

The Statesman, 1 July 2008

Anwar files law suit against aide

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's embattled Opposition leader Mr Anwar Ibrahim today filed a complaint against the national police chief and Attorney General for allegedly fabricating evidence against him in a sodomy case a decade ago.

Viet Nam News, 1 July 2008

Viet Nam takes UNSC chair

HA NOI : Viet Nam will officially begin its month-long chair of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) from today, affirming the country's increasing political role in settling issues of conflict that are important to international security, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ambassador Le Luong Minh, Viet nam's permanent representative to the UN Security Council, said the country would contribute to the council's decisions and reflect concern on the legitimate interests of member countries and relevant agencies.

The Jakarta Post, 1 July 2008

Inflation rate climbs to 11 percent after fuel price hikes

Indonesia's inflation rate climbed to 11 percent after government fuel hikes caused the price of food and other basic goods to skyrocket, the Central Statistics Bureau said Tuesday. That sparked speculation that Bank Indonesia Governor Boediono could raise the benchmark interest rate for the third month in a row. Consumer prices rose 11.03 percent in June from the same period last year, the bureau said on its Web site, noting that the cost "all goods and services" have climbed up. Food staples alone are

The Bangkok Post, 1 July 2008

The temple ghost returns

Preah Vihear, the 900-year-old temple currently in the spotlight, has always been like a restless ghost. At a proper given moment and background, it finds a way to come back and haunt the Thai people. On June 15, 1962 the whole country mourned when the International Court of Justice ruled that the ancient Khmer-style temple was situated in Cambodian territory. This year, the ghost of Preah Vihear has returned with a vengeance.

The New Straits Times Online, 1 July 2008

Move to refer Gobind to Rights and Privileges Committee fails

An attempt to refer Gobind Singh Deo (DAP-Puchong) to the Rights and Privileges committee has failed on the grounds that the wrong standing order was used by backbenchers. Backbenchers are expected to try and refer the fiery Dap member under another standing order either later in the day or tomorrow. The attempt to refer Gobind to the Right and Privileges, the committee which disciplines members for any wrong doing, was made by Razali Ibrahim (BN-Muar).

The Asian Age, 2 July 2008

Malaysia party issues apology

Kuala Lumpur: Drawing criticism from the minority Indian community, a Malay party in Malaysia's Perak state has issued a public apology over a racial slur against Indians uttered by one of its state assembly persons last week. Hamida Osman at a meeting last week reportedly asked the state Assembly speaker V. Sivakumar if he agreed to disagree with the well-known fable of whether "a snake or an Indian should be killed first". She later retracted her statement and apologised.

The Bangkok Post, 2 July 2008

Unesco weighs temple dispute

The Administrative Court's injunction against Thailand's support of the listing of Preah Vihear might not overrule the joint communique signed by Thailand and Cambodia on May 22 in Paris, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

The Bangkok Post, 2 July 2008

More incentives planned for filmmakers

Tourism and Sports Minister Weerasak Kohsurat pledged yesterday to offer "attractive" incentives for foreign film productions in a bid to promote Thailand as a prime location for the industry. "The privileges to be offered would be competitive and on par with those currently offered by various countries in the region such as South Korea, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam," he said.

The Manila Times, 2 July 2008

Brace for high inflation

The worst is yet to come, as the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) predicted that consumer price increases will peak in the coming two months before returning to the single-digit level next year. In a statement on Wednesday, central bank Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said inflation will start easing only after the third quarter this year but that it will likely return to single-digits in 2009

Viet Nam News, 2 July 2008

Deputy PM meets with Australia, Pakistan officials

HA NOI : Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Pham Gia Khiem yesterday met with Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs Stephen Smith. Khiem said Viet Nam had always highly considered and wanted to continually develop friendship and multi-faceted co-operation with Australia

The Asian Age, 3 July 2008

Coup plot foiled in Philippines

The Philippine police filed criminal complaints on Thursday against an opposition lawyer, three retired colonels and a former police officer for allegedly plotting to overthrow President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. National police director general Avelino Razon said authorities were taking seriously the allegations that the five, led by prominent Opposition lawyer Homobono Adaza, had planned to oust the President and tried to extort money from a Japanese businessman to finance the coup.

The Financial Express, 3 July 2008

India wants road, rail and river routes through Bangladesh

Monday , June 30, 2008 at 1325 hrs India wants Bangladesh to open up its road and river routes to facilitate better link between Kolkata, Myanmar and the Northeast. Inaugurating a conference of the SAARC-backed South Asia Free Media Association (SAFMA), External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee said India would build a 60-km road link with Myanmar and develop a port in that country.

International herald Tribune, 3 July 2008

9 suspected terrorists arrested in Sumatra are taken to Jakarta

JAKARTA: Heavily armed Indonesian police officers transferred nine suspected terrorists, bound and wearing black hoods, to Jakarta on Thursday following their arrest in southern Sumatra. A raid Wednesday in the Sumatran port city of Palembang by an elite Indonesian counterterrorism team turned up more than 20 homemade bombs and a cache of ammunition, indicating that the group had been planning a major attack, the police said.

The Bangkok Post, 3 July 2008

Thaksin told he cannot leave

Former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra's latest request to travel overseas has been rejected by the Supreme Court's Criminal Division for Holders of Political Positions. On June 24 Mr Thaksin lodged a request through his lawyer for the court's permission to travel to China and England. Mr Thaksin is a defendant in the 772-million-baht Ratchadaphisek land purchase case.

