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# *INSIGHT* SOUTHEAST ASIA

Looking Eastwards From New Delhi



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## Southeast Asia

### Act East Policy

#### **India, Japan, Australia foreign secretaries hold first-ever trilateral talks**

The foreign secretaries of India, Japan and Australia met in New Delhi on June 8 to discuss various issues of mutual interest but there was no official word on the agenda for the talks. Keeping the meeting a low key issue was a deliberate move not to antagonize any third country.

The trio discussed a range of issues at the dialogue. Maritime security was on the agenda, including freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. They discussed concerns over Chinese reclamation in the South China Sea and hoped a "code of conduct" would be agreed upon between China and the ASEAN countries to calm tensions in the region.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from that trilateral maritime cooperation in the Indian and the Pacific Ocean prospects for greater economic cooperation were deliberated.<sup>2</sup>

#### **India, Bangladesh ratify historic land deal**

India formalized the 40-year-old Land

Boundary Agreement with Bangladesh on June 6 during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Dhaka. This will enable the two countries to exchange land enclaves in each other's territory.

Foreign secretaries of India and Bangladesh signed and exchanged the instruments of exchange in the presence of Prime Minister Modi and his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina.

The pact is aimed at the acquiring of territories by India and the transfer of territories to Bangladesh through retaining of adverse possession in pursuance of the 1974 agreement between the two nations. There are 111 Bangladeshi enclaves in India that houses 37,369 people while 14,215 people have been residing at 55 Indian enclaves in Bangladesh.<sup>3</sup>

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) expects big gains for both India and Bangladesh from the meeting between the two Prime Ministers in Dhaka. "CII believes that Prime Minister Modi's visit will mark an exciting new phase in India-Bangladesh economic and commercial relations," said CII president Sumit Mazumder.

Infrastructure and connectivity is the key to the bilateral investment. CII has suggested that the northeastern states of India should be actively involved in planning and preparing transport linkages. This will also deepen India's Act East Policy for greater engagement with ASEAN and East Asia.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> India-Japan-Australia forum not anti-China: Peter Varghese, Suhasini Haider, The Hindu, June 9, 2015, available at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/chinas-actions-cause-for-concern-australia/article7295709.ece>

<sup>2</sup> India, Australia, Japan Hold First Ever Trilateral Dialogue, Prashanth Parameswaran, The Diplomat, June 9, 2015, available at <http://thediplomat.com/2015/06/india-australia-japan-hold-first-ever-trilateral-dialogue/>

<sup>3</sup> India, Bangladesh ratify historic land deal, Narendra Modi announces new \$2 billion line of credit to Dhaka, The Times of India, June 6, 2015, available at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/India-Bangladesh-ratify-historic-land-deal-Narendra-Modi-announces-new-2-billion-line-of-credit-to-Dhaka/articleshow/47567164.cms>

<sup>4</sup> Big gains from India-Bangladesh PMs' meet: CII, The Times of India, June 6, 2015, available at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/Big-gains-from-India-Bangladesh-PMs-meet-CII/articleshow/47566233.cms>

During the same visit, India and Bangladesh inked the agreement on Coastal Shipping for two-way trade through ports; renewed the 1972 Protocol on Inland Waterways Transit and Trade (PIWTT) for using their waterways for commerce; and signed a MoU for use of Chittagong and Mongla Ports for movement of goods to and from India.

The agreements will help to greatly reduce not only the time in shipping goods but also costs, besides making optimum use of the ports, inland waterways and roads.

The Chittagong and Mongla ports, along with Kolkata port and Haldia dock system, are located in the Ganga delta. According to the agreement, the two Bangladesh ports can be used by India to ship goods to its landlocked states in the northeast - to Agartala in Tripura, to Dawki in Meghalaya or to Sutarkandi in Assam - either through waterways, rail or road.

Not only will India get easier access to its northeast, Bangladesh will also get transit through India into Nepal and Bhutan, according to the renewed Bilateral Trade Agreement inked in 1972. This also gives a fillip to connectivity in the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal sub-regional grouping of SAARC.

Another connectivity link is the 15-km railway between Agartala and Akhaura in Brahmanbaria district of Bangladesh, which is to be completed in 2017. Akhaura has a rail link to Chittagong too. Once the

Agartala-Akhaura railway link is ready, goods brought to Chittagong port can be carried by rail directly to Agartala. The northeastern states can also export and import goods through the Chittagong port.<sup>5</sup>

### **Half of SAARC nations sign Motor vehicles Agreement**

Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) on June 16 signed a Motor Vehicles Agreement for seamless movement of people and cargo among the neighbors.

Union Transport Minister of India Nitin Gadkari said that the Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA) within the sub-grouping of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) nations would increase economic benefits for the region. This pact is the first stage of the \$8-billion road connectivity project set to begin in October.

Myanmar and Thailand have agreed to develop a motor vehicle pact on lines of the draft SAARC Motor Vehicle Agreement, to pave the way for greater economic cooperation in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region.

According to the agreement, the four countries would carry out a six-month work plan from July for the implementation of the BBIN MVA in accordance with the agreements and protocols. The staged implementation of the historic pact would begin in October 2015. Secretary-level discussions were successfully concluded in Bengaluru in June and a consensus was reached on the text of the agreement.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> India, Bangladesh business set to grow through ports, waterways, Ranjana, Narayan, The Economic Times, June 9, 2015, available at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/india-bangladesh-business-set-to-grow-through-ports-waterways/articleshow/47599967.cms>

<sup>6</sup> Half of SAARC nations sign Motor Vehicles Agreement, Business Standard, June 16, 2015, available at [http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/half-of-saarc-nations-sign-motor-vehicles-agreement-115061500981\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/half-of-saarc-nations-sign-motor-vehicles-agreement-115061500981_1.html)

## ASEAN

### ASEAN parliamentarians urge action over Myanmar's Rohingya crisis

ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR) in a statement issued on April 30 appreciated statements by Malaysia's Foreign Minister Anifah Aman recognizing the regional significance of the plight of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, but also urged ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) leaders to take concrete action to address the growing crisis.

During the April 24 press conference, Mr. Anifah Aman acknowledged that the escalating crisis in Myanmar's Rakhine State and the associated refugee influx to other countries were impacting the entire region. He said the crisis was an issue for ASEAN to resolve together with Myanmar.

However, the Myanmar government continues to block all attempts to formally discuss the issue at the regional level, demonstrating the structural failures that prevent ASEAN from addressing pressing humanitarian issues in a timely and effective manner.

If ASEAN cannot solve the crisis itself, APHR warned, inevitably the international community will be brought into the picture in a more concrete way, further undermining the ASEAN experiment.

APHR argued that ASEAN leaders have an important role to play in pushing the Myanmar government to grant Rohingya full citizenship, denounce hate speech, and hold perpetrators of violence accountable.<sup>7</sup>

### 2nd ASEAN-EU High Level Dialogue on Maritime Security Cooperation

2nd ASEAN – EU High Level Dialogue (HLD) on Maritime Security Cooperation was held on May 5-6 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The 2nd HLD was attended by officials and key experts from ASEAN Member States, the EU Institutions and EU Member States. It had an in depth exchange of views on different aspects of maritime security including enhancing inter-agency cooperation and coordination, investigation of maritime security incidents, enhancing maritime situational awareness and ensuring port security among others. Ratifying international convention and treaties by ASEAN member states can be the basis of a rule based approach, said a joint media release. It further stated that understanding interpretation and implementing the international convention and treaties at national, regional and international level would further strengthen regional cooperation.<sup>8</sup>

The European Union (EU) has affirmed its interest in enhancing maritime security in the South China Sea jointly with ASEAN.

Maritime Institute of Malaysia Chairman Mr. Ahmad Ramli Mohd Nor said that the EU's willingness in participating in the joint

<sup>7</sup> ASEAN parliamentarians urge action over Myanmar's Rohingya crisis, Mizzima, April 30, 2015, available at <http://mizzima.com/news-international/ASEAN-parliamentarians-urge-action-over-rohingya-crisis>

<sup>8</sup> JOINT MEDIA RELEASE 2nd ASEAN – EU High Level Dialogue on Maritime Security Cooperation - "Developing Inter-Agency and Regional Cooperation", website of the Delegation of the European Union (EU) to Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam, May 6, 2015, available at [http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/indonesia/press\\_corner/all\\_news/news/2015/20150506\\_02\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/indonesia/press_corner/all_news/news/2015/20150506_02_en.htm)

cooperation with ASEAN is timely in combating piracy and transnational organized crimes at sea.<sup>9</sup>

### **ASEAN plus 3 pledge further structural reform**

Financial chiefs from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) plus Japan, China and South Korea have agreed on the need to promote structural reforms in a bid to promote economic growth, and to be vigilant against risks arising from large capital outflows.

