Fuizabeth Kartini Hassan Basri, Arfa 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/doc/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/emedia/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: 28%
Asia Pacific: 32%
Western Europe: 6%
South/Central America: 6%
Eastern Europe: 6%
Middle East/Africa: 4%
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 Penh 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 Penh 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 Philippine Star 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.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>News on Malaysia</th>
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<td>Indonesia</td>
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<td>Thailand</td>
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<td>Brunei</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5-world news, 2-lokal (Malay languages), 3-Media Permata (Malay Languages)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
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<td>Country</td>
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<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>KL vows to sweep badminton golds</td>
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<td>Main batch of Indonesian athletes to depart on Sept 5</td>
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<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Tresia Roberts prepares for KL Sea Games</td>
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<td>Police nab fraud ring for selling cellular phones in Malaysia</td>
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<td>Smart partners to make content for wireless services</td>
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<td>Shin soft launch in Malaysia next month</td>
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<td>Brunei Darussalam</td>
<td>Officials set to hold elections in Sarawak</td>
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<td>Off-limits to Sabah's &quot;lost World&quot;</td>
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<td>Call for wildlife corridor between Danum Maliau</td>
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<td>Likas by-election: Chong files fresh petition</td>
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<td>Nod to deportation</td>
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<td>Royal messages to KL</td>
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<td>Brunei delegates attend KL education congress</td>
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<td>Baginda sultan utus tahniah kepada Malaysia</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Liang hulur sambangan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Brunei tetap sasaran emas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Favours for Malaysia overdue: Mahathir</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Carve a niche for edge over China</td>
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<td>Airline bars man for previous unruly behaviour</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pilgrims/fund clerk detained over $3.2m theft</td>
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<td>Laid-off Malaysian in no hurry to get jobs</td>
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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 Strails 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 -- 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 ASEAN 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-A SEAN 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 determinative factor in terms of (operational) definition. The online journalist has to make decisions on which media formats best tell a certain story (multimediability), 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 e-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 website 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.

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Reference
(Online: http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue5_8/hongladarom/index.html 23/10/2001)

(Online: http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue6_5/krebs/index.html 23/10/2001)


Appendix:

Websites of ASEAN Online Newspapers

Borneo Bulletin

Your gateway to Borneo ON-LINE

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2000

The Borneo Bulletin was launched on September 3rd, 1993, as a daily newspaper after 38 years as a weekly tabloid in Borneo, Sarawak. It is the only English daily newspaper that is published in Brunei, Indonesia, a country with one of the highest per capita incomes in Asia. The Borneo Bulletin is the main source of information for the news, local, regional and international news.

The Borneo Bulletin maintains an independent editorial policy while catering to objective, fair and factual coverage of news and information. International news is covered through online Global Sources, AP, DPA and AP wire and photo service. It provides perspective on the world and business information on the Internet. The Borneo Bulletin’s readership is spread across the world with a focus on Singapore, Malaysia, and other Asian and European countries.

WORLD NEWS

[News headlines and articles]


10/17/01

46
Anything about Less, We Post Here!

2001-2002 socio-economic development plan and state budget approved (Buea NA or back)

The plan, which is expected to generate $30.6 million of foreign aid, is up over the previous year. Of the $29.6 million, $8.4 million will be invested in the state budget, $13.5 million in the state budget, and $4.9 million in the state budget.

Anti-drug fund to be used to combat drug use (Vientiane Times or back)

Funds are being used to combat drug use in Lao PDR, with a focus on the province of Vientiane. The anti-drug fund is being used to support the fight against drug use in the province of Vientiane.

HR development focuses on national university (Vientiane Times or back)

The Faculty of Economics and Management at the Lao University of Social Sciences has been established to focus on human resource development. The faculty will be responsible for providing training and education to support the development of the country.

Zuo Maoba's friendship bridge construction project (Buea NA or back)

The bridge project, which is expected to be completed in 2006, has not yet been completed. The construction work has been delayed.

