

FUZIAH KARTINI HASSAN BASRI, ARFAH YUSOF,
MOHD. SAFAR HASIM & NORMAH MUSTAFA

ASEAN on Malaysia on 31st August 2001: A Study of Online Newspapers

Introduction

The Bangkok Declaration of 1967 established the regional grouping of ASEAN with five member countries, namely Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia. By 1999 all the ten Southeast Asian nations came within the ASEAN fold when Brunei Darussalam joined in 1984, Vietnam in 1995, Laos and Myanmar in 1997, and Cambodia in 1999. As an organization, ASEAN holds the vision that by 2020 it will become "a concert of Southeast Asian nations, outward looking, living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies" (<http://www.aseansec.org/summit/vision97.htm>).

As ASEAN moves into the new millennium, it holds on strongly to the spirit and consciousness of the Bangkok Declaration which states that "in an increasingly interdependent world, the cherished ideals of peace, freedom, social justice and economic well-being are best attained by fostering good understanding, good neighborliness and meaningful cooperation among the countries of the region already bound together by ties of history and culture" (<http://www.aseansec.org/history/leader67.htm>). Further, ASEAN aims to promote goodwill and solidarity amidst the diversities it is built upon so that "our mountains, rivers and seas no longer divide us but link us together in friendship, cooperation

and commerce" (<http://www.aseansec.org/summit/vision97.htm>).

ASEAN realized that as a regional grouping, it needs to foster knowledge, interest and understanding among its peoples. In this matter the role of the mass media is acknowledged. Throughout ASEAN's 34-year history, the mass media has always "been an effective instrument for distributing the messages of ASEAN" and thus must be further utilized to promote "the work of ASEAN and its vision for the future" (<http://www.aseansec.org/asc/r9900/ar99007.htm>). In this digital age, the power of the mass media is so much more than ever before.

This paper is concerned with one particular medium – the newspaper – and in this digital age, it is only apt to turn our attention to its online version. The purpose of the paper is to look at how some selected online newspapers in/of ASEAN countries can help promote goodwill, understanding and solidarity among the citizens of its member countries. It uses one particular case in view and does not intend to be all-encompassing and exhaustive. In addition it is very much exploratory and basic. Malaysia celebrates its independence on August 31st. How then, do online newspapers of ASEAN countries cover/ report on Malaysia on that particular day? Before we try to answer the question, let us examine several issues relevant to the topic at hand.

Defining online newspapers

Dominick (2002) observes that the newspaper industry is still experimenting to find the best way to incorporate an online presence with the traditional print editions. Online companies were doing well in the beginning of the digital age so much so, they seem to be stealing readers and advertising revenues away from the print media. Not to be outdone, many newspapers rushed to set up websites. The earliest newspaper sites were simply watered-down versions of the printed paper. Nowadays, online newspapers have embraced e-commerce with banner ads and links to various retailers.

Online newspapers share some defining features with print newspapers. These include:

- i. an adverse content - contain international, national and local news with features, editorials, sports, ads,

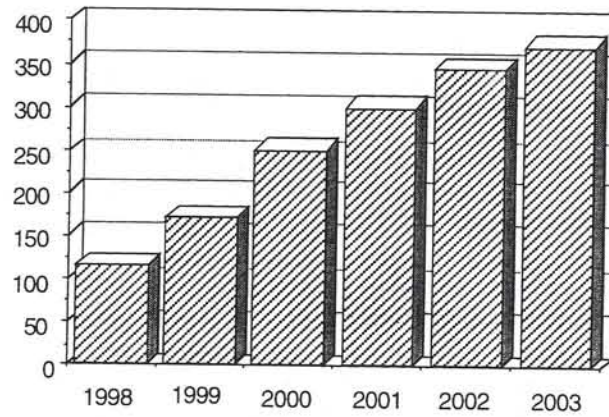
- and so on;
- ii. an organized format – packaged accordingly with sections, subsections, headlined and columnized;
- iii. localized and contextualized reporting;
- iv. function as a historical record;
- v. perform the watchdog role;
- vi. timely – no stale news, only fresh and recent; and
- vii. contains pictures, images and graphics.