Meeting on the fringes of the Asian Development Bank annual meeting in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, the finance ministers and central bank governors said in a joint statement on May 3 that this year their economies will likely sustain the same relatively high growth of the previous year.

While reaffirming their commitment to “carrying out the necessary structural adjustments,” they sounded the alarm about the possibility of a sharp run-up in oil prices and capital outflows amid the changing global economic environment.

To deal with these risks, the financial chiefs called for macroeconomic policy steps, where appropriate, “supported by macro-prudential measures and capital flow management measures,” in addition to continued regional financial cooperation.<sup>10</sup>

### **ASEAN, U.S. Reaffirm Commitment to Bring Partnership to New Heights**

ASEAN and the United States agreed to accelerate their cooperation to wrap-up the implementation of their current five-year action plan, which will expire at the end of 2015. This commitment was made at the 6th ASEAN-U.S. Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) Meeting held on May 8 at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta.

Both sides agreed to work on a new action plan for the period of 2016 - 2020 that is forward-looking, action-oriented, taking into account new developments in both regions and reflecting the priorities of ASEAN and the U.S.

Highlighting the importance of ASEAN in the U.S.’ strategic balance to the region, the U.S. reaffirmed its strong and continued commitment to support ASEAN unity and centrality, and looked forward to working with ASEAN to promote a norms-based and rules-based regional architecture that is conducive for peace, security and development in the region. The U.S. also supports ASEAN in its efforts to play a greater global role, particularly in addressing emerging global issues such as climate change and countering terrorism, violent extremism, and radicalization.

ASEAN appreciated the valuable support and assistance that the U.S, as an important and long-standing Dialogue Partner, has extended to ASEAN in the past years. They encouraged the U.S. to continue its constructive contribution to regional peace, stability and

<sup>9</sup> EU affirms interest in enhancing maritime security jointly with ASEAN, The Sun Daily, May 6, 2015, available at <http://www.thesundaily.my/news/1410514>

<sup>10</sup> ASEAN Plus Three pledge further structural reforms, The Japan Times, May 4, 2015, available at <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/05/04/national/politics-diplomacy/ASEAN-plus-three-pledge-further-structural-reforms/#.VikFNNx97IV>

prosperity through their active participation in various ASEAN-led mechanisms such as ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus, East Asia Summit, and Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum.

As the ASEAN-U.S. dialogue relations will reach its 40th year in 2017, both sides agreed that planning should be underway for a new phase of cooperation with a strong strategic focus and a forward-looking vision.<sup>11</sup>

Three ASEAN ministers urge unified action, code of conduct in South China Sea

Defence ministers from three ASEAN countries signaled a united stand during The IISS Shangri-La Dialogue which took place in Singapore from May 29-31, demanding unified action to peacefully tackle long-standing territorial conflicts in the South China Sea.

Cambodia, the ASEAN nation closest to China, echoed ASEAN chairman Malaysia's hope of seeing a code of conduct come into force. Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for National Defence Tea Banh said the code, which ASEAN members are negotiating with Beijing, can guarantee the peaceful settlement of disputes in the South China Sea.

Meanwhile, ASEAN's largest member, Indonesia, called for more dialogue and suggested that countries embroiled in disputes in the South China Sea conduct joint patrols. In his speech, Defence

Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu said that he was confident that these "peace patrols" can help solve the problem.

Malaysia has consistently advocated a diplomatic approach to the dispute and has said that joint patrols involving China is not impossible. Malaysia's Defence Minister Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said, "It is an old problem. It involves the dignity and 'face' of the nations involved. If we are not careful, it could certainly escalate into one of the deadliest conflicts of our time, if not our history."

ASEAN and China have been working towards such a code for several years but progress has been slow.<sup>12</sup>

### **South China Sea dispute: Japan to boost support for ASEAN to thwart China**

Defence Minister of Japan Gen Nakatani has declared Japan's intention to heighten its support of the Association of South-East Asian Nations' (ASEAN) member countries to counter China's moves to reclaim land on reefs in the Spratly Islands and establish military facilities there.

"In order to ensure the safety of regional waters as a strategic focal point of our sea-lanes, it is with an extreme importance to enhance capabilities for maritime domain awareness and ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) with ASEAN countries," Mr Nakatani said in a speech May 30 at the Asia Security Summit meeting in Singapore.

On May 25, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe confirmed during a meeting with Malaysian

<sup>11</sup> ASEAN, U.S. Reaffirm Commitment to Bring Partnership to New Heights, ASEAN website, May 8, 2015, available at <http://www.ASEAN.org/news/ASEAN-secretariat-news/item/ASEAN-us-reaffirm-commitment-to-bring-partnership-to-new-heights>

<sup>12</sup> Three Asean ministers urge unified action, code of conduct, The Star Online, May 31, 2015, available at <http://www.thestar.com.my/News/Nation/2015/05/31/Shangri-la-ASEAN-ministers-code-of-conduct/>

Prime Minister Najib Razak that the two nations would begin negotiations on an agreement regarding the transfer of equipment.<sup>13</sup>

On June 4, President of Philippines Benigno Aquino III and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe signed a declaration strengthening the relationship of their countries amid the territorial disputes with China, during former's visit to Japan.<sup>14</sup>

### **CLMV, ACPMECS held in Myanmar**

7th edition of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV) Summit was held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on June 22-23. Along with this summit, the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of Summit of 'Ayeyawaddy-Chao-Phraya Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy' (ACMECS) involving these four CLMV countries and Thailand was also held in Nay Pyi Taw on June 22-23.

The CLMV summit was attended by Myanmar President Thein Sein, it's Minister of Foreign Affairs Wunna Maung Lwin, Thailand's Deputy Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs General Tanasak Patimapragorn, Cambodia's Secretary of State and Minister of Foreign Affairs Long Visalo, Vietnam's Deputy Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Bui Thanh Son and Secretary General

of ASEAN Le Luong Minh.

According to the joint statement released at the CLMV summit, the appointees from all participating countries reviewed the progress of projects agreed upon in the previous CLMV summit held in Vietnam as well as the future direction of the CLMV cooperation with the goal of narrowing the development gap between the ASEAN nations.

They reaffirmed and discussed upon trade and investment cooperation, transport cooperation, agricultural, industry energy and telecommunication / information communication and technology cooperation, tourism cooperation and human resource development.<sup>15</sup>

At the 6th ACMECS Summit, the sub regional leaders reaffirmed their determination to strengthen the traditional relations of friendship, good neighborliness and mutual benefits among the ACMECS countries.

In trade and investment facilitation cooperation, the ACMECS summit agreed to promote foreign direct investment, particularly among ACMECS countries, and from other countries in the region. In agriculture cooperation, the ACMECS leaders agreed to expedite the implementation of ACMECS rice cooperation mechanism to promote rice sector development among ACMECS countries.

In industrial and energy cooperation, the ACMECS leaders agreed to encourage the

<sup>13</sup> South China Sea dispute: Japan to boost support for ASEAN to thwart China, The Sydney Morning Herald, June 1, 2015, available at <http://www.smh.com.au/world/south-china-sea-dispute-japan-to-boost-support-for-ASEAN-to-thwart-china-20150531-ghdplp.html#ixzz3pMoyWiQV>

<sup>14</sup> Aquino, Abe sign declaration on stronger ties amid China row, philstar, June 4, 2015, available at <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2015/06/04/1462185/aquino-abe-sign-declaration-stronger-ties-amid-china-row>

<sup>15</sup> Cambodia-Laos-Myanmar-Vietnam summit begins in Nay Pyi Taw, The Nation, June 23, 2015, available at <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/aec/Cambodia-Laos-Myanmar-Vietnam-summit-begins-in-Nay-30262894.html>

establishment of industrial zones, Special and Specific Economic Zones along the ACMECS countries' borders and other potential areas along the East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC), North South Economic Corridor (NSEC), the Southern Economic Corridor (SEC) and the "inter-corridor linkages" focusing on green growth and sustainable development.

In transport cooperation, the leaders called for development of air linkages among major cities, cultural and natural heritage sites in the ACMECS countries as well as railways and feeder roads to increase trade, investment and tourist flows. In tourism cooperation, the leaders agreed to promote cross border travel with the ACMECS countries under the concept of "Five Countries, One Destination".