The Manila Times, 3 July 2008

18,000 workers benefit

THE Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) on Thursday said that more than 18,000 workers have benefited from its inspection blitz that corrected labor standard violations in various worksites all over the country. Labor Secretary Marianito Roque said in a statement that the correction of labor standard violations has resulted in the awarding of P37.43 million in settlements to 18,059 workers.

The Indian Express, 6 July 2008

Malaysia seeks Interpol help in finding missing detective

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian police on Sunday said they have sought Interpol's help in locating a private detective, who went missing after retracting a claim suggesting close links between deputy premier Najib Razak and a slain Mongolian woman

Hindustan Times, 6 July 2008

Quake jolts eastern Philippines

An earthquake measuring 4.5 on the Richter scale on Sunday jolted the eastern Philippine province of Aurora, the country's volcanology and seismology institute Philvocs said. The quake occurred at 1201 GMT. No reports of damage or casualty have been reported. Philvocs said the quake was of tectonic origin and was also felt in the Philippine capital.

The Jakarta Post, 6 July 2008

Most Indonesians say country in recession: Nielsen survey

A survey of Asia-Pacific countries carried out on the Internet reveals 77 percent of the respondents believe Indonesia is in a recession, despite first-quarter economic growth. Catherine Eddy, executive director of PT ACNielsen Indonesia, the company that carried out the survey, said Friday rising fuel and food prices were the main cause for the gloomy outlooks. "This is I think worse than what happened in 2005 when the government also increased the fuel prices. This time is like a double hit," she said.

The Bangkok Post, 6 July 2008

End of the rally

The People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) said on Sunday it will obey a court order to quiet down, probably by declaring victory and ending the six-week rally. The rally could end at any time, said Maj-Gen Chamlong Srimuang, a core PAD leader. He said the PAD will strictly obey last week's Civil Court order, set to be issued in writing on Monday, to either suspend its ongoing rally or move the demonstration to a site other than Government House.

Viet Nam News, 6 July 2008

PM affirms better US co-operation

HA NOI : Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung yesterday spoke on Viet Nam's mutually beneficial relations with the US as he received Henrietta H Fore, the administrator of the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Dung affirmed all commitments made by both sides during his visit to the US last month and called for further assistance from USAID in curbing pandemics in Viet Nam.

The Straits times, 6 July 2008

S'pore's property boom cooling

SINGAPORE'S booming residential property sector is finally showing signs of cooling but projects including two casino developments should underpin long-term prices, analysts say. The market was described by real estate giant Jones Lang LaSalle as the world's hottest in 2007, when the city-state's property prices surged 31 per cent overall. But this year the sector has not escaped wider concerns over a United States-led global economic slowdown and inflationary pressures.

The Indian Express, 7 July 2008

Malaysian court says dead man is Muslim as Hindu kin object

KUALA LUMPUR: A Hindu family in multicultural Malaysia on Monday vowed to fight Islamic

authorities over the rights to the body of their relative whom a religious court has declared to be Muslim.

The Statesman, 7 July 2008

Malaysian detective retracts claims against deputy PM

Kuala Lumpur, A Malaysian detective, who made a sworn statement alleging relationship between Malaysia's deputy prime minister and a slain Mongolian model, retracted it today, saying he had made it under duress. Balasubramaniam Perumal made the sworn declaration yesterday with Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim at his side alleging that that Najib Razak had close ties with the 28-year-old model Altantuya, who was blown up with explosives nearly two years back..

The Financial Express, 7 July 2008

Malaysia to observe July 16 as 'Buy Nothing Day'

Friday, July 04, 2008 at 1535 hrs In the wake of rising cost of living, a coalition of prominent non-governmental organisations is trying to change Malaysians' spending habits by organising a "Buy Nothing Day" later this month. "Buy Nothing Day" to be observed on July 16 is not a protest of any sort, but a day of self-reflection in relation to consumerism, organisers the Federation of Malaysian Consumer Associations (FOMCA), said here.

The Jakarta Post, 7 July 2008

34 parties make the cut for 2009 polls

The 2009 legislative election will see 34 political parties vying for seats in the House of Representatives, after the General Elections Commission (KPU) passed 18 new parties after less than a month of factual verification. Old faces will feature in next year's election, including former Indonesian Military commander Gen. (ret) Wiranto with his Hanura Party, Roy Janis with his Democratic Reform Party, Oesman Sapta with his Regional Unity Party and Yapto Soerjosumarsono with his Patriot Party. Only 24 parties contested the election in 2004, down from 48 in the country's first democratic election in 1999.

Viet Nam News, 7 July 2008

Prime Minister launches \$8b port, steel plant projects

HA TINH : Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung yesterday issued an order to kick off construction on the Iron/Steel Complex and Son Duong Port in the central province of Ha Tinh, the largest foreign direct investment project ever licensed in Viet Nam so far, with total investment capital of nearly US\$8 billion

Hindustan Times, 8 July 2008

Former Khmer Rouge 'First Lady' loses bid for release

The former Khmer Rouge "First Lady" facing trial for crimes against humanity on Wednesday lost her appeal to Cambodia's UN-backed genocide court to be released from detention before her trial. Ieng Thirith, the regime's former social affairs minister, is one of five top cadres in the sights of the UN war crimes tribunal over atrocities committed during the Khmer Rouge's 1975-1979 rule.

The Statesman, 8 July 2008

Briefs

KUALA LUMPUR: The body of an ethnic Indian Hindu, who had reportedly converted to Islam, was buried according to Muslim rites after his family's application for injunction was dismissed by the Penang state High Court. High Court judge Mr Balia Yusuf Wahi ruled that there was Elangeswaran Benedict's family, who had claimed his body for cremation according to Hindu rites.