The advent of the Internet has indeed changed the mode of delivery of newspapers. Coupled with the growth of Internet users worldwide, it is clear that online newspapers are here to stay. ITU and other sources indicate that Internet growth worldwide is remarkable, and by 2003, it is predicted to go beyond the 350 million mark. It is also predicted that by 2005, 68 percent of online users will be outside of North America (<http://www.commerce.net/research/stats/stats.html>). In the Asia-Pacific rim, there were about 15 million Internet users in 1998, and a year later, the figure almost doubled up to 27 million. ASEAN, being a part of the Asia-Pacific rim, is no doubt catching up with the rest of the world in terms of getting connected.

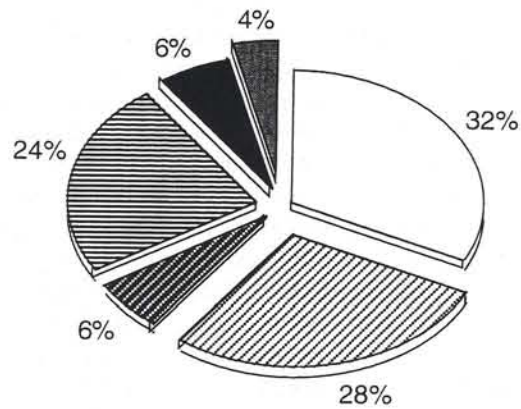
According to MediaLinks – Online Media Directory, there are 4840 sites of online newspaper throughout the world. In Asia, 218 sites are available, of which 58 are ASEAN sites (<http://www.emedia1.mediainfo.com/emedial/asia.htm>). For a developing region, this is a relatively encouraging figure.

Thus in all of the ASEAN countries, newspapers are not only available in the conventional form – the printed version, but also in the online version available through the World Wide Web. As a result, Internet edition of the newspapers are available online even before the conventional newspapers hit the road. There is one significant difference, however – the online newspapers are accessible throughout the world. For example, if a Malaysian is overseas, he/she may still read the home newspaper by just hooking up on the Internet. In the pre-Internet days, one has to wait between three to four weeks to read some news from the home newspaper. Nowadays, many conventional newspapers in ASEAN have their own online editions. Some newspapers in ASEAN are quick to grab the opportunity of the Internet technology. For instance, *Republika*, a modest-sized newspaper in Indonesia, was among the first to publish an online edition.

Internet Growth Worldwide (millions)

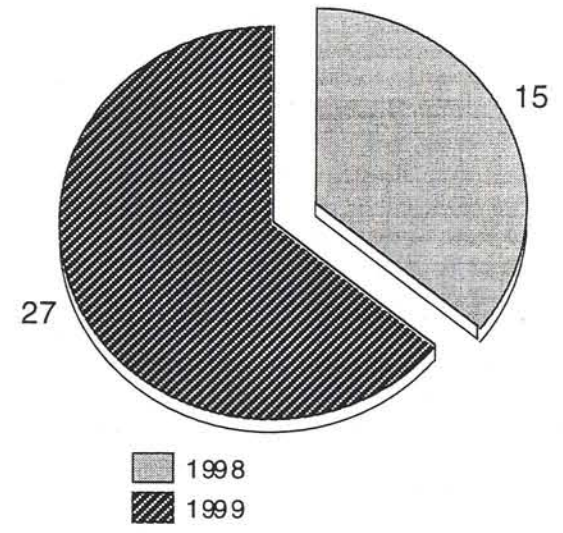


By 2005, 68% of online users will be outside of North America

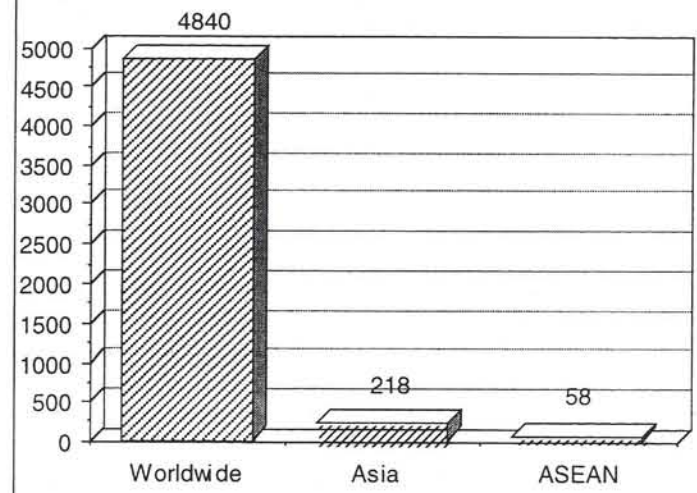


- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| North America | Asia Pacific |
| Western Europe | South/Central America |
| Eastern Europe | Middle East/Africa |