In human resource development, the ACMECS leaders called for providing scholarships and fellowships as well as vocational training and skills development programs. The ACMECS leaders also agreed to enhance cooperation between ACMECS countries on environmental conservation and sustainable use of natural resources of the Ayeyawaddy, Chao Phraya and Mekong rivers.<sup>16</sup>

### **Southeast Asia braces for MERS, boosts screening at airports**

As Middle East respiratory syndrome continued to spread through South Korea, Southeast Asian countries stepped up

detection measures and prepared for potential outbreaks of the virus. The Vietnamese government had set up 98 mobile response teams by June 24, with 65 in Hanoi and 33 in the commercial hub of Ho Chi Minh City.

Southeast Asia's first MERS case was confirmed in Thailand on June 18. Since then, the country rapidly increased measures to keep the virus from spreading.

In the Philippines, airports receiving direct flights from South Korea had strengthened quarantine preparations. Malaysia expanded temperature screening from airports to all points of entry into the country, including ports and land borders. Singapore began body temperature scanning of travellers from South Korea at its airports.

In 2003, Southeast Asia was hit hard by an outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome, better known as SARS, resulting in deaths as well as economic losses including a heavy blow to tourism revenue.<sup>17</sup>

## **ASEAN-India**

### **Indian participation in ASEAN disaster relief drill in Malaysia**

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is holding its fourth disaster relief drill, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Disaster Relief Exercise (DiREx), in Malaysia on May 24-28. The drill is being jointly hosted by China and Malaysia. There are roughly two thousand participants from members of the ASEAN Regional Forum and international

<sup>16</sup> ACMECS countries reiterate commitment to supporting ASEAN community building, xinhuanet, June 23, 2015, available at [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-06/23/c\\_134349517.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-06/23/c_134349517.htm)

<sup>17</sup> Southeast Asia braces for MERS, boosts screening at airports, Atsushi Tomiyama, Nikkei, June 24, 2015, available at <http://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/Policy-Politics/Southeast-Asia-braces-for-MERS-boosts-screening-at-airports?page=2>

organizations. This marks the first time that China has organized a military and civilian disaster relief drill overseas.

The four day event will cover rescue operations for traffic accidents, chemical leaks, landslides, building collapses, flood evacuation and offshore searches. The exercises are an effort to enhance effective operations between China and ASEAN Regional Forum nations.<sup>18</sup>

India will be among 27 countries to take part in this biennial event. A 14-member team of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) will travel to China and Malaysia. The NDRF squad will participate in the field training exercises on various simulated disaster scenarios like landslides and collapsed structures, chemical leakage, mass evacuation, maritime scenarios with ASEAN member states. The team will share its theoretical and practical experiences while rendering the humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations in India and abroad.<sup>19</sup> The Indian Navy's indigenous offshore patrol vessel, INS Saryu, will participate in this drill.<sup>20</sup>

### **Government sees convergence of interest and aspirations between India and APEC member economies**

Mr Anil Wadhwa, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, released the report 'APEC and

India: An Appraisal' by Ambassador V. S. Seshadri, Vice Chairman, Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) at a launch function organized jointly by FICCI, RIS and ASEAN-India Centre in New Delhi on May 21.

During the function he said that as India undertakes further economic reforms and sets the next generation of the liberalization process in motion, there is a golden opportunity for India and economic forums such as Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) to benefit from deeper engagement. There is today a significant and identifiable convergence of interest and aspirations between India and APEC member economies. India's 'Act East Policy' envisions increased cooperation in trade, investment, infrastructure development, connectivity, capacity building and strengthening people-to-people contacts in the region, goals which are shared by APEC too.

In his presentation on the report Ambassador V. S. Seshadri, said that it would be desirable for India to join APEC as it would provide an impetus for domestic trade and investment facilitation initiatives; assist in familiarization with newer issues and best practices developing in a host of areas; offer networking opportunities at official, expert, business and think tank levels; and strategically enable India to have wider options on emerging global trade governance. He added that increasing recognition of India's contribution to maritime security, rescue and rehabilitation at the time

<sup>18</sup> ASEAN Drill gathers 2,000 participants in Malaysia, Xinhuanet, May 25, 2015, available at [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/video/2015-05/25/c\\_134269052.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/video/2015-05/25/c_134269052.htm)

<sup>19</sup> NDRF to take part in ASEAN event in China, Malaysia, The Times of India, May 23, 2015, available at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/NDRF-to-take-part-in-ASEAN-event-in-China-Malaysia/articleshow/47400327.cms>

<sup>20</sup> Indian naval vessel to participate in ASEAN exercise, Zee News, May 23, 2015, available at [http://zeenews.india.com/news/india/indian-naval-vessel-to-participate-in-ASEAN-exercise\\_1600078.html](http://zeenews.india.com/news/india/indian-naval-vessel-to-participate-in-ASEAN-exercise_1600078.html)

of disasters and accidents and its efforts to improve connectivity with South East Asia would also act in India's favor.

Sidharth Birla, Immediate Past President, FICCI, said that India is positioned well to take a place at the high table in APEC, thanks to the vigorous policy of external engagement by the Indian government. India's engagement with China, an influential member of APEC, has strengthened. India's close and rapidly growing political, economic and strategic ties with many of the other APEC economies like US, Australia and Japan are all encouraging signs of an endorsement of India's efforts to join APEC.

Ambassador Shyam Saran, Chairman, RIS, said that once the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) agreements are established they would impact the global trading mechanism. India would find it difficult to conform to the TPP and TTIP standards as they would be different and much more arduous. Hence, India would need to effectively respond to TPP and TTIP, if it is not a part of these free trade mega agreements. In such a scenario, he said that if India secures a membership of APEC, then it would be able to take forward its economic growth agenda and remain an active player in the global market.<sup>21</sup>

### **Cooperation in remote sensing technology with ASEAN**

The Vietnamese Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the Indian Department of Space will promote cooperation in remote sensing and outer space technology via joint projects in human resources training and in applying remote sensing technology.

The two sides made the joint decision during working sessions between a delegation of the Vietnamese ministry, which made a three-day visit to India in May, and officials from India's Ministry of External Affairs, Department of Space, and Space Research Organization.

A cooperation agreement between Vietnam's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and India's Department of Space was also discussed by the two sides.

The two sides reviewed preparations for establishing a center for satellite tracking and data reception and processing for ASEAN, to be located in Vietnam, as part of the ASEAN-India cooperation framework.

After three years of preparation, the project has been approved by the ASEAN Secretariat and the Indian Government, with a total budget of 23 million USD sourced from the ASEAN-India cooperation fund.

India will pay for the installation and operation costs for the project in the first five years, and supply remote sensing images free of charge to ASEAN member states for five years.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Govt sees convergence of interest and aspirations between India and APEC member, Marine News, May 23, 2015, available at <http://www.merineews.com/article/govt-sees-convergence-of-interest-and-aspirations-between-india-and-apec-member-economies/15906656.shtml#sthash.qGZCmupa.dpuf>

<sup>22</sup> Vietnam, India cooperate in remote sensing technology, VietnamNet Online Newspaper, May 18, 2015, available at <http://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/science-it/130904/vietnam-india-cooperate-in-remote-sensing-technology.html>

### **Indian Naval Ships enter Sihanoukville, Cambodia and Sattahip, Thailand**

In pursuit of India's 'Look East' and 'Act East' policy, the Indian Navy's Eastern Fleet ships under the command of Rear Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh, VSM, Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet (FOCEF), were on a two month long operational deployment to South East Asia and Southern Indian Ocean.

As part of the deployment, two of the Indian warships, INS Ranvir, a Guided Missile Destroyer and INS Kamorta, an indigenously built Anti-Submarine Corvette entered Sihanoukville, Cambodia and the other two warships including INS Satpura, an indigenously built guided missile stealth frigate and INS Shakti, a sophisticated fleet tanker and support ship, entered Sattahip, Thailand on June 23 on a four day visit respectively.

The visit was aimed at strengthening bilateral ties between the two countries as well as fostering inter-operability between the navies of these two friendly nations. During the stay in harbour, various activities such as official calls, professional interaction between personnel of both the navies, reception onboard and ship visits were planned.

During this deployment INS Ranvir and INS Kamorta also visited Freemantle (Australia) and Kuantan (Malaysia). They participated in the bilateral exercise SIMBEX-15 with the Royal Singapore

Navy from May 20-26. These ships then called on Jakarta, Indonesia on May 31 and sailed out on June 4.<sup>23</sup>

## **Brunei**

### **Russia to hold military drills in South China Sea with Brunei**

On May 30, Russia announced that it will hold military drills in the South China Sea in 2016 together with Brunei and China.

Russian Deputy Defense Minister Anatoly Antonov announced that Russia will conduct its first-ever military exercises with Brunei in 2016 in the wake of the escalating South China Sea tension. He said Russia is very much concerned with U.S. policies that destabilize the Asia Pacific region.