The Economic Times, 8 July 2008

Vietnam vows to keep fuel prices stable in 2008

HANOI: Vietnam, which has been severely strained by double-digit inflation this year, plans to keep fuel prices including petrol, coal and power unchanged until the end of 2008 despite mounting pressure from high world energy prices.

The Manila Times, 8 July 2008

DBCC expects growth to pick up next year

PHILIPPINE economic managers expect growth to pick up pace anew in the next two years after this year's slowdown on account of higher commodity prices. The Development and Budget Coordinating Committee (DBCC) set the country's gross domestic product (GDP) growth range next year to between 6.1 percent and 7 percent, better than this year's 5.7 percent to 6.6 percent target.

the Jakarta Post, 8 July 2008

Motorcycle sales rise 44 percent despite higher fuel prices

Despite recent rises in fuel prices and lending interest rates, motorcycle sales rose 44 percent in the first half of this year compared to in the same period last year, an association reports. "The industry sold more than 3 million motorcycles in the first six months, compared to 2.1 million last year," Gunadi Sindhu Winata, head of Indonesian Motorcycle Industry Association (AISI) and CEO of Indomobil Group, said Monday.

Hindustan Times, 9 July 2008

Pak, Malaysia to sign MoU on counter-terrorism

Pakistani Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Wednesday, said his country will sign a memorandum of understanding with Malaysia on counter-terrorism and abolition of visas for diplomatic and official passport holders. Gilani gave the undertaking during talks with his Malaysian counterpart Abdullah Ahmad Badawi on the sidelines of D8 (group of eight developing Islamic nations) meeting here yesterday.

The Statesman, 9 July 2008

Thaksin goes on trial on corruption charges

Bangkok, Nearly two years after a coup, ousted Thai premier Thaksin Shinawatra goes on trial today on corruption charges, the first in a raft of cases this month against his family and aides. When royalist generals toppled his government in September 2006, they accused Thaksin of widespread corruption, undermining the nation's democracy and insulting Thailand's revered king. But the case actually before the Supreme Court is far less sweeping.

The Economic Times, 9 July 2008

Singapore growth slows in Q2

SINGAPORE: Singapore's economic growth slowed to 1.9 per cent in the second quarter, down from 6.9 per cent in the first three months due to a slump in biomedical manufacturing, the government said on Thursday. The figures measure growth against the same period a year earlier and represented a more severe slowing than the 2.3 per cent forecast in a poll.

The Jakarta Post, 9 July 2008

For parties, election win could come down to luck of the draw

Normally elections are about campaign funds and strategy but, believe it or not, some political parties consider which number they draw for the 2009 polls a clue to their success or failure. In a nation where mysticism still prevails, party executives believe the numbers, drawn on Wednesday, could prove lucky -- or not. "We expect the number one will trigger positive changes to this party," People's Conscience Party (Hanura) chairman Wiranto said on the party's official website after the draw.

The Bangkok Post, 9 July 2008

Reform at the top

The secret may well be out once this article is published - that a restructuring at the top of the military chain of command is imminent. But will the changes in the pipeline be substantive and are they worth the trouble? The questions trace back to the high-level talks in the military over a planned restructuring which promises reform at the top of the command pyramid, in addition to the proposed renaming of the Office of Supreme Commander to the Office of the Royal Thai Armed Forces.

The Jakarta Post, 11 July 2008

Energy-saving regulation to come into effect on July 21

The government is moving forward plans to change business operating hours for manufacturers, with the joint ministerial decree to take effect in Java and Bali from July 21 until the end of 2009. Under the regulation, manufacturing companies will be obliged to move two working days each month to Saturday and Sunday. A maximum violation of the decree will result in a temporary cut in electricity supply, but no incentives will be given for compliance, despite earlier announcements. "We will introduce all provisions in the decree on July 14, before the implementation period, which starts on July 21 and runs until December 2009," Industry Minister Fahmi Idris said Friday.

The Bangkok Post, 11 July 2008

Democrats: Govt trying to amend the charter again

government is renewing its attempt to amend the charter prior to dissolving the House and calling a new election, the Democrat party said yesterday. The opposition party warned that the constitution amendment bid, if renewed, could be a new time bomb in the wake of the Preah Vihear temple controversy.

Viet Nam News, 11 July 2008

First visit by Brazilian leader brings ties to new heights

HA NOI, President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's visit to Viet Nam marked a historic milestone, as the first Brazilian presidential visit since the countries established ties in 1989, Party General Secretary Nong Duc Manh said yesterday. Manh, who paid an official visit to the South American country last May, said Viet Nam always appreciated the comprehensive friendship and co-operative ties between the two countries.

International Herald Tribune, 12 July 2008

Indonesia widens use of death penalty

When the time comes, after any final wishes have been granted, the prisoner is taken to a field to stand in front of 12 gunmen. A single shot is fired from each rifle, carefully aimed at the chest. If that does not kill the prisoner, the commander will fire a point-blank shot to the head. This is how it went for Ahmad Suradji, 57, who was executed late Thursday night for the murder of 42 women a decade ago. No family or witnesses were allowed. This was how it also went for two Nigerians executed June 26 on drug trafficking charges.

The Times of India, 13 July 2008

Malaysian police lock Parliament, fearing opposition protest

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian police locked down Parliament on Monday with roadblocks and massive security to prevent an anticipated rally by supporters of opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, who is awaiting interrogation on a sodomy accusation. Anwar's questioning later on Monday was to coincide with an opposition demand for an emergency debate in Parliament on what it says is the public's lack of confidence in the government.