Online Users in Asia/Pacific Rim (millions)



**Online Newspapers
(as listed by MediaLinks-Online Media Directory)**



In Malaysia, the first newspaper to go online was The Star. Others include New Straits Times, Utusan Malaysia, Utusan Express, Berita Harian, Nanyang Siang Pau, Sin Chew Jit Poh, and The Sarawak Tribune. Bernama, the national news agency, is also available online. There is also a totally online newspaper in Malaysia, Malaysiakini. In Singapore, The Straits Times, Berita Harian, and Lianhe Zaobao are among newspapers available online. In Brunei Darussalam, Borneo Bulletin and Pelita Brunei can be accessed through their websites. In Thailand, among Thai language newspapers available online are Daily News, Krungthep Turakij, Paojadikam, and Thai Rath, while the English newspapers are Bangkok Post, Business Day, and Nation.

In Vietnam, Saigon Daily, Vietnam News, and Nhan Dhan are available online. Phnom Pehn Post and Cambodia Daily are two Cambodian online newspapers. In Myanmar, of the three newspapers only New Light of Myanmar is available online. Albeit so, The Burma Net is an online newspaper available for Myanmar, probably operating from outside of the country. In the Philippines, about a dozen newspapers have gone online and these include Bohol Times, Business World, Chinese Commercial News of Manila, The Filipino Express, The Journal, Manila Bulletin, The Manila Times, Philippine Daily Inquirer, The Philippine Reporter, Today, and The Philippine Star. The Freeman and Sun Star Daily in Cebu City are also available online. In Indonesia, among newspapers available online are Kompas Daily, Media Indonesia, Republika, Ummat, and The Jakarta Post. For Lao PDR, we discovered Vientiane Times as the only online newspaper available.

The 31st August Study

As aforementioned, the current study is exploratory in nature and does not purport to be all encompassing and comprehensive. The main idea here is to discover if there is an effort by the online newspapers to provide coverage on Malaysia in lieu of its independence day on August 31st. It is assumed that in the spirit of goodwill and solidarity of ASEAN, member countries would certainly report on the member country celebrating its independence day, if not a substantial coverage, at least a congratulatory message.

Perhaps this is a naïve assumption, but it is based on a common practice of print newspapers in Malaysia to provide some coverage about a country on its independence or national day.

We managed to access nine online newspapers on 31st August 2001 for the purpose of the study. The randomly selected newspapers are Borneo Bulletin Online (Brunei Darussalam); Phnom Pehn Post (Cambodia); The Jakarta Post (Indonesia); Vientiane Times (Lao PDR); The Burma Net (Myanmar); The Straits Times Interactive (Singapore); Bangkok Post (Thailand); The Philippine Star (the Philippines); and Vietnam News (Vietnam). The following is some brief accounts of the above newspapers.

The Borneo Bulletin was launched as a printed daily newspaper in 1990, after 38 years as a weekly tabloid in Brunei Darussalam. It is the only English daily that is published in Brunei and is the main source of information for the latest local, regional, and international news. Its online version includes a Malay language segment entitled Media Permata.

Phnom Pehn Post is an English-language newspaper. It is the oldest and most comprehensive independent newspaper covering Cambodia today. Since its founding in 1992, the printed edition has been published on a fortnightly basis and read in Cambodia and worldwide by over 20 000 people in more than 40 countries.

The Jakarta Post.com is more than just an extension of The Jakarta Post daily newspaper. As the largest English newspaper in Indonesia, The Jakarta Post has anticipated the online trend and has dedicated a considerable amount of time and resources to preparing its website. It carries local stories that appear in the printed version and has news flashes which are updated as each story develops.

At the time of writing, we did not have any information on the Vientiane Times (although we e-mailed the webmaster for some facts) and Bangkok Post. The Burma Net is an online newspaper covering Myanmar and is published in English and Burmese. It was established in 1994 and probably originates from outside of the country (we could not verify this at the time of writing).