"We are concerned by US policies in the region, especially since every day it becomes increasingly focused on a systemic containment of Russia and China," Antonov said at the Shangri-La Dialogue summit in Singapore.<sup>24</sup>

## **Cambodia**

### **Beijing loan funds Cambodia's new road to Thai border**

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen and Chinese Ambassador to Cambodia Bu Jianguo jointly broke ground for the construction of a 182-kilometer national road No 55, which stretches from Pursat province's central part to Thai border on May 3.

<sup>23</sup> Indian Naval Ships enter Sihanoukville, Cambodia & Sattahip, Thailand, Indian Navy, June 23, 2015, available at <http://indiannavy.nic.in/print/3056>

<sup>24</sup> WWII: Russia Joins South China Sea Dispute As Ally To China And Brunei, Morning News USA, June 2, 2015, available at <http://www.morningnewsusa.com/wwii-russia-joins-south-china-sea-dispute-as-ally-to-china-and-brunei-2322235.html>

The road is expected to cost nearly US\$133 million, a concessional loan from China, according to the master-plan. The China Road and Bridge Corporation will undertake the construction, which is expected to be completed in June 2018.

Hun Sen expressed profound gratitude to China for financial support to Cambodia for infrastructure development.

"The road No. 55 is a strategic road to serve economic development, stretching from the province's central part to Thmorda checkpoint on the Cambodia-Thailand border," he said at the event.

According to Ms. Bu, so far, China has provided financial aid to Cambodia to build roads in the length of 2,669 kilometers, representing about 35 percent of Cambodia's total roads.<sup>25</sup>

### **Cambodia receives military assistance from China**

China handed over a batch of military equipment - 44 vehicles, including jeeps, rocket-launcher mounted trucks, at least a half-dozen anti-aircraft guns mounted on wheels and spare parts - to the Ministry of Defence of Cambodia. Cambodian officials said it will be strictly used for training purposes.

As Cambodia's most generous military aid donor as well as its biggest investor, China made the handover at a ceremony in

Kompong Speu province of Cambodia at the Army Institute.

China makes regular donations of equipment to Cambodia, including at least 20 trucks to the army in 2014 and \$300,000 with which the Interior Ministry pledged to buy supplies for its police forces from China.<sup>26</sup>

### **Cambodia's ruling party chief dies at 82, Hun Sen takes over**

Chea Sim, a key Cambodian political figure after the fall of the brutal Khmer Rouge regime and an ally of Prime Minister Hun Sen, has died at age 82 on June 8. He had been in ill health for many years and hospitalized in recent months.

Chea Sim was president of the ruling Cambodian People's Party since it was formed in 1991, and president of the Senate since 1999. He became a revolutionary in the 1950s and was a member of the communist Khmer Rouge when they seized power in 1975 after a civil war. He fled the group to join a resistance faction groomed by neighbouring Vietnam, which installed him and incumbent president Hun Sen as Cambodia's new leaders after ousting the Khmer Rouge in 1979.<sup>27</sup>

On June 20, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, vice president of the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP), was elected as the party President. "The Central Committee of the CPP had voted to appoint Hun Sen as the chairman of the party with 506 voices out of 507," according to CPP senior official and Information Minister Khieu Kanharith.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Beijing loan funds Cambodia's new road to Thai border , The Standard, May 4, 2015, available at [http://www.thestandard.com.hk/breaking\\_news\\_detail.asp?id=60626](http://www.thestandard.com.hk/breaking_news_detail.asp?id=60626)

<sup>26</sup> China Donates Heavy Weaponry to Military, The Cambodia Daily, May 25, 2015, available at <https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/china-donates-heavy-weaponry-to-military-84249/>

<sup>27</sup> Cambodian politician Chea Sim, a leader of post-Khmer Rouge government, dies at 82, StarTribune, June 8, 2015, available at <http://www.startribune.com/veteran-cambodia-politician-chea-sim-dies-at-82/306458851/>

<sup>28</sup> Cambodian PM elected as ruling party chief, xinhuanet, June 20, 2015, available at [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-06/20/c\\_134343114.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-06/20/c_134343114.htm)

### **Cambodia lodges protest with India over 'Angkor Wat' replica in Bihar**

Cambodia has lodged a protest with India over plans of a private trust to build an Angkor Wat replica in Bihar, saying it "seriously violates" the 12th century Hindu temple and a world heritage property which holds exceptional and universal value.

The protest comes after Cambodia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation received a report about Patna-based Mahavir Mandir Trust's plans to construct a replica of the largest Hindu temple in the world.

The preparation for the Trust's "dream" project, some 120 km from Patna, to build the largest Hindu temple for Lord Rama has already been made with a design very similar to the Angkor Wat. The 'Viraat Ramayan Mandir' will be 2,800 feet in length and 1,400 feet in width and its sanctum sanctorum shall be 405 feet in height, according to details available on the Trust's website.

"Cambodia considers that this copy of Angkor Wat Temple for commercial benefit seriously violates the World heritage which is of a universal and exceptional value of humanity", the Ministry said in its protest note to the Indian External Affairs Ministry.

"Moreover, the Angkor Wat Temple is the emblem that has been used in the Cambodian national flag for many centuries," added the statement, issued on Saturday.

The country requested India to "seriously" and "urgently" consider the planned construction of the replica "in order to nurture the traditional historical relations between the two countries and peoples" and sought assurances that the planned construction will not be carried out.

Located in northwest Cambodia's Siem Reap province, Angkor Wat Temple, inscribed in the UNESCO's World Heritage list in 1992, is the country's most popular tourist destination.<sup>29</sup>

## **East Timor**

### **Australia backs down in East Timor row after UN court fight**

Australia has agreed to return to East Timor sensitive documents related to a controversial oil and gas treaty between the two countries which were seized by Canberra, following a battle at the UN's top court.

East Timor dragged Canberra to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague in early 2014 seeking the return of the documents that were taken by Australia's intelligence services in a raid on an East Timor lawyer's office in the Australian capital.

The documents relate to a multi-billion-dollar agreement signed in 2006 between Canberra and Dili, several years after East Timor won independence following years of brutal Indonesian occupation.

The tiny, half-island nation, which has a sluggish economy heavily dependent on oil and gas, wants the treaty torn up, as it claims Australia spied on ministers to gain commercial advantage.

<sup>29</sup> Cambodia Lodges Protest With India Over 'Angkor Wat' Replica In Bihar, The Huffington Post, June 8, 2015, available at [http://www.huffingtonpost.in/2015/06/07/angkor-wat\\_n\\_7532002.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.in/2015/06/07/angkor-wat_n_7532002.html)

The ICJ — which rules in disputes between states — had already ordered Australia to stop interfering with East Timor and forbidden Canberra from reading the secret documents.

East Timor said that Australia had now agreed to hand back the paper and electronic documents.

In a statement, East Timor welcomed “the decision of the government of Australia to return all documents and data seized from (East Timor)’s legal representative in 2013”.<sup>30</sup>

## Indonesia

### Indonesia pushes for code of conduct in South China Sea

Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja, Director of ASEAN Cooperation I said that Indonesia will continue to encourage the settlement of the agreement on the Code of Conduct (CoC) to overcome disputes in the South China Sea.

He stated that Indonesia will continue to push for efforts towards peace in the South China Sea. One of them is settling the code of conduct (CoC) agreement between China and ASEAN. The code of ethics for dealing with the South China Sea disputes must be immediately framed and agreed

upon to maintain stability in the region.

According to the foreign ministry official, at the ASEAN Summit held in Malaysia in April 2015, President Joko Widodo had emphasized on the importance of commitment to maintain and improve stability in the region, which is capital for sustainable development.