Hindustan Times, 13 July 2008

Four killed in communist attack in Philippines: police

Four communist guerrillas were killed in the latest outbreak of fighting in the southern Philippines, police and local officials said on Saturday. About 60 guerrillas of the communist New People's Army (NPA) attacked a military outpost on the island of Mindanao late Friday, sparking a gunbattle that raged into the next day, said provincial police and local officials.

The Asian Age, 13 July 2008

Thailand PM plans Cabinet reshuffle

Bangkok, Thai Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej announced plans on Sunday for a major Cabinet reshuffle following a series of legal battles that forced three of his ministers out of office.

Viet Nam News, 13 July 2008

Businesses count the cost of power outages

HA NOI - Many business representatives raised concerns about electricity shortages and sudden power cuts that caused great losses to their businesses at an on-line conference in Ha Noi this week.

The Bangkok Post, 13 July 2008

Return of the poppy

Contrary to the popular belief that the illegal growing of opium has dwindled in Thailand, the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) reports the opposite is true for this source of heroin. Authorities are having a tough time suppressing narcotics in the North, with illegal opium poppy fields increasing but being better hidden and a new breed of high-yield poppy being grown.

International Herald Tribune, 14 July 2008

Thai prime minister vows to amend Constitution

BANGKOK: Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej of Thailand, whose government faces streets protests and a barrage of corruption allegations, vowed Sunday to amend the post-coup Constitution, despite strong political opposition. In his weekly radio television program, Samak also said he would go through with an anticipated cabinet reshuffle but gave no details. Samak blamed the Constitution for a spate of problems confronting his government, including legal actions that have forced the resignations of three of his cabinet ministers.

The Jakarta Post, 14 July 2008

Climate, demand boost coffee exports

Abundant harvests and soaring demand from non-traditional coffee importers propelled Indonesia's coffee bean exports during the first half of the year, allowing the country to cash in on the high global price of the commodity. More than 350 exporters grouped under the Association of Indonesian Coffee Exporters (AEKI) revealed recently coffee exports rose 12.5 percent to 180,000 tons between January and June this year compared to in the same period last year. Executive Secretary of the AEKI, Rachim Kartabrata, told The Jakarta Post high rainfall this year had provided farmers with larger harvest yield.

The Bangkok Post, 14 July 2008

Confidence hits 2008 low in June

Consumer confidence fell to its lowest level this year in June as anti-government protests intensified and high oil prices continued to add to inflation woes. The Consumer Confidence Index (CCI), based on a survey of 2,240 respondents nationwide, fell for the third consecutive month to 78.0 in June, down from 78.8 in May and 79.9 in April, and compared with 80.7 in March, 79.5 in February, and 78.1 in January, according to the University of Thai Chamber of Commerce survey.

The Manila Times, 14 July 2008

Poverty will worsen

Philippine poverty can be expected to rise by at least three percentage points because of rising food prices in the past two years. This projection is based on studies by the World Bank of a study of eight developing countries.

The New Straits Times, 14 July 2008

ANWAR'S NO SHOW AT POLICE HQ

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's no-show at the city police headquarters yesterday to have his statement recorded could result in a warrant of arrest being issued against him. Criminal lawyers told the New Straits Times that the de facto Parti Keadilan Rakyat leader could also be charged for disobeying an order from a public servant, an offence punishable with jail and a fine. Anwar was supposed to turn up at city police headquarters at 2pm yesterday to have his statement recorded regarding a sodomy complaint filed by a former aide, Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan.

The Statesman, 15 July 2008

Arrest warrant against Anwar over sodomy charges

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysian police issued an arrest warrant today for Opposition leader Mr Anwar Ibrahim in connection with a sodomy accusation by a former male aide, his lawyer said. Counsel Sankara Nair said police told him Mr Anwar was formally "a suspect" in the case and faxed him a letter asking the politician to appear for questioning before Wednesday at 2 pm. "An arrest warrant on your client has been issued," said the letter, signed by investigating officer Mr Jude Pereira. Mr Nair distributed copies of the letter at a news conference held in Mr Anwar's house. Mr Anwar himself did not attend.

International Herald Tribune, 15 July 2008

Bali ignites spectacular Hindu celebration of the dead

UBUD, Indonesia: Tiny bits of bone, plucked from the ashes of a royal cremation, found their final resting place in the sea early Wednesday, empty of the soul that had been liberated by fire. It was the last step in an elaborate cremation ceremony three months in the making, the most spectacular royal funeral in Bali in at least three decades.

The Jakarta Post, 15 July 2008

Fuel price hikes dent Indonesian president's re-election hopes, say opinion polls

Fuel price rises have further hit the popularity of Indonesia's president, with a new opinion poll Tuesday showing him struggling to win re-election next year. Until this year, former military general Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono was seen by most political analysts as likely to win a second term at the head of the world's most populous Muslim nation. But several recent surveys - the latest released Tuesday by respected Jakarta-based think tank CSIS - show him falling behind his closet rival, former president and current opposition leader Megawati Sukarnoputri.

The Manila Times, 15 July 2008

OFW remittances stay resilient

MONEY sent home by overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) rose significantly in the first five months of the year due to steady growth of deployed workers, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said Tuesday. In a statement, BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said total remittances grew 14.7 percent year on-year to \$6.8 billion in the five-month period. In May alone, remittances rose 15.6 percent year on year to \$1.4 billion.

The Bangkok Post, 15 July 2008

Tempest in a temple

Supreme Commander Gen Boonsrang Niempradit has urged protesters in Si Sa Ket not to escalate tensions over the Preah Vihear temple, after three Thais crossed into the disputed border area.

The Times of India, 16 July 2008

Malaysian opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim released on bail

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, who was arrested over sodomy accusations, has been released from police custody after being granted bail, his lawyer said on Thursday. "He is freed, he is not feeling well and he's going straight home," lawyer Sankara Nair said.