The Straits Times is one of the region's oldest English daily newspaper and is the flagship publication of the publicly-listed Singapore Press Holdings group. It was first

published on July 15, 1845 and is the most widely read newspaper in Singapore. The Straits Times has nine bureaus in Asia, one in Washington, and a worldwide network of other contributors.

The Philstar.com or the Philippine Star is one of the Philippines' leading English broadsheets. It was launched as online in March 1997 as a news and infotainment portal especially designed for the Filipino global community. In August 2000, the Philippine Star experienced a rebirth when it was launched again as the mega-portal for the Filipino global community.

Vietnam News was a modest four-page newspaper when it was first published in 1991. Stories were written, edited and proofed by hand. Since then, Vietnam's major English language daily, published seven days a week, has matched the rapid strides taken by the country in its economic renovation and integration with regional and world economies.

Thus those were the online ASEAN newspapers that we looked into to answer our basic question in the study. The findings are displayed in Table 1 and Table 2. Out of the nine newspapers, only four carried some news items about Malaysia on its auspicious day. Table 1 indicates that The Jakarta Post (Indonesia) carried 2 news items about Malaysia, Bangkok Post (Thailand) had 5, Straits Times Interactive (Singapore) 5, and Borneo Bulletin (Brunei Darussalam) 10.

Findings
TABLE 1

Country	News on Malaysia	Segments
Vietnam	-	-
Laos	-	-
Myanmar	-	-
Cambodia	-	-
Philippines	-	-
Indonesia	2	Sports
Thailand	5	1-Sports 4-Business
Brunei	10	5-world news 2-lokcal (Malay languages) 3-Media Permata(Malay Languages)
Singapore	5	5-special segment on Malaysia

TABLE 2

Country	News Headlines
Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KL vows to sweep badminton golds - Main batch of Indonesian athletes to depart on Sept 5
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tresa Roberts prepares for KL Sea Games - Police nab fraud ring for selling cellular phones in Malaysia - Smart partners to make content for wireless services - Shin soft launch in Malaysia next month
Brunei Darussalam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Officials set to hold elections in Sarawak - Off-limits to Sabah's "lost World" - Call for wildlife corridor between Danum Maliau - Likas bi-election: Chong files fresh petition - Nod to deportation - Royal messages to KL - Brunei delegates attend KL education congress - Baginda sultan utus tahniah kepada Malaysia - Liang hulur sumbangan - Brunei tetap sasaran emas
Singapore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Favours for Malaysia overdue: Mahathir - Carve a niche for edge over China - Airline bars man for previous unruly behaviour - Pilgrims' fund clerk detained over \$3.2m theft - Laid-off Malaysian in no hurry to get jobs

The two items in The Jakarta Post were sports news. Bangkok Post had a sports story too. This is understandable since the period studied was just a few weeks away from the Kuala Lumpur Sea Games. The other four items in the Bangkok Post were business and crime news. Singapore's Straits Times Interactive, like the printed version, has a special segment on Malaysia. The five items covered about Malaysia on 31st August 2001 were current events; two dealt with Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's speeches at a social luncheon and a part of the national day speech; one news was about Malaysia Airlines, another one about Tabung Haji's recent fiasco; and lastly one write-up about retrenched Malaysian workers in Singapore.

Brunei's Borneo Bulletin had 10 stories on Malaysia. This online newspaper has a Malay segment labelled Media Permata. In both the English and Malay sections, there were news items about Malaysia. More of these news were related to happenings in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah - Malaysia's Borneo state which is the immediate neighbor of Brunei. Borneo Bulletin is the only online ASEAN newspaper discovered to report on the congratulatory messages sent by the Brunei government to Malaysia in relations to its national day.

Discussion

The findings of the study demolishes our naive assumption that all the online newspapers around ASEAN would have some stories about Malaysia on its significant day. Perhaps our assumption is unfounded and unscientific, yet we would like to think that sometimes common sense and idealistic notions are more pragmatic than any other ideologies or beliefs. If ASEAN is to achieve what it strives for as stated in its fundamental philosophy and documented in its Vision 2020 rhetoric, then its mass media I:- must be committed to a more integrated role of the promoter and the strategist in the II public relations agenda. After all, this is very much grounded in the spirit of the Bangkok Declaration which we believe is still firmly held by all member countries.