In the view of this, Mr Puja pointed out that the Indonesian government would encourage all parties involved in the South China Sea dispute to exercise restraint.<sup>31</sup>

### President Widodo visits Papua New Guinea

President of Indonesia Joko Widodo was in Papua New Guinea for a state visit during May 11–12. He and Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea Peter ONEILL witnessed the signing of cooperation agreements in various fields between the two countries. The agreements were related to establishing cooperation to overcome cross-border crimes, including those related to narcotics and terrorism, among others. Other agreements signed were related to capacity building of human resources to explore the oil and energy sectors.<sup>32</sup>

Meanwhile the visit also led to protests by Papua New Guinean activists supporting the freedom of West Papua. They marked Indonesian president Joko Widodo’s arrival in Port Moresby by holding flags reading “Indonesia stop the genocide in West Papua” and were detained by police shortly after the demonstration began.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Australia backs down in East Timor row after UN court fight, Mail online, May 4, 2015, available at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3066916/Australia-backs-East-Timor-row-UN-court-fight.html>

<sup>31</sup> Indonesia encourages settlement of S. China Sea CoC agreement, Antara News, April 30 2015, available at <http://www.antaraneews.com/en/news/98736/indonesia-encourages-settlement-of-s-china-sea-coc-agreement>

<sup>32</sup> Indonesia, Papua New Guinea sign various cooperation agreements, Antaranews, May 12, 2015, available at <http://www.antaraneews.com/en/news/98908/indonesia-papua-new-guinea-sign-various-cooperation-agreements>

<sup>33</sup> Free West Papua activists detained without charge at Indonesian president’s arrival in Papua New Guinea, ABC, May 12, 2015, available at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-12/free-west-papua-activists-detained-by-png-police/6462658>

### **Indonesia, Malaysia agree to provide temporary shelter to migrants still stranded at sea**

Indonesia and Malaysia agreed on May 20 to provide temporary shelter to thousands of migrants believed to be stranded at sea, a potential breakthrough in the humanitarian crisis confronting Southeast Asia after weeks of reluctance by the region's nations to take responsibility. Most of the migrants are the long-persecuted Rohingya Muslim minority in Myanmar and others are Bangladeshis fleeing poverty.

Anifah Aman, Malaysian Foreign Minister also urged the international community to "uphold their responsibility and urgently share the burden of providing the necessary support to Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand in addressing the problem." He said the three countries propose that the international community provide them with financial assistance to enable them to help the migrants who would be sheltered in a designated area to be agreed by the affected countries and administered by a joint task force.

Significantly, the agreement does not include Thailand even though it participated in the talks. Thailand has previously said it cannot afford to take any more migrants since it is already overburdened by tens of thousands of other refugees from Myanmar.<sup>34</sup>

### **Indonesia and Iran agrees to build power plants**

Iran and Indonesia have agreed to build 48 small-scale hydroelectric power plants. The two countries are seeking to improve ties harmed by sanctions over Tehran's nuclear program.

Iranian Energy Minister Hamid Chitchian said after a conference with Indonesian Economy Minister Sofyan Djalil that the power plants will be constructed in Indonesia by Iranian companies in the next five years. They signed a memorandum of understanding for cooperation in the fields of industry, investment, trade, customs and banking. Mr. Djalil headed the Indonesian delegation of trade and economic experts in Tehran for the 11th Iran-Indonesia joint economic commission.

Jakarta intends to resume oil imports from Iran, joining China, India, Japan and South Korea that are the main customers of the Iranian crude in Asia. The country currently imports 800,000 to 900,000 barrels per day of crude oil.

Last year Iran and Indonesia signed an agreement to build a refinery in Indonesia to process 300,000 barrels per day of Iranian heavy crude oil. The project requires around \$3 billion of investment, 70 percent of which will be covered by Indonesians and the rest by Iran.<sup>35</sup>

### **Indonesia, Australia conduct joint naval exercise**

The Indonesian Navy (TNI AL) and the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) conducted a joint exercise named Exercise Cassowary 2015.

<sup>34</sup> Indonesia, Malaysia Agree To Provide Temporary Shelter To Migrants Still Stranded At Sea, the Huffington Post, May 20, 2015 available at [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/20/migrant-crisis-indonesia-malaysia\\_n\\_7339738.html?ir=India&adsSiteOverride=in](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/20/migrant-crisis-indonesia-malaysia_n_7339738.html?ir=India&adsSiteOverride=in)

<sup>35</sup> Iran to construct 48 power plants in Indonesia in 5yrs, RT, May 25, 2015, available at <https://www.rt.com/business/261801-iran-indonesia-plants-construction/>

The exercise which was held from June 8-16 involved two Indonesian warships, KRI Hiu-634 and KRI Tombak-692, and two Australian warships, HMAS Wollongong and HMAS Glenelg.<sup>36</sup> According to spokesman for Indonesian navy, the joint exercise was aimed at improving the professionalism of TNI AL soldiers and establishing cooperation between the two sovereign countries on the basis of mutual respect.<sup>37</sup>

## Laos

### **Mekong River Commission says governments must decide fate of Lao Don Sahong dam**

The Mekong River Commission (MRC), an intergovernmental body that supervises development along Southeast Asia's main waterway, said on June 19 that the fate of the controversial Don Sahong dam project in Laos must be decided by the governments of its four regional member states.

The issue had already been deferred to the MRC Council - consisting of water and environment ministers from Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam - after a special session on January 28, when the MRC Joint Committee was unable to reach an agreement on the project.

"After further deliberations the MRC Council announced that there are still differing views among the countries on whether the prior consultation process

should come to an end, and that the matter must now be referred to their respective governments for resolution," the statement said.

At the special meeting in January, the governments of Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam had expressed concern that the potential impacts of the 260 megawatt Don Sahong dam remained unclear and requested more time to collect additional data.

The government of Laos had proposed bringing the prior consultation process to a close, saying it had considered and addressed the "legitimate" concerns of the other member countries, and expressed its commitment to ensuring the sustainable development of the project.

The Don Sahong dam is the second to undergo process of prior consultation following the September 2010 prior consultation for the 1285 megawatt Xayaburi Hydropower Project located on the Mekong mainstream in Laos.

Conservation groups also have urged the Lao government to postpone the construction of the Don Sahong dam, arguing that it will block migratory fish routes, destroy endangered ecosystems, and threaten nutrition and livelihoods across regional boundaries.

The MRC on June 19 pointed to a clause in the 1995 Mekong Agreement, signed by the four nations, which stipulates that in the event that the commission is unable to resolve a dispute, the issue shall be referred to the governments for "negotiation through their diplomatic channels."

If necessary, the MRC has said that the

<sup>36</sup> Islands in focus: Military exercise goes on amid 'bribery' claim, Jakarta Post, June 15, 2015, available at <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/06/15/islands-focus-military-exercise-goes-amid-bribery-claim.html#sthash.Id8TjG5j.dpuf>

<sup>37</sup> Indonesia, Australia conduct joint naval exercise, ANTARANEWS, June, 10, 2015, available at <http://www.antaraneews.com/en/news/99163/indonesia-australia-conduct-joint-naval-exercise>

governments could “resort to mediation by mutual agreement according to the principles of international law”.<sup>38</sup>

## Malaysia

### US Okays \$21 million missile sale to Malaysia and Indonesia

Washington has approved new multi-million-dollar missile sales to Malaysia and Indonesia. American laws require that sales of arms to foreign countries must first be approved by its Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), which acts as an intermediary between foreign governments and arms contractors. The approvals were part of a set of five deals worth some US\$3.5 billion cleared for US allies and partners in the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific, including air-to-air missiles worth US\$21 million for Malaysia.

US-Malaysia ties are at their best in decades under Prime Minister Najib Razak’s stewardship, with President Barack Obama becoming the first US president to visit Malaysia in 2014 since Lyndon Johnson in 1966. Malaysia is also regarded an important ally as the US seeks to finalise the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement involving 12 countries in the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>39</sup>

### Malaysia, Singapore leaders meet

Leaders of Singapore and Malaysia emerged from their annual retreat on May 5 saying that the friendship and cooperation would continue and the two neighbours are working well together.

Aside from the “game-changing” high-speed-rail link between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and his Malaysian counterpart Najib Razak, as well as their delegations discussed issues related to the Causeway and the Johor River Barrage.

They also discussed automation of motorcycle counters, train service between Johor Baru and the Woodlands train checkpoint, “Friendship Bridge” — a proposed third link between Singapore and Johor in addition to the Causeway and Tuas Second Link among others.

The two leaders welcomed discussions on loan of artworks through the National Gallery Singapore and the National Visual Arts Gallery of Malaysia. Prime minister Mr Lee noted how both sides have “been helping each other quietly in times of need”. Malaysia helped bring some Singaporeans back from war-torn Yemen recently, while Singapore helped some Malaysians return from Kathmandu in Nepal when a deadly earthquake struck over a week ago.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Mekong River Commission Says Governments Must Decide Fate of Lao Don Sahong Dam, Joshua Lipes, Radio Free Asia, June 19, 2015, available at <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/laos/dam-06192015143701.html>

<sup>39</sup> US okays RM74 million missile sale to Malaysia, The Malaysia Insider, May 7, 2015, available at <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/us-okays-rm74-million-missile-sale-to-malaysia#sthash.4vWdp2NY.dpuf>

<sup>40</sup> Malaysia, Singapore to keep working closely on transport, water, Malaymail Online, May 6, 2015, available at <http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/malaysia-singapore-to-keep-working-closely-on-transport-water#sthash.rOcGL3rn.dpuf>

# Myanmar

## UN Secretary-General's Adviser visits Myanmar to discuss migrants

Vijay Nambiar, Special Adviser to UN Secretary-General on Myanmar, Ms. Renata Dessallien, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Myanmar, and senior Representatives of the UN System in Myanmar visited Rakhine State on May 22 according to a UN statement.