The Jakarta Post, 16 July 2008

40% of all drugs in RI may be fake

Think twice about where you get your medicine these days, as it is estimated some 40 percent of all drugs in Indonesia may be counterfeit. The International Pharmaceutical Manufacturer Group (IPMG) announced Wednesday the figure was nearly double last year's, when counterfeits comprised 25 percent of all drugs in circulation. IPMG anti-counterfeit drugs committee head Thierry Powis said the increase was driven by higher demand for cheaper drugs coupled with weak legal measures tackling the fakes.

The Bangkok Post, 16 July 2008

Update: Border build-up

As both countries beef up military forces near the Preah Vihear temple, Thailand and Cambodia have called a special General Border Committee meeting for Monday to try to defuse tension over the brand new World Heritage Site. Lt-Gen Sujit Sithiprapa, commander of the Second Army in charge of the northeastern region, has closed Khao Phra Viharn national park in Kantharalak district of Si Sa Ket and sealed access to the border in the area, banning visitors from seeing the temple ruins from the Thai side.

Viet Nam News, 16 July 2008

US assists with textile development

HA NOI- US cotton associations have pledged to help Viet Nam develop its textile and garment industry during Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung's visit to the United States, according to the Viet Nam Textile and Apparel Association (VITAS).

The New Straits Times, 16 July 2008

MAS to pay US\$2.6b for Boeing planes

FARNBOROUGH: Malaysia Airlines (MAS) yesterday agreed to pay US\$2.6 billion (RM8.4 billion) for 35 next-generation Boeing 737-800 airplanes, to be delivered beginning 2010 and timed to benefit from a turnaround in the airline industry. The airline has also acquired purchase rights for an additional 20 aircraft, which it will only have to decide on from 2016 onwards.

The Statesman, 20 July 2008

Cambodia complains to UN about Thai 'incursion'

PREAH VIHEAR, Cambodia complained to the UN Security Council that Thai forces have violated its territory near a World Heritage Site temple, as more than 4,000 troops from the two sides were deployed in the border region today. The two countries were to hold talks Monday in Thailand aimed at resolving the dispute, but a Cambodian general said he had little hope they would succeed. Cambodia's mission at the United Nations submitted a letter to the chairman of the Security Council and the chairman of the General Assembly to "draw their attention to the current situation on the Cambodian-Thai border," information minister Mr Khieu Kanharith said today.

The Economic Times, 20 July 2008

Vietnam raises diesel, fuel oil by up to 36.8 pc

HANOI: Vietnam has raised retail prices of diesel by 14.3 per cent to 15,950 dong (\$0.97) per litre and the price for fuel oil has also jumped 36.8 per cent, top importer and retailer Petrolimex said on Monday. Petrolimex has raised the fuel oil price from 9,500 dong previously, the largest rise among its new retail prices of oil products in Vietnam, which has been battling double-digit inflation since last November.

International Herald Tribune, 20 July 2008

Thai politics ensnared in dispute over temple

KANTHARALAK, Thailand: Hundreds of Thai and Cambodian soldiers faced off at the ruins of an ancient Hindu temple here this weekend in a modern-day echo of the age-old clash of empires across Indochina. The temple, high on a bluff on a disputed patch of border, was the prize, but the target was more prosaic: an embattled government in Bangkok, where political insurgents are using a historical dispute as a weapon. Once lit, the fires of nationalism have spread in both nations; old grievances have flared, and troops and heavy weapons have been mobilized in the mists above the jungle.

The Jakarta Post, 20 July 2008

Bribery a mainstay for local businesses

Ten years into the reform movement, many businesses in the country are still engaging in corruption to ensure their financial success. Money for bribes remains a variable in a company's production costs, spent to ensure safe and timely delivery of goods, obtain business permits or win government projects, business players claim. At a workshop hosted by the Center for Strategic and International

Studies (CSIS) on governance problems, noted businessman Noke Kiroyan admitted such practices were considered "business as usual"

The Manila Times, 20 July 2008

Malaysian govt deports more

ZAMBOANGA CITY: More than 300 Filipinos arrested in Sabah have arrived here, as Malaysia continued its crackdown on undocumented workers in the oil-rich state. The deportees arrived by boat late Saturday afternoon from Sandakan City. They were herded onto trucks and brought to a government refugee shelter. The deportees, mostly from Sulu, Basilan and Tawi-Tawi provinces, all in the Muslim autonomous region, are to be sent to their home provinces after social workers gather information about them.

The Hindu, 21 July 2008

Suu Kyi comment "misunderstood"

SINGAPORE: The release of Myanmar's celebrated democracy campaigner Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest in Yangon is not on the cards until almost the end of next year. Myanmar's Foreign Minister Nyan Win had on Sunday made a comment, which was taken for a clear hint that Ms. Suu Kyi might be set free in about six months.

The Asian Age, 21 July 2008

Burmese junta formally ratifies Asean charter

Military-ruled Burma on Monday formally ratified the Asean Charter but observers doubted the junta will live up to the document's ideals on democracy and human rights. Foreign minister Nyan Win presented his country's ratification during an annual meeting of foreign ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

The Statesman, 21 July 2008

Malaysia's police chief sues Anwar for defamation

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's police chief sued Opposition leader Mr Anwar Ibrahim for alleged defamation Monday, piling legal pressure on the politician as he combats a sodomy accusation that has threatened his resurgent career. Inspector General of Police Mr Musa Hassan demanded unspecified compensation from Mr Anwar, who claimed earlier this month that Musa had fabricated evidence linked to Mr Anwar's assault by the country's former police chief in 1998.