In addition to that, we believe that online newspapers do not have to follow the sensational model of news gathering and reporting, and that not all news must be sensational in order to attract the reader. Why not use online newspapers for a more positive role of the harmonizer or the integrator? Are newspapers not effective tools of public relations? Can newspapers not be an arm of A SEAN to foster better understanding and goodwill among its citizens? Will journalists lose their credentials and credibilities if they become companions of the powers that be? Certainly, not!

Our findings suggest that the principle of proximity - geographical. historical. and cultural, - is important in determining news selection or coverage. It appears that countries geographically. historically and culturally closer to Malaysia provide more coverage on her compared to those further away. It is generally known that Singapore. Thailand, Indonesia. and Brunei Darussalam are geographically.

historically and culturally closer to Malaysia compared to Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia and Lao PDR. Moreover, the former countries (with the exception of Brunei) are the initial members of ASEAN, while the latter countries are more recent members. Brunei, however, has always been closed to Malaysia historically, and the Sultan and his royal household are like family to the royal houses of the states in Peninsular Malaysia.

Previously, Syed Arabi and Mohd. Safar (1989) discovered a similar trend in news coverage. Their 1989 study of Malaysian newspapers found that although there are ten countries in Southeast Asia, only stories from four countries were used in Malaysian newspapers, namely Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia. In another study, Mohd Safar (1991) found that Singapore continue to lead news usage in Malaysian newspapers, followed by the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia.

Our study also found that most of the news about Malaysia in the online newspapers are sourced from both news agencies and their own journalists. For example the piece on Prime Minister Mahathir's speech in Singapore's Straits Times Interactive came from Reuters and Bernama. Borneo Bulletin's pieces on Malaysia are mostly done by their own journalists on the beat. Tiffen (1978) observed that news agencies form the backbone of international reporting in Southeast Asian countries. Scheller (1983) found that Western news agencies are a major source of news for Asian countries, the national news agencies rated higher in importance by respondents.

Conclusion

The Internet has indeed change the mediascape of most societies in the world. ASEAN, as a fast-growing region, is not far behind. Online newspapers are becoming increasingly popular in the ASEAN region. ASEAN nations recognize the potential of online newspapers to help develop "an awareness and positive opinion of ASEAN." Among its member countries, it is crucial that bridges are strongly built and new frontiers successfully explored.

The Internet is not to be ignored because its possibilities for a better ASEAN are endless. Studies have indicated that

virtual connections on the Net have managed to foster community bonding more than ever before (Glogoff. 2001). It is thus not impossible that online ASEAN newspapers can foster such bonding among ASEAN people. Moreover, the fear that the Internet may erode local cultures has no conclusive empirical support, rather it is shown to be otherwise. For instance, Hongladarom (2001), in a case study in Thailand, demonstrates that Thai culture co-opts the Internet. Hongladarom argues that the relationship between computer-mediated communication technologies and local cultures is characterized neither by a homogenizing effect, where the technologies bring about one global monolithic culture, nor by an erecting of barriers separating one culture from another, where there is no impact at all. Instead, local cultures usually find ways to cope with the impact and are resilient enough to absorb it without losing some kind of identity.

The growth of online newspapers in ASEAN is encouraging. Nevertheless, there is always much room for improvement so that they may carry the spirit of ASEAN to a higher level than today. Even though we do not claim any generalization from our little exploration of online ASEAN newspapers, we believe we can still offer several suggestions to this endeavor:

- i. Firstly, we would like to suggest that online ASEAN newspapers provide in a more consistent manner an inter-ASEAN coverage. If all member countries can do so, then knowledge and information of each other can be better distributed and understood.
- ii. Secondly, in relations to the above, an ASEAN column or page should be established in all of the online ASEAN newspapers. Among the items to be included in this column or page are learning the languages of ASEAN, introducing the arts and cultures of ASEAN, listing an e-pal column, and fostering community bonding through an ASEAN chatgroups, besides news of current events, business, sports, entertainment and human interest stories.
- iii. Thirdly, it is deemed important that on auspicious occasions of the member countries, such as national days and so on, special write-ups ala advertorials

be published in the online newspapers. Some may think that this is trivial and petty, but we believe that there is nothing silly about being good and sincere neighbors. At the very least, this may benefit tourism in ASEAN which is undeniably a big income earner for the region.