The visit was in the context of the ongoing "boat crisis" in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal as well as the UN's ongoing focus on the humanitarian and development situation in Rakhine State. The UN commended both the Union Government of Myanmar and Rakhine State Government for the important rescue of over 200 migrants in Myanmar waters on May 21.

The statement notes that Mr. Nambiar recognized that the rescue had been undertaken with great seriousness and irrespective of the nationality of the stranded migrants. The Myanmar government was urged to continue the search and rescue operations as there are believed to be many more migrants still stranded at sea.

The UN has offered support to the government of Myanmar to address these issues and both sides agreed of the importance of tackling these challenges both nationally but also at the regional level.

The statement concludes, notwithstanding these welcome improvements, more work needs to be done to address the daily issues of discrimination, restricted freedom of movement, and deprivation of fundamental rights faced by the Internally displaced people (IDP) and other Muslim populations. The UN Delegation emphasized that the citizenship process and legal status, in particular, need urgent and comprehensive solutions, not only in Rakhine State, but also for other groups in Myanmar. The UN reiterated that efforts to address these rights need to be combined with concerted measures to urgently ramp up development initiatives for all communities of Rakhine State so that the critical challenges facing the state of extreme poverty, deprivation and exclusion are tackled through a comprehensive approach.<sup>41</sup>

## China holds fire drills along Myanmar border

China has launched live-fire air-ground training exercises along the China-Myanmar border, an area where Kokang rebels have been fighting Myanmar's army for months. China has been angered by repeated incidents of shells from the fighting falling in Chinese territory, in which few Chinese have died, and thousands of refugees have crossed into China's south-western province of Yunnan to escape the clashes.

China's Foreign and Defence Ministries announced that the military exercises are taking place inside the country's Yunnan province, which lie right next to Myanmar's Kokang region. The drill is "a promised act to protect the safety and properties of the Chinese people", state owned The Global Times reported.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup> UN Secretary General's Special Advisor visits Rakhine, mizzima, May 26, 2015, available at <http://mizzima.com/news-domestic/un-secretary-general%E2%80%99s-special-advisor-visits-rakhine>

<sup>42</sup> China Stages Military Exercises Along Myanmar Border, Voice of America, June 6, 2015, available at <http://www.voanews.com/content/china-military-exercises-myanmar-border/2810409.html>

Myanmar government soldiers have been battling rebels in Kokang. The main rebel group in Kokang is called the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), which is led by ethnic Chinese commander Peng Jiasheng. The MNDAA was formed from remnants of the Communist Party of Burma, a powerful China-backed guerrilla force that battled the Myanmar government until it splintered in 1989.

The group struck a truce with the government which lasted until 2009, when government troops took over their region in a conflict that pushed tens of thousands of refugees into China's Yunnan province.<sup>43</sup>

### **Myanmar, Bangladesh border forces clash while chasing smugglers**

One Bangladesh border guard was wounded and another seized by his Burmese counterparts on June 17 after the two sides exchanged gunfire while chasing drug smugglers on a river separating their countries.

The Bangladeshis were pursuing the smugglers by boat near Teknaf on the Naff River separating the neighbouring countries near Cox's Bazar in southern Bangladesh. The border runs down the middle of the wide river that flows into the nearby Andaman Sea.

The smugglers got away, but a Burmese border patrol boat opened fire on their Bangladesh counterparts, said Col. M M Anisur Rahman, the local Bangladesh border guard commander in Cox's Bazar. The Bangladesh patrol fired back.

A Bangladesh guard was seized by the Burmese patrol after falling in the river and taken away to Myanmar. Bangladeshi side is trying to hold a flag meeting to get back their border patrol member and establish peace on the border.<sup>44</sup>

### **NSA Ajit Doval meets Myanmar President, top Defence officials**

National Security Advisor of India Ajit Doval on June 17 held comprehensive talks with Myanmar President U. Thein Sein and top defence brass on security cooperation in Myanmar, days after Indian Army carried out a counter-insurgency offensive along the Indo-Myanmar border.

Ajit Doval's visit to Myanmar was an imposed necessity following Naypipidaw's unhappiness at the way Indians handled the communications and media strategy after the unilateral military action to hit camps of the Naga insurgents' Khaplang faction on the Myanmar side of the border.<sup>45</sup>

On June 4, in one of the worst attacks suffered by the Indian Army in a decade, at least 18 soldiers were killed and 11 others injured when militants ambushed their convoy in Manipur's Chandel district. Naga rebel outfit NSCN-K has claimed responsibility. The Indian army

<sup>43</sup> China to hold fire drills along Myanmar border, Reuters, June 1, 2015, available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/06/01/us-china-myanmar-idUSKBN00H19G20150601>

<sup>44</sup> Bangladesh and Burma Patrols Exchange Fire Along River Border, The Irrawaddy, June 18, 2015, available at <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/bangladesh-and-burma-patrols-exchange-fire-along-river-border.html>

<sup>45</sup> NSA's mission could take Act East further, Deccan Chronicle, June 17, 2015, available at <http://www.deccanchronicle.com/150617/commentary-dc-comment/article/nsa%E2%80%99s-mission-could-take-act-east-further>

responded to this by the surgical strike inside Myanmar which was carried out by a crack team of about 70 commandos of the Indian Army who finished the operation within 40 minutes, leaving number of Naga insurgents dead and few injured on June 9.<sup>46</sup>

Enhancing security cooperation between the two countries was the main focus of the meetings which were also attended by foreign secretary S. Jaishankar.

Doval and Jaishankar called on President Sein, Commander-in-Chief and Foreign Minister and the discussions included "continued security cooperation and coordination along the India-Myanmar border and on other bilateral issues."

The officials were on day-long visit to Myanmar. Mr. Doval had been closely involved in planning the June 9 operation along the India-Myanmar border in which India invoked May 2014 border agreement with Myanmar on border cooperation which provides for a framework for security cooperation and exchange of information between security agencies of the two countries. A key provision of the pact was conduct of coordinated patrols on their respective sides of the international border and the maritime boundary by the Armed Forces of the two countries.<sup>47</sup>

### **Proposed amendment to make Myanmar's Suu Kyi eligible for presidency voted down**

Myanmar's parliament on June 25 voted to retain the military's veto power over any

constitutional amendments, dealing a blow to the opposition National League for Democracy's hopes of having its leader Aung San Suu Kyi run for the presidency.

The amendment bill, which was drawn up and submitted by the ruling Union Solidarity and Development Party led by figures affiliated with the former junta, was rejected by unelected military representatives who hold a quarter of seats in the Union Parliament. Ms. Suu Kyi said after the vote that the result was expected and it was not surprising.

The constitution, adopted in 2008 while the country was still under direct military rule, allocates 25 per cent of seats in parliament to the military and empowers its representatives to veto any proposed amendments by requiring a support threshold of more than 75 per cent.

The bill had called for amending the constitution amendment procedures to reduce the required support threshold to 70 percent, while Suu Kyi's party had sought to further reduce it to 65 percent.

During the debate in the bill, the military representatives argued that the military's involvement in the initial stages of the country's transition to democracy, while temporary, is necessary to ensure a smooth and successful transition.

Regarding Suu Kyi's eligibility to run for the presidency, the charter currently bars any citizen whose spouse, children or spouses of children are foreign nationals from becoming a candidate, effectively disqualifying her as her late husband was British and her two sons are both British nationals.

<sup>46</sup> Myanmar operation: 70 commandos finish task in 40 minutes, The Hindu, June 10, 2015, available at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/myanmar-operation-70-commandos-finish-task-in-40-minutes/article7302348.ece>

<sup>47</sup> NSA Ajit Doval meets Myanmar President, top defence officials, live mint, June 17, 2015, available at <http://www.livemint.com/Politics/pzAstXMGddOXWHWEexhnZK/NSA-foreign-secretary-in-Myanmar-meet-President-Sein-and-t.html>

The bill voted on Thursday had proposed only minor changes to that article by lifting the disqualification of citizens with children whose spouses are foreign nationals. Lawmakers from Suu Kyi's party want the article barring her candidacy to be totally scrapped, saying its original intention was to exclude her.<sup>48</sup>

## Philippines

### Philippines urge Beijing to dismantle structures from East China Sea

The Department of National Defence (DND) on May 5 urged China to dismantle its structures in the West Philippine Sea or South China Sea (internationally known as the East China Sea) and apologize to the international community for destroying natural resources in the area through its massive reclamation activities.