International Herald Tribune, 21 July 2008

Thailand and Cambodia talks fail to end temple standoff

ARANYAPRATHET, Thailand: Talks between Thailand and Cambodia failed on Monday to end a military standoff over an ancient temple on their border, which regional neighbors feared could turn violent. Hundreds of troops facing each other at the temple for the past week will hold their positions, Thai and Cambodian negotiators said after eight hours of talks.

Viet Nam News, 21 July 2008

Gov't aims for \$61.2 billion in exports

HA NOI -Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade Bui Xuan Khu asked enterprises and commodity-chain associations to work at full capacity to raise their processing capabilities of exports, to reach the country's target export turnover of US\$61.2 billion this year, up 26 per cent over last year.

The Asian Age, 22 July 2008

'Suu Kyi will not be freed in 6 months'

Singapore: Burma's foreign minister has said pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi can be kept in detention legally until late 2009 and not until December 2008 as reported earlier, Singapore officials said on Tuesday. Burma foreign minister Nyan Win was misunderstood by his nine counterparts from the Asean during a dinner conversation on Sunday, said a foreign ministry official. Singapore foreign minister George Yeo subsequently passed on Mr Nyan Win's remarks to the media, which reported widely that a new glimmer of hope had been raised for Ms Suu Kyi's early

freedom.

The Statesman, 22 July 2008

Asean offers to mend relations

SINGAPORE, The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) offered its facility if neighbouring Thailand and Cambodia fail to solve their dispute over the Hindu temple of Preah Vihear peacefully, Singapore's Foreign Minister George Yeo said. In Asean chairman statement on the border stand-off between the two members, Yeo said the Asean foreign ministers decided to offer its facilities to be placed at the disposal of Cambodia and Thailand, in the event that they felt the need for further support to find an early resolution to the issue. The border stand-off between the two countries came into attention of the Asean as Cambodia raised the issue during a working dinner here Sunday night, prior to the formal meeting of the group's foreign minister meeting. The Asean foreign ministers were briefed by both Cambodia and Thailand on the situation in the area around the Temple of Preah Vihear and noted this with concern.

International Herald Tribune, 22 July 2008

Cambodia asks UN to intervene in 'imminent state of war' with Thailand

BANGKOK, Calling a border confrontation with Thailand "an imminent state of war," Cambodia asked the United Nations and its Southeast Asian neighbors to intervene Tuesday as hundreds of soldiers faced each other for the eighth day on the grounds of a disputed temple.

The Jakarta Post, 22 July 2008

Singapore turns ASEAN into all work, no play

And Singapore's Foreign Minister George Yeo is very serious in ensuring the success of the annual ASEAN meeting, which has been overshadowed by the dispute between Cambodia and Thailand, with Cambodia opting to directly report the dispute to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) before asking her neighbors for help and Thailand refusing to involve the regional group in resolving the conflict at all.

The Hindu, 22 July 2008

East Asia Summit explores free trade area prospects

SINGAPORE: The East Asia Summit (EAS), a "leaders-driven forum" with India, as also China and Japan in its fold, "is studying the feasibility of a free trade area among its 16 countries." This was indicated by an official spokesman for the Summit after the Foreign Ministers of the member-countries met in Singapore on Tuesday under the auspices of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). India was represented by Minister of State for External Affairs Anand Sharma. The EAS, which did not discuss the possibility of inviting the United States to join the forum, zeroed in on ways to enhance its "internal consolidation," the spokesman said.

The Statesman, 23 July 2008

ASEAN talks tough, little action on Myanmar

Singapore: ASEAN has expressed "deep disappointment" over Myanmar democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi's detention but the verbal swipe does not signal a major shift in attitude towards the junta, observers say. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which has been criticised in the past for its failure to act firmly against its renegade member, on Sunday issued one of its strongest statements yet on the issue.

The Financial Express, 23 July 2008

Singapore inflation holds at 26-yr high

Singapore's annual inflation held at a 26-year high in June, missing expectations for an acceleration and reducing pressure on the central bank to tighten monetary policy at a time when the global economy is slowing. Annual inflation held at 7.5 per cent in June, reflecting a rise in housing and food costs. Economists in a Reuters poll had forecast inflation to have picked up to 8 per cent, which would have the highest level since February 1982 when inflation hit 9 per cent

International Herald Tribune, 23 July 2008

Thai says Cambodia using 'guerrilla tactics' in temple dispute

BANGKOK: The Thai ambassador to the United Nations accused Cambodia on Wednesday of employing diplomatic "guerrilla tactics" in a dispute over an ancient temple to try to redraw the countries' 800-kilometer border. The ambassador, Don Pramudwinai, said the Cambodians were using a century-old map of the disputed temple, drawn up when Cambodia was a French colony, in a broader plan to gain more territory.

The Bangkok Post, 24 July 2008

UN to intervene

The United Nations Security Council will convene a special session, probably next week, to try to prevent a border dispute between Thailand and Cambodia from escalating into a military confrontation

The New Straits Times, 24 July 2008

ABDULLAH: Name of god and religion being abused to justify violence and terrorism

Many individuals and groups have abused the name of God and religion to justify violence and terrorism, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today. The prime minister said such extremism had been observed many times in the course of history and in each instance, the virtuous teachings of religion had been twisted and manipulated on behalf of one's religion, for the sake of political gain or personal profit.

The Times of India, 24 July 2008

US to renew ban on Myanmar imports

WASHINGTON: The US Congress has voted to renew a legislation banning all imports from military-ruled Myanmar and sent it for President George W. Bush's signature, lawmakers said on Thursday.