Large trees in Laos (Bangkok Post)

Three large trees in Laos that were recently cut down have been identified as being at risk of falling. The trees are located in the province of Louang namtha.

Nurses in Lao PDR are being offered a chance to learn more about nursing (Vientiane Times or back)

Nurses in Lao PDR are being offered a chance to learn more about nursing. The program is being offered by the Ministry of Health.

National crackdown on illegal labour taking place in Vientiane (Bangkok Post)

A crackdown on illegal labour is being carried out in Vientiane. The crackdown is part of a national effort to combat illegal labour.

The possibility of a new market in Laos (Vientiane Times or back)

A new market is being considered for Laos. The market is expected to provide new opportunities for the country.

Chinese cable TV to be in Laos (Lao NA or back)

The government of Laos has approved a plan to introduce cable TV into the country. The plan is expected to provide new opportunities for the country.

Dai Nong University helps train Laos students (Vietnam NA or back)

Dai Nong University has started training students from Laos. The training program is expected to provide new opportunities for the country.
EDITORS' ALLEY - Soldiers, kidnappers

Members of the uniformed services should not be allowed to operate as criminal elements. This is particularly true of soldiers who have been shown to be involved in illegal activities, such as drug trafficking and human rights violations.

LIFESTYLE FEATURES

Micro Markets: Foreigners in drug raid

Face deportation raps

The three Americans and the British national who were arrested last week in Quezon City were accused of drug trafficking. The police said that the suspects were involved in a large-scale drug operation.

BUSINESS FEATURES

Nations

Bare's P39-B PNR rehab plan

A plan to expand and rehabilitate the Philippine National Railways (PNR) system to make it more efficient and reduce the number of accidents and delays around the country is currently being implemented.

HIGHLIGHTS

GMA opens Malampaya gas field

President Arroyo inaugurated the landmark Malampaya Deepwater Gas Plant yesterday, saying it is the start of the Philippines' independence from oil importation.

Business

Investors snap up P35-B worth of zero coupon bonds

Investors snapped up the Bureau of Treasury's initial offering of 15-year zero coupon bonds yesterday, indicating strong demand for the P37.09 billion offered government offering of P50 billion.

Entertainment

Says the Raven, 'Nevermore!'

You see, Jane and husband Angelo Castro Jr.'s co-daughter-in-law Renie Villanueva (divorced from the couple's son Chapa Capistrano) is also in the mix, having her own show, 'debut' as a solo star.

The Philippines in America's New War
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 this bulk of shares of the new Singapore Shares (3SS), 1,400 shares worth $1 each. 

Taliban offers to hand over Composite Report

LONDON — A senior minister in Afghanistan's ruling Taliban regime has offered a last-minute deal to hand over suspected terrorists, including Omid Solaimani, The Guardian reported on Wednesday, citing senior Taliban official sources.

Taliban minister issued 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 dismantled, Israeli state television reported.
Antiboy panic spreads here.
The Defence and Public Health
ministries are stepping up security
response to global concern about
terrorism.

TODAY'S NEWS

Heckler 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 Heckler was quoted as saying yesterday.

Businesses step up security
measures

Businesses in Thailand are
exercising extra caution while
handling mail amid fears of
al-Qaeda in the United States.

Angel Air suspends its service to
Japan

Angel Air will return one of its two
leased aircraft to China Northern.

SEARCH

classifieds

Check the weather
anywhere with

Subway plan held back by new
barrier

Commercial service of Thailand's
first subway, scheduled to begin in
December, is now expected to
be delayed after operator Bangkok
Metro Co failed to secure deals to
install train carriages and
operating system equipment under
its contract deadline.

Stronger incentives called for
Foreign investors, especially from
Taiwan, yesterday urged the Thai
government to lay out more
effective measures to lure them
since Thailand has lost some of the
appeal it had in the 1990s and early