Reacting to China's latest accusation that the Philippines is engaged in construction activities in the dispute West Philippine Sea, Dr. Peter Paul Galvez, spokesman of DND, said that the Chinese are now getting "confused" with what they are saying.

"They are saying too many things that now they are confused. What they should do is to stop all activities in WPS (West Philippine Sea) reclamation, dismantle structures and apologize to the international community for the massive environmental degradation they committed," said Galvez.

China recently accused the Philippines of provocation through its construction activities in areas, claiming it has never taken any actions that complicated the dispute. It also called on the Philippines to stop building structures and evacuate its people.<sup>49</sup>

### Philippine rebels begin process of giving up arms

President Benigno Aquino III on June 16 witnessed the first phase of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front's (MILF) decommissioning of weapons and combatants in Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao. He described it as a historic moment.

During the decommissioning ceremony, the MILF turned over 55 high-powered and 20 crew-serve weapons to the Independent Decommissioning Body headed by Turkish Ambassador Haydar Berk.

In his speech, Aquino said that the MILF rebels' turnover of firearms was proof that they were committed to pursue the peace process with the government. In addition to this, 145 members of the MILF's Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces were decommissioned who will start their return to full civilian lives.

The decommissioned MILF rebels will undergo a registration and validation process and will receive PhilHealth cards and 25,000 Philippine pesos in immediate cash assistance. The MILF decommissioning is in accordance with the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) signed by the rebel group and the national government in January 2014.

<sup>48</sup> Myanmar parliament votes to keep military veto over charter changes, Kazinform, June 25, 2015, available at <http://www.inform.kz/eng/article/2790576>

<sup>49</sup> DND continues word war, tells China to get rid of structures in disputed sea, The tribune, May 7, 2015, available at <http://www.tribune.net.ph/nation/dnd-continues-word-war-tells-china-to-get-rid-of-structures-in-disputed-sea>

The CAB states that 30 percent of MILF combatants and weapons will be decommissioned upon the passage of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), to be followed by another 35 percent after the plebiscite and the appointment of members of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority.

The remaining 35 percent will be decommissioned once the Bangsamoro government is established and its leaders are elected.

The decommissioning started despite the delay in the passage of the BBL following the deadly encounter between Special Action Force commandos and MILF fighters in Mamasapano, Maguindanao in January.<sup>50</sup>

## Singapore

### **Singapore deploys Home Team's largest overseas relief operation to Nepal**

Singapore deployed home team's largest overseas relief operation, consisting of 60 officers from the Singapore Civil Defence Force and 66 officers from the Singapore Police Force, to Nepal which was rattled by a devastating earthquake on April 25. Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean on May 3 said that 126 Home Team officers were focusing their efforts on the Gorkha district which was close to the epicentre of the earthquake.<sup>51</sup> This is Republic's largest deployment for an

overseas relief operation.

### **ISIS social media post cites Singapore as possible target**

Singapore has been identified as a possible target for attack by a recent Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) posting on social media, according to a report by Jasminder Singh who is an analyst from S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies. ISIS supporters from the region have also cited the Philippines and the United States as targets.

This development comes as Malaysia in April nabbed a cell with explosives targeting Putrajaya and the federal Parliament, and as Singapore's Home Affairs Ministry on May 27 announced the detention of a 19-year-old student who made plans to join ISIS in Syria and carry out attacks in Singapore.

It is not the first time Singapore has been cited by radicals. In 2014, extremist English-language magazine Resurgence cited the Phillip Channel and Sembawang Naval Base in a piece on how militants could attack at sea.

The threat to Singapore and the region is set to grow as ISIS' Malay Archipelago combat unit, Katibah Nusantara, formed in Syria in August 2014 for Southeast Asian fighters who find it easier to communicate in Bahasa Indonesia and Malay rather than Arabic, gains ground. There are now more than 700 fighters from Indonesia and over 200 fighters from Malaysia fighting in Iraq and Syria, Mr Singh noted in the report.

Professor Rohan Gunaratna, who heads Singapore's International Centre for Political

<sup>50</sup> PNoy sees MILF sincerity as rebels turn over weapons, philstar, June 16, 2015, available at <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2015/06/16/1466552/pnoy-sees-milf-sincerity-rebels-turn-over-weapons>

<sup>51</sup> Singapore deploys Home Team's largest overseas relief operation to Nepal, xinhuanet, May 3, 2015 available at [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-05/03/c\\_134206232.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-05/03/c_134206232.htm)

Violence and Terrorism Research, said that the unit poses a severe threat to Singapore and Southeast Asia. The strategy to counter this influence has to be multi-pronged, from engaging the community to exposing ISIS' evils online.<sup>52</sup>

### **Thailand, Singapore sign deals to boost bilateral investments**

Thailand and Singapore on June 11 signed four memorandums of understanding to boost bilateral investments in the public and private sectors of both countries.

The MoUs were signed by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha and his Singaporean counterpart Lee Hsien Loong at the end of the Thailand-Singapore Leaders' Retreat in Singapore on June 11.

The MoUs were related to waiving repetitive tariffs between the two countries, cruise tourism, information and experience sharing. They are also connected to producing and marketing products categorised as "digital content" between the Thai Software Industry Promotion Agency (Public Organisation) and the Media Development Authority of Singapore.

The pair also reached agreement between the Federation of Thai Industries and the Singapore Manufacturing Federation.

Both leaders discussed the ASEAN-China relationship in the South China Sea

dispute. Gen Prayut told Mr Lee that Thailand would support Singapore to succeed in the rotating role of ASEAN-China coordinator, a role filled by Thailand at present. It becomes vacant in July 2015.<sup>53</sup>

## **Thailand**

### **More than 30 graves of suspected Rohingya refugees discovered in Thailand**

The discovery of more than 30 graves of suspected Rohingya Muslim refugees who were possibly victims of human trafficking has dealt a blow to Thailand's human trafficking record.

Last year, Thailand was downgraded to the lowest tier on the US State Department's influential Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, which annually ranks countries by their efforts to combat trafficking.<sup>54</sup>

Tens of thousands of migrants from Myanmar, mainly from the Rohingya Muslim minority and increasingly from Bangladesh, make the dangerous sea crossing to southern Thailand, a well-worn trafficking route often on the way south to Malaysia and beyond.

Thousands of Rohingya, described by the UN as one of the world's most persecuted minorities, have fled deadly communal unrest in western Myanmar's Rakhine state since 2012. Thailand has been criticised in the past for pushing boatloads of Rohingya entering Thai waters back out to sea and for holding migrants in overcrowded facilities.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>52</sup> ISIS social media post cites Singapore as possible target, The Strait Times, May 29, 2015, available at <http://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/isis-social-media-post-cites-singapore-as-possible-target>

<sup>53</sup> PM signs deals with Singapore, Bangkok Post, June 12, 2015, available at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/lite/news/589925/pm-signs-deals-with-singapore>

<sup>54</sup> 'Rohingya' graves found, Bangkok Post, May 2, 2015, available at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/general/548727/rohingya-graves-found>

<sup>55</sup> Mass grave of 'boatpeople' found in southern Thailand, Business Standard, May 1, 2015, available at [http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/mass-grave-of-boatpeople-found-in-southern-thailand-115050100356\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/mass-grave-of-boatpeople-found-in-southern-thailand-115050100356_1.html)

## International meet on South East Asia migrants concludes in Thailand

A regional conference called to address the swelling tide of boat people in Southeast Asia ended on May 29 with no major breakthroughs, as Myanmar criticised those blaming it for fuelling the crisis and warned that “finger pointing” would not help.

The meeting in Bangkok was attended by representatives of 17 countries directly or indirectly affected by the growing crisis, along with the United States and Japan and officials from international organisations such as the UN refugee agency and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). That so many countries, including Myanmar, participated was considered progress in itself.

“The most encouraging result was the general consensus that these discussions need to continue,” said IOM Director-General William Lacy Swing. “It cannot be a one-off”, he added.

Southeast Asia has been beset for years by growing waves of desperate migrants from Bangladesh and Myanmar. The word “Rohingya” did not appear on the invitation for the meeting, after Myanmar threatened to boycott the talks if it appeared, and most people who spoke at meeting avoided saying it. Myanmar’s government does not recognise Rohingya as an ethnic group, arguing instead they are really “Bangladeshis”.

An official summary of the meeting included a list of proposals and recommendations that were “put

forward”, including ensuring the UN has access to migrants and addressing the issue’s root causes. Thai Foreign Minister Thanasak Patimaprakorn said Bangkok agreed to allow the US military to operate flights out of Thailand to search for migrants stuck on boats, one week after Washington put in a request to do so. And the US pledged \$3 million to help the IOM deal with the crisis, while Australia pledged \$4.6 million toward humanitarian assistance in Myanmar.

