel News Asia, 28 October 2007

### **Malaysia favours strong ringgit as currency hits near 10-year high**

Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi Saturday said Malaysia favours a steady rise in the value of the ringgit after it rose to its strongest position in nearly a decade against the US dollar. "We want to see a stable ringgit which appreciates gradually. What we do not want is for the ringgit to fluctuate," he was quoted as saying by Bernama news agency...

International Herald Tribune, 28 October 2007

### **Estrada pardon weakens Arroyo's opposition in Philippines**

For a man who sought and received a presidential pardon less than two months after being sentenced to prison for corruption, Joseph Estrada, the former Philippine president, has displayed a remarkable lack of contrition. "I believe that history will vindicate not only this executive act but my innocence as well," Estrada declared Friday after his release from house arrest. On the same day, looking ebullient as ever before a throng of supporters, the former movie star thanked President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo for granting him executive clemency, referring to her, for the first time since his ouster in 2001, as "President Arroyo"...

The Jakarta Post, 29 October 2007

### **Myanmar step up propaganda war against 'loudmouthed bully' US**

Myanmar's military government stepped up its propaganda campaign against the United States on Sunday, accusing Washington of inciting last month's pro-democracy demonstrations in a bid to install a puppet government. "Recent protests in the country were created by the loudmouthed bully, using the exiled dissidents and traitors together with communists, internal and external anti-

government destructionists," said a commentary Sunday in the Myanmar-language Myanma Ahlin daily

The Manila Times, 29 October 2007

### **ADB to resume regular multi-year aid to RP**

THE Asian Development Bank (ADB) is set to resume its five-year loan assistance program to the Philippines given its improving economic performance. The five-year Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) was suspended two years ago because of economic uncertainties. In lieu of that, the ADB provided a three-year country strategy and program for the years 2005 to 2007 for amounts of up to \$1.5 billion...

Bernama, 29 October 2007

### **Open Skies Accord Tops Agenda At Asean Transport Officials Meet**

Senior Asean transport officials are meeting in Singapore ahead of the 13th Asean Transport Ministers Meeting here on Thursday, with the Asean open skies accord among issues taking centre stage. Asean, the regional grouping of 10 Southeast Asian nations, has set December 2008 as the deadline to implement the open skies accord which will see free access to Asean capitals. Singapore's Transport Minister Raymond Lim, who opened the meeting today, urged officials to finalise the implementing text for the roadmap so that it could be signed early next year...

Mizzima News, 29 October 2007

### **Impermanence as an agent of change**

Buddha's words, uttered over twenty-five hundred years ago, still prove to be true time and time again: Life is impermanent and change is inevitable. We see this in everyday matters in our own lives as well as in the life of a nation. Burma as a nation is not exempted from this Law of Nature. As time moved on in the past and is moving on in the present into the future, the growth of Burma as a nation is inevitable...

Vietnam News, 29 October 2007

### **Nation's FDI surpasses \$11 billion milestone**

Viet Nam has attracted US\$11.26 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI) during the first 10 months of this year, a 33.6 per cent increase over the same period last year, the Ministry of Planning and Investment has said. A total of 1,144 foreign-invested projects, mostly in the industrial and construction sectors, received licenses with a total registered capital of \$9.75 billion. The figures reflect a year-on-year increase of 59 per cent in investment capital and 36 per cent in the number of projects...

Channel News Asia, 29 October 2007

### **Malaysia launches East Coast Economic Corridor project**

Malaysia's Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi Monday launched a US\$33.2 billion economic plan aimed at boosting growth and reducing poverty in the country's rural east. The East Coast Economic Corridor (ECER) project, drawn up by the national oil company Petronas, is the third and final of a series of big-spending development master plans which have been rolled out ahead of expected snap polls. It is designed to raise incomes for nearly four million people, representing 15 per cent of the country's total population, create 560,000 jobs and attract RM112 billion worth of investments over the next 12 years...

The Irrawaddy, 29 October 2007

### **A Meaningful Dialogue Needs Courage [Commentary]**

Burma's current situation presents an unambiguous demand for structural political change to save its people from the economic whirlpool. This fact is not based on political theories nor on predictions, but on the socio-economic decline leading to the Buddhist monks-led September uprising...