- iv. Fourthly, it is best that online ASEAN newspapers formulate the most interactive and user-friendly models for their websites so as to encourage hits and visits. Some of the sites that we accessed for the study are not as user-friendly and interactive as we expected them to be. This made it rather irritating and bothersome to browse the sites. As stated by Deuze (2001), online journalism is the "fourth" kind of journalism that differs in its characteristic from traditional types of journalism. Online journalism can be functionally differentiated from other kinds of journalism by using its technological component as a determining factor in terms of (operational) definition. The online journalist has to make decisions on which media formats best tell a certain story (multimediality), has to allow room for options for the public to respond, interact or even customize certain stories (interactivity) and must consider ways to connect the story to other stories, archives, resources and so on through hyperlinks (hypertextuality).
- v. We would also like to suggest that portals or links be established for the r- ASEAN region. Perhaps COCI and the e-ASEAN project can include this idea. It is also through links and portals that one who has accessed, say Singapore's Straits Times Interactive, may access Brunei's Borneo Bulletin and Malaysia's The Star without having to leave the initial web site accessed.
- vi. Last but not least, newspapers and journalists in the region need to redefine their mission so as to benefit from the advent and growth of ICT and ICT communities in the region. Lapham (1995) noted that in addition to improving the delivery of news, ICT can improve the research and news gathering processes of newspapers. Unlike the one-to-many

model where information came from the top, news on the Internet bubbles up from the bottom and meanders its way upward. The daily reality of the many-to-many model means that the journalist now has a chance to really know and interact with his or her audience that goes way beyond traditional letters to the editor. This closer interaction ideally lead to a better knowledge of the audience, and writing and reporting that more closely reflect readers' values and interests.

As a concluding remark, we reiterate that online journalism and newspapers can help much in the fostering of goodwill and solidarity of the ASEAN people. The newspaper, in its printed version, has always been a useful tool to set the agenda and attain the objectives of a nation. With online newspapers, the effect may be more immediate, meaningful and significant. The current scenario indicates that ASEAN has still to trudge a long and winding road ahead in order to benefit fully from online newspapers. Albeit so, we are having a great beginning and we must persevere so as not to be left behind in the digital age.

Authors

Fuziah Kartini Hassan Basri, Arfah Yusof & Normah Mustafa are lecturer at School of Media and Communication Studies,Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Mohd Safar Hasim, Ph.D is Professor of Journalism at the School of Media and Communication Studies,Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

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Appendix:

Websites of ASEAN Online Newspapers

Borneo Bulletin

Your gateway to Borneo **ON-LINE**

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2001

The Borneo Bulletin was launched on September 3rd 1990, as a daily newspaper after 38 years as a weekly tabloid in Brunei Darussalam. It is the only English daily newspaper that is published in Brunei Darussalam, a country with one of the highest per capita incomes in Asia. The Borneo Bulletin is the main source of information for the latest local, regional and international news.

The Borneo Bulletin maintains an independent editorial policy while adhering to objective, fair and factual coverage of news and information. International news is covered through satellite linked Reuters, AFP, dpa and AP wire and photo service. It provides prospective investors and business oriented with details of Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and regional stock markets, as well as other commercial information. The Borneo Bulletin is available from Monday to Friday and Borneo Bulletin Weekend is circulated on Saturday and Sunday. It is available in Brunei Darussalam, Sabah and Sarawak respectively.

• *Local* • *Borneo* • *Sports* •

WORLD NEWS

*Iran will not provide
help to US, allies*

TEHRAN (AP) - Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Wednesday said Tehran would not "provide any help to America or its allies in their attack" against Afghanistan, state radio reported.

• Mega support for US faces opposition

<http://www.brunei.bn/news/v0b1bu0hu.htm>

10:17:01



Cambodia's Independent News & Views

Volume 10 Issue 21, October 12 - 25, 2001

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Full edition (subscribers only)

By Bill Balabridge
A letter from the Ministry of Social Affairs, Labor, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation (MOSALVY) claims that 316 cases of international adoption have been processed since the adoption moratorium was lifted in March.

By Bill Bainbridge
A Cambodian government source involved in human trafficking issues has said the government has been carefully scrutinizing Afghan arrivals in the aftermath of the attacks on the United States.

CAMBODIA ONLINE DIRECTORY

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Anything about Laos, We Post Here!