The Economic Times, 24 July 2008

Indonesia's Kencana opens 3.2 pc lower in Singapore

SINGAPORE: Shares in Indonesian palm oil firm Kencana Agri opened 3.2 per cent below their initial public offering (IPO) price of S\$0.305 at the start of trade in Singapore on Friday.

The Manila Times, 24 July 2008

ARMM move tied to 'Cha-cha'

The government proposal to postpone the elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) was a move aimed at amending the Constitution, Sen. Richard Gordon said on Thursday.

International Herald Tribune, 24 July 2008

Cambodia and Thailand to discuss land dispute

PHNOM PENH: Cambodia and Thailand have agreed to meet Monday to discuss a stretch of disputed land near a historic temple, rather than take the matter to the United Nations immediately, officials from both countries said Thursday.

The Times of India, 27 July 2008

Cambodians vote amid Thai temple stand-off

PHNOM PENH: Cambodians went to the polls on Sunday in an election overshadowed by a row with neighbouring Thailand over a 900-year-old temple that has inflamed nationalist passions and led to troop build-ups on the border. Both the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and the opposition Sam Rainsy Party (SRP) jumped on the dispute surrounding the Preah Vihear ruins, which sit on a jungle-clad escarpment separating the two southeast Asian countries.

Hindustan Times, 27 July 2008

Cambodia, Thailand open talks on border standoff

Foreign ministers from Cambodia and Thailand opened a new round of talks in Siem Reap on

Monday to try to resolve a nearly two-week military standoff over an ancient temple. Thousands of soldiers have deployed since July 15 to a small patch of land around the 11th-century Preah Vihear temple, which sits atop a mountain overlooking the Cambodian jungle.

The Statesman, 27 July 2008

Anwar eyes return to parliament

KUALA LUMPUR, July 27: Malaysia's Opposition figurehead Mr Anwar Ibrahim today said that he aims to return to parliament for the first time in a decade later this year if a court orders a by-election near his home town. A high court in Kedah state will hear a challenge on 19 August asking it to invalidate the result in a seat that was won by his Keadilan party in 8 March general elections. Mr Anwar told AFP that if the court declares the result null and void he will contest the ensuing by-election. "My plan is to contest in the Kulim-Bandar Baharu seat. I am optimistic of victory," he told AFP.

The Financial Express, 27 July 2008

Singapore inflation holds at 26-yr high

Singapore's annual inflation held at a 26-year high in June, missing expectations for an acceleration and reducing pressure on the central bank to tighten monetary policy at a time when the global economy is slowing.

International Herald Tribune, 27 July 2008

In Cambodia, land seizures push thousands of the poor into homelessness

ANDONG, Cambodia: When the monsoon rain pours through Mao Sein's torn thatch roof, she pulls a straw sleeping mat over herself and her three small children and waits until it stops. She and her children sit on a low table as floodwater rises, bringing with it the sewage that runs along the mud paths outside their shack. Mao Sein, 34, was resettled by the government here in an empty field two years ago, when the police raided the squatters' colony where she lived in Phnom Penh, the capital, 12 miles away.

Viet Nam News, 27 July 2008

VN, Japan strengthen strategic partnership

HA NOI - State President Nguyen Minh Triet says Viet Nam and Japan should increase high-level visits as well as exchanges between ministries, agencies and local authorities to strengthen their comprehensive co-operation and develop it into a strategic partnership

International Herald Tribune, 28 July 2008

Thai and Cambodian leaders begin talks

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia: The foreign ministers of Thailand and Cambodia met Monday to begin what they said would be protracted talks over a disputed mountaintop temple where soldiers from both nations have confronted each other since early this month. "The situation is not easing," a Cambodian government spokesman, Khieu Kanharith, said at a news conference here in the capital. "Thailand has continued to increase its military buildup." He said that Cambodia had 800 soldiers at the temple and Thailand about 3,000 troops. The Thai Foreign Ministry in Bangkok said that 400 Thai troops were facing as many as 1,700 Cambodian soldiers

The Bangkok Post, 28 July 2008

ELECTION ROUNDUP

Phnom Penh (dpa) - The dominant Cambodian People's Party (CPP) extended its lead Monday after weekend national elections, claiming at least 90 of the 123 seats in the National Assembly - 64 more than its nearest rival, the Sam Rainsy Party (SRP).

The Jakarta Post, 28 July 2008

Cabinet ministers implicated in BI graft

The Bank Indonesia corruption saga has expanded to the President's Cabinet, with new testimony implicating two ministers once tasked with amending the BI Law. Golkar Party lawmaker Hamka

Yandhu testified that National Development Planning Minister Paskah Suzetta and Forestry Minister Malam Sambat Ka'ban accepted around Rp 1 billion and Rp 300 million, respectively, when he distributed Rp 31.5 billion in cash from then BI communications bureau head Rusli Simanjuntak in 2003.

The Manila Times, 28 July 2008

GMA rejects calls to scrap consumption tax

President Gloria Arroyo on Monday turned down appeals to scrap an unpopular sales tax because of surging inflation, warning that food and fuel prices would likely remain high. In her annual State of the Nation Address (SONA), she expressed support, though, for calls to extend the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program for another five years. The program expired in June.

The Asian Age, 28 July 2008

Malay temples can now get priests from abroad

Kuala Lumpur, Registered Hindu temples in the country can get foreign help in hiring priests, musicians and artisans, said human resource minister S. Subramaniam. Approval would only be given for new recruitments. Temples having requirement of the services of such people could file in their applications from now, he said in a statement here on Sunday. Mr Subramaniam, who is also the Cabinet representative for the Indian community, said the temples concerned must get his endorsement before filling in their application.