The Jakarta Post, 30 October 2007

### **Malaysia urges rich nations to give funds, technology to fight climate change**

Developed nations, which are some of the world's greatest polluters, should provide the technological and financial means to help poor countries fight climate change, Malaysia's deputy leader said Monday. Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak, opening a two-day regional conference on climate change, said developing countries lacked the means to gain new technology for reducing greenhouse gas emissions...

The Jakarta Post, 30 October 2007

### **Military earns praise for role in democracy**

A U.S political analyst has lauded the Indonesian Military (TNI) for helping to improve the country's democracy by staying out of active politics for the past nine years. Alfred C. Stepan, director of the Center for the Study of Democracy, Tolerance and Religion at Columbia University in New York, said Monday he was impressed by the TNI's commitment to remain out of political activities, and this commitment had contributed to the country's progress toward democracy...

The Jakarta Post, 30 October 2007

### **New fund promises help for port development**

Transportation ministers on Monday agreed to form the ASEAN-China Port Development and Cooperation Forum, which could also include a joint fund accessible by private companies for port development projects. "We will further explore the financing channels, including government investment, financial assistance from international financial institutions, as well as concession loans," the ministers said in a joint statement in Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, China...

Channel News Asia, 30 October 2007

### **France's Kouchner in Thailand to discuss Myanmar crisis**

France's foreign minister is expected to meet Thai officials later Tuesday in a bid to step up international pressure on Myanmar's military rulers after their bloody crushing of anti-government protests in September. Bernard Kouchner is on the second leg of an Asian tour that began in Singapore, where on Monday he said incentives and sanctions were needed to bring about democratic change...

The Jakarta Post, 31 October 2007

### **Malaysia: Keep Myanmar politics out of ASEAN-EU free trade talks**

Myanmar's political crisis should not be used as an excuse to hold up a proposed free trade pact between Europe and Southeast Asian nations, Malaysia's trade minister has said. Negotiations must be free of political meddling and a constructive engagement is a better way to persuade military-ruled Myanmar to open up, Rafidah Aziz was quoted by national news agency Bernama as saying Monday while on a trade mission in Frankfurt...

The Jakarta Post, 31 October 2007

### **Leader of Al Qidayah sect surrenders to police**

The leader of the controversial Al Qiyadah Al Islamiyah sect, Ahmad Mushaddeq, and six of his followers have turned themselves in to Jakarta Police. Mushaddeq and his followers are being questioned at the Jakarta Police's criminal investigation directorate, Jakarta Police chief Insp. Gen. Adang Firman said Tuesday. "He and his men came to the Metro Jaya Police Headquarters last night at around 7:30 p.m. to surrender themselves," Adang Firman said...

The Manila Times, 31 October 2007

### **Philippine biofuels attract investors**

The biofuel feedstock sector can expect multibillion-peso investments to pour in as several foreign and local companies have shown interest in alternative fuel production, Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said. The agri chief said 15 companies have been scouting for lands on which to plant crops for biofuel feedstock. The Department of Agriculture said the companies require a total of 725,300,000 hectares of land, which would need an investment of P34 billion...

Bangkok Post, 31 October 2007

**France lends support to UN push**

France yesterday proposed the set-up of "Friends of Gambari" working group to support United Nations-led efforts to solve the problems in Burma with carrot-and-stick measures. French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said at the end of his hour-long discussion with Thai counterpart Nitya Pibulsonggram that effective measures apart from sanctions against the Burmese regime needed to be worked out to bring about the success of the mission carried out by UN special envoy to Burma Ibrahim Gambari...

Indo-Burma News, 31 October 2007

**Germany, India Urge Burma to Release Political Prisoners**

India and Germany urged Burma's military rulers Tuesday to free all political prisoners and hold talks with the United Nations, following a brutal crackdown on anti-government protests in the impoverished Southeast Asian nation. India has come under intense international pressure to take action over the junta's repression of recent monk-led protests across Burma, largely because of the strong economic and military ties established between the two countries in the past decade...