- 2001-2002 socio-economic development plan and state budget approved** (Laos NA or backup)
 The plan also expects US\$ 403 million of foreign aid & loans, 8% up over the previous year. Of this, US\$ 241 million will be of grant aid & US\$ 162 million will be loans. In the front of poverty reduction, efforts will be made to
- Anti-drug fund goes to schools and rehab clinics** (Vientiane Times or backup)
 Funds came from various sectors, NGOs, governments and businessmen. The biggest donation was the US embassy with US\$ 82,000. The big fund will help the victims of drug addiction, and assist in the construction
- HR development facilities opened at National University** (Vientiane Times or backup)
 The Faculty of Economics and Management and the Lao-Japan Human Resource Cooperation Centre had been under construction from Aug. 2000 until Sept. 2001. About US\$ 10 million was spent in the construction of
- 2nd Mekong Friendship bridge construction delay** (Laos NA or backup)
 The 2nd Mekong bridge construction project, which was expected to be completed in Savannakhet & open in the year 2003, has had its completion date moved back to 2005. The construction delay has been caused by
- Laos frees 3 Thaijs** (Bangkok Post)
 Three Thai men jailed in Laos for illegal entry were yesterday found at Chong Mek border pass in this northeastern province. One of them, identified as Sunthorn Thaisarree, was suffering from malnutrition
- Biologist rediscovers longest-legged spider by chance** (Ananova)
 He has named the spider as Heteropoda maxima. It was brought back from Laos by a cave explorer and belongs to the family of giant crab spiders. Sparassidae. Its body measures between four and five centimetres.
- Nationwide crackdown on illegal labour begins in two weeks** (Bangkok Post)
 Employees serving restaurants, hotels, bars, massage parlours and karaoke bars made up the biggest group of applicants before yesterday, 94,279 of whom were Burmese, 20,818 from Laos, and 7,519 others from Cambodia.
- The rest of stories from Vientiane Times
 ... Val Phou preservation one step closer
 ... Making new technologies work for development
 ... Defense delegation on official visit to France and more
- The rest of stories from Laos NA
 ... Nouthak Pounsavanh visit Bolikhamxay
 ... Training course on NA elections opens
 ... Bolikhamxay marks Child Rights Day
- National campaign against drugs opens in Vientiane** (Laos NA or backup)
 A meeting to open the National Campaign against Drugs under the theme 'A nation against drugs, a future for the children, the duty of all' was opened at the National Culture Hall. PIM Boungnang Vorachit took part in the ceremony
- Chinese cable TV to set up in Laos** (Laos NA or backup)
 Under the terms of the agreement, the Lao Govt will allow the company to proceed with the cable TV business in Laos for ten years with an initial capital investment of US\$ 2,355,400 & the Chinese company will hold 65%
- Da Nang University helps train Lao students** (Vietnam NA)

News 8

NA

Web St

- 41,728 visit
- 64,471 visit
- 103,735 visit
- 125,118 visit
- 99,871 visit
- 99,402 visit
- 65,132 visit
- 23,874 visit
- 7,731 visit
- 235 visit

Emails readers

Did Yang P...
 you visit...
 country? Th...
 German go...
 in 1920. Fe...
 Doe la you.

I was vely &...
 more at La...
 Association...
 U.S. I mean...
 really want t...
 this fig. If...
 media's ob...
 presentatio...
 are very dif...
 are presece...
 accuracy to

MORE
 Reader E

The Burmanet News

An on-line newspaper covering Burma (Myanmar)

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President Arroyo's image appears on a giant TV screen while she delivers her message during the inauguration of the Malampaya Deep Water Gas-to-Power project at the Shell refinery in Tabangao, Batangas City yesterday. - REVOL CORTEZ

Headline News
GMA opens Malampaya gas field

Batangas City — President Arroyo inaugurated yesterday the landmark Malampaya Deep Water Gas-to-Power project of the on-shore gas plant inside the Shell refinery in Barangay Tabangao here, hailing it as the start of the Philippines' "expedance from oil importation."

- Full Story
- Avoid RP, Japanese advised
 - Estrada getting fair trial
 - Execution of drug convicts pressed

Opinion
EDITORIAL - Soldiers, kidnappers

Members of the uniformed services should not wonder why they are suffering from an image problem. This week police arrested two soldiers for the abduction of three children. Army Sergeants Joselim Arnuco of the 3rd Infantry Division and Virgilio Corpuz of the Civil Affairs Group at Fort Bonifacio were apprehended...