The Times of India, 29 July 2008

Anwar fights sodomy claim with doc's report

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian opposition figure Anwar Ibrahim produced a doctor's report on Tuesday that he said showed his accuser had not been sodomised, as he tries to fend off criminal allegations in his drive to unseat the government.

The Statesman, 29 July 2008

Malaysia priests

Kuala Lumpur, Registered Hindu temples in the country can get foreign help in hiring priests, musicians and artisans, said Human Resource Minister S. Subramaniam. Approval would only be given for new recruitments

Viet Nam News, 29 July 2008

France, Viet Nam 'move to higher, mutual plane'

Ha Noi - France and Viet Nam have agreed to promote their relationship to a higher plane "for mutual benefit". This was the outcome of a meeting yesterday between the National Assembly Chairman Nguyen Phu Trong and visiting French Senate Chairman, Christian Poncelet

The Manila Times, 29 July 2008

July inflation still at double digits

THE Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) expects inflation to have remained at the double-digit level last month as a result of higher food and oil prices and costlier utilities. BSP Governor Amando Tandangco Jr. said the central bank projects inflation to have hit 11 percent to 12 percent in July from 11.4 percent in June.

The Jakarta Post, 29 July 2008

40m people lack access to finance services: SBY

Geographical constraints and poor business infrastructure have left millions of low-income people across the country without access to the most modest financial services, the President says. "Today, we have more than 50,000 micro-financing institutions, among the most in the world, yet some 40 million Indonesians are still lacking access to any of the services," President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono said during the opening ceremony of the Asia-Pacific regional micro-credit summit Monday.

The Asian Age, 30 July 2008

Junta skimmed off £5m cyclone aid

London, The United Nations has admitted that 5 million pounds in aid intended for Burmese cyclone survivors has been skimmed off by banks run by the country's military junta. The missing money is likely to have lined the pockets of the ruling generals and their business cronies. The scam, which is still occurring, involves forcing the UN to buy the local currency, the Kyat, at above the market rate by changing money through government backed Foreign Exchange Certificates (FEC).

The Financial Express, 30 July 2008

FDI for Vietnam hits record USD 45 bn

Foreign direct investment pledged for Vietnam in the first seven months of the year has hit a record USD 45.3 billion, up 373 percent from the same period a year ago and surpassing the record of USD 21.3 billion for all of 2007, the government said on Tuesday.

International Herald Tribune, 30 July 2008

Thai court accepts another case against Thaksin

BANGKOK, The Thai Supreme Court accepted Wednesday a lawsuit alleging abuse of power by Thaksin Shinawatra, the ousted prime minister, in connection with a government loan to Myanmar. It was the fourth case to go to court involving allegations of corruption and abuse of power against Thaksin, who was deposed in a September 2006 military coup. The first hearing is set for Sept. 16, a court statement said.

The Bangkok Post, 30 July 2008

Oil Fund subsidies may fall

The Energy Ministry is considering cutting some petrol subsidies supported by the state Oil Fund to reflect declining oil prices and reduce subsidy costs. The National Energy Policy Council would discuss the issue tomorrow, said Energy Minister Poonpirom Liptapanlop.

Viet Nam News, 30 July 2008

Huge boost in battle to beat poverty

HA NOI--The World Bank and the Government of Viet Nam have signed a credit agreement worth US\$150 million to boost the country's efforts to eradicate hunger and alleviate poverty.

The Times of India, 31 July 2008

Ousted Thai PM Thaksin's wife found guilty of tax evasion

BANGKOK, Thailand: The wife of ousted Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra was found guilty on Thursday of evading millions of dollars in taxes and sentenced to three years in prison. The landmark ruling against Pojaman Shinawatra strikes a major blow to Thaksin, who was ousted in a 2006 coup, and has long denied any wrongdoing by his family in the tax case and several other corruption cases against his inner circle.

The Asian Age, 31 July 2008

Anwar's threat is just a bluff, says Badawi

Malaysia's leader on Thursday dismissed his rival Anwar Ibrahim's threat to seize power as a "bluff," but ruled out imposing emergency measures if street violence breaks out to protest a sodomy accusation against the opposition figurehead. In an interview with the Associated Press, Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi also promised justice would be served in the sodomy case against Mr Anwar, the second time he is facing such an accusation. While denying any government conspiracy, he indicated that the complaint to police made by a 23-year-old former aide of being sodomised by Mr Anwar would not be taken lightly.

The Economic Times, 31 July 2008

Malaysia to cut fuel prices soon -report

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia will cut fuel prices soon, Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was quoted on Friday as saying by the official Bernama news agency. The agency did not elaborate

on the move which comes after the government cut some fuel subsidies earlier this year.

The Financial Express, 31 July 2008

Dog meat traders arrested in Philippines

Six people illegally selling dog meat have been arrested and are facing up to four years jail in a fresh crackdown in the northern Philippines, officials said. Animal rights activists from the London-based Animal Kingdom Foundation (AKF) accompanied police as they raided a public market near the northern mountain city of Baguio.

International Herald Tribune, 31 July 2008

Wife of Anwar quits Parliament

KUALA LUMPUR: The wife of Anwar Ibrahim resigned from her seat in the Malaysian Parliament on Thursday, enabling him to contest it and ultimately pursue the post of prime minister, which he has coveted for decades. The announcement by Anwar's wife, Azizah Ismail, comes at a time of turmoil in Malaysian politics, with the party that has governed the country since independence from Britain in 1957 seemingly unable to bounce back from electoral losses in March and Anwar's increasingly confident political allies ascendant in the polls.