The final statement from the meeting included a paragraph that called for addressing factors in the areas of origin of migrants, including “promoting full respect for human rights” as well as investing in economic development. It did not mention Myanmar by name.<sup>56</sup>

## Vietnam

### Vietnam, South Korea sign Free Trade Agreement

Vietnam and South Korea on May 5 signed a bilateral free trade agreement in the Vietnamese capital of Hanoi, concluding the countries’ two-year talks. The deal, which was initiated in April, will enable the trade between the two nations to reach \$70 billion a year by 2020, the Vietnamese government said in a statement, citing Trade Minister Vu Huy Hoang.

Under the Korea-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (FTA), Vietnam will reduce import duties for all South Korean products by nearly 90 percent over a period of 15 years, which could boost South Korea’s economy by 3 percent over the next decade. South Korea also agreed to cut import duties by over 95 percent for Vietnamese goods.

<sup>56</sup> Southeast Asian countries vow to work together to address migrant crisis, The Daily Start, May 30, 2015, available at <http://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/countries-vow-work-together-89575>

Seoul is reportedly seeking to implement the deal before end of 2015. "The Korea-Vietnam FTA will be a key example of a mutually beneficial FTA by expanding South Korean firms' investment in Vietnam while also boosting trade between the two countries," South Korean Trade Minister Yoon Sang-jick was quoted as saying.

The first round of negotiations for the agreement with Vietnam was held in August 2012, following which the two countries held eight more rounds of talks before striking a deal late last year. At that time, bilateral trade between the two countries had reportedly reached over \$30 billion.<sup>57</sup>

### **Vietnam, US ministers hold talks to boost defence ties**

Defence Minister of Vietnam General Phùng Quang Thanh held talks with visiting US Secretary of Defence Ashton Carter in Hanoi on June 1 and signed a "joint vision statement" pledging to expand defence trade, including possible co-production and collaborate on maritime security.

The Vietnamese Defence Minister lauded the US defence chief's visit in the context that both countries were celebrating the 20th anniversary of the normalization of bilateral relations.

The minister said that he believed the visit

would contribute to promote the Vietnam-US defence collaboration in line with the 2011 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on strengthening bilateral defence partnership.

The future defence collaboration will cover activities addressing war aftermaths like searching for missing in action soldiers, dioxin detoxification, dealing with unexploded ordnance; the exchange of delegations; dialogue and consultation; experience sharing in search and rescue, disaster relief, peace-keeping operations and maritime security; mutual consultations at multilateral forums, the ADMM+; and other fields of mutual needs and capacity.<sup>58</sup>

But the first visit to Hanoi by a U.S. Defence secretary since 2012 was also a reminder of the limits of the burgeoning U.S.-Vietnam relationship. The new vision statement, which builds on an earlier 2011 accord, is legally non-binding. New U.S. arms sales have been slow to develop and in Washington, expanded arms sales are opposed by human rights organisations, which say Vietnam's rights record remains weak in all key areas.<sup>59</sup>

### **Vietnam receives Russian-design missile boats amid maritime tension**

Vietnam took delivery of two new missile boats on June 2 made locally and modelled on Russian vessels, in a move by its military to strengthen maritime defences as tensions simmer over sovereignty in the South China Sea.

The two Tarantul-class corvettes, known as

<sup>57</sup> South Korea, Vietnam Sign Free Trade Agreement; Deal Could Help Bilateral Trade Reach \$70B A Year By 2020, International Business Times, May 5, 2015, available at <http://www.ibtimes.com/south-korea-vietnam-sign-free-trade-agreement-deal-could-help-bilateral-trade-reach-1908442>

<sup>58</sup> Vietnam, US defence chiefs hold talks, VietnamPlus, October 26, 2015, available at <http://en.vietnamplus.vn/vietnam-us-defence-chiefs-hold-talks/78793.vnp>

<sup>59</sup> U.S. Touts Military Ties With Vietnam Amid China Sea Tension, Bloomberg, June 1, 2015, available at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-06-01/u-s-touts-military-ties-with-vietnam-as-china-sea-tensions-rise>

Molniyas, are equipped with 16 missiles and automatic weapons and are among six ordered by the navy, two of which were delivered last year. The missiles have a range of 130 kilometers.

Vietnam's naval defence capabilities have been boosted by Russian hardware, including state-of-the-art kilo-class submarines equipped with a Russian land attack variant of the Klub missile. They are capable of precision strikes within a range of 300km.

Deputy Defence Minister Truong Quang Khanh said that the new boats showed Vietnam could "fully master the technology and techniques of modern military shipbuilding" and would boost its combat power and help protect its maritime sovereignty.<sup>60</sup>

## OCEANIA

### AUSTRALIA

#### **Australia announces 16m-dollar aid package for Pakistan**

Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop announced on May 6 an assistance package of about \$16 million for reconstruction projects in Pakistani areas affected by militancy and floods, and to support a trade initiative.

The \$16 million assistance was part of a total aid package of approximately \$20

million. About \$8 million will be spent on restoring damaged infrastructure, supporting livelihood and improving service delivery in areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Federally-Administered Tribal Areas and Balochistan affected by flood and conflict, through the World Bank's Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF). Over the past five years, Australia has contributed \$25 million to the MDTF.

Another \$8 million has been pledged for a trade initiative being managed by the World Bank and Pakistan's Commerce Ministry under a four-year trade and investment programme.<sup>61</sup>

#### **Australia, Japan agree to strengthen defence cooperation**

Prime Minister of Japan Mr Shinzo Abe and Australian Defence Minister Mr Kevin Andrews agreed on June 3 to strengthen defence cooperation with an increased role of the Self Defence Forces of Japan in mind as the two countries face an increasingly severe security environment in the Asia-Pacific region.

Closer bilateral defence cooperation "will contribute significantly not only to the national interests of both countries, but also to the stability and peace of the region," Abe said in a meeting with Andrews in Tokyo.

With Japan seeing Australia as a "quasi ally," Tokyo plans to include Canberra in a list of friendly nations to which, besides the United States as its ally, the Self Defence Forces would extend logistical support in situations that gravely threaten the peace and security of Japan.

On Australia's plan to develop submarines for its navy, Abe cited Tokyo's decision on May 18

<sup>60</sup> Vietnam receives Russian-design missile boats amid maritime tension, Reuters, June 2, 2015, available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/06/02/us-vietnam-defence-idUSKBN00I22B20150602>

<sup>61</sup> Australia announces \$16m aid package, dawn, May 7, 2015, available at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1180485>

to participate in the process to select a partner for the project and said, "Our country would like to continue cooperation."

Australia is expected to decide a partner for its Future Submarine Program by the end of the year after identifying Japan, France and Germany as a possible partner country for what it says is the "largest defence procurement program in Australia's history."

Andrews said that Australia was committed to work with Japan to support regional security through enhanced trilateral cooperation which also included the United States.<sup>62</sup>

## Fiji

### US Rescinds ban on military sales to Fiji

The United States has rescinded a ban on sales of military equipment to the South Pacific island nation of Fiji. An announcement on May 29 in the Federal Register said that the shift in defence trade policy was in response to credible, democratic elections in Fiji in 2014. The U.S. had restricted its assistance following a military coup in 2006.

Voreqe Bainimarama, who launched the coup and served as military ruler for eight years, won a decisive victory in the election and is now prime minister.

The Obama administration has stepped up U.S. engagement with Pacific island nations as it vies for regional influence with China. In October, the U.S. said that it was exploring opportunities to resume engaging with Fiji's military, including in training exercises and in cooperating on issues of global concern.<sup>63</sup>

## New Zealand

### New Zealand, India reach agreement on exchange of navy personnel for training

The New Zealand Navy has reached an in-principle agreement with the Indian Navy for mutual exchange of personnel for training, likely by the next year, said Chief of New Zealand Navy Rear Admiral Jack Raymond Steer. He was on a visit to Kochi.

Describing the scope of India-New Zealand maritime relations, the Admiral said that New Zealand and India had similar maritime security issues in their respective oceans and across the Indo-Pacific trade routes. Therefore, they had a great deal to share in addressing each other's security concerns.

He said that the New Zealand Navy was not trying for supremacy in the Indian Ocean region, though the region was important for the country.

India and New Zealand have enjoyed a good relation as members of the Commonwealth, sharing the commonality extended by virtue of commitment towards secularism, democratic freedom and common interests, as the Indian Ocean Littoral states.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Japan, Australia Vow To Step Up Defense Cooperation, Japan Bullet, June 4, 2015, available at <http://www.japanbullet.com/news/japan-australia-vow-to-step-up-defense-cooperation>