- Full Story
- BY THE WAY by Max V. Soliman
 - JAYWALKER by Art A. Borja
 - POSTSCRIPT by Federico D. Pascual II

Metro Manila
Foreigners in drug raid face deportation raps

The three Americans and the British national who were arrested Saturday in Quezon City along with nine Filipinos for possession of Ecstasy pills turned out to be undocumented aliens, police said yesterday.

- Full Story
- QC looking for a new campus
 - Manila launches drive against stray dogs, cats
 - Drug testing program for drivers suspended

Nation
Paras bares P39-B PNR rehab plan

A plan to expand and rehabilitate the Philippine National Railways (PNR) system to ease travel to and from key destinations around the country is

Business
Investors snap up P35-B worth of zero coupon bonds

Investors lapped up the Bureau of Treasury's initial offering of 10-year zero coupon bonds yesterday, tendering bids totaling P137.08 billion against government's offering of P30 billion.

- Full Story
- Cuzco sees slower GDP growth this year
 - Money supply growth slows in August
 - NTC starts consultations on interconnection fees

Entertainment
Says the Raven, 'Nevermore!'

You see, June and husband Angelo Castro's ex-daughter-in-law Raven Villanueva (divorced from the couple's son Diego Castro) is also in the movie, having her belated "debut" as a bold star.

- Full Story
- Dirak Cyril's Kama
 - Songs in A minor by Alca Keys
 - Garcia: Out of the beltwagon



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Poorest to get bulk of shares

THE poorest Singaporeans, about 441,000 of them, will each be richer by at least \$1,400 from next month. They will be getting the lion's share of the New Singapore Shares (NSS), 1,400 shares worth \$1 each. [Full Story](#)

[Full story](#)

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BREAKING NEWS

US cracks down on anthrax pranksters
WASHINGTON - American law enforcers threatened to crack down on pranksters behind a spate of anthrax hoaxes and indicted a Connecticut man, even as two new anthrax victims were confirmed, including the seven-month-old son of an ABC news producer.

Taliban offers to hand over Osama: Report
LONDON -- A senior minister in Afghanistan's ruling Taliban regime has offered a fast-minute deal to hand over suspected terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden, The Guardian reported on Wednesday, citing senior Pakistani official sources.

Sharon issues terms for Palestinian state
JERUSALEM -- Prime Minister Ariel Sharon warned late on Tuesday that the creation of a Palestinian state would have to meet Israel's security needs and must be demilitarised, Israeli state television reported.

Wife of \$35m SIA cheat jailed
TAN Lay Bee, the wife of convicted embezzler Teo Chang Kiat, will go to jail for 18 months for helping her husband to hide jewellery and expensive watches after he was arrested.

HotTopic

→ US strikes back: What is your reaction?

LatestDiscussion

→ What will you do to help Singapore?

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Daily Sports Updates



Anthrax panic spreads here
The Defence and Public Health ministries are stepping up security in response to global concern about bioterrorism.

Accounts at all temples to be checked
The Religious Affairs Department is seeking anti-scam measures and a check of temple assets following the sex scandal involving Phra Issaramunee and a woman disciple.

TODAY'S NEWS

Sports

Hocklinger briefs Senate on activities at U-tapao base
The United States is using U-tapao airbase the same way it is using bases in other countries to support its war against terrorism, the US ambassador Richard Hocklinger was quoted as saying yesterday.

US urged to halt strikes before Ramadan
Muslims in the southern provinces were concerned the situation in Afghanistan would get worse if the US-led airstrikes continue into the holy month of Ramadan.

ENTERTAINMENT

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Exclusive

Businesses step up security measures
Businesses in Thailand are exercising extra caution while handling mail amid growing fears of anthrax in the United States.

Subway plan held back by new barrier
Commercial service of Thailand's first subway, scheduled to begin in December 2002, is now expected to be delayed after operator Bangkok Metro Co failed to secure deals to procure train carriages and operating system equipment under its contract deadline.

SEARCH

Angel Air suspends its service to Japan
Angel Air will return one of its two leased aircraft to China Northern Airlines after the Thai airline suspended daily flights between Phuket and Osaka.

CLASSIFIEDS

Stronger incentives called for Foreign investors, especially from Taiwan, yesterday urged the Thai government to lay out more attractive measures to lure them since Thailand has lost some of the appeal it had in the 1980s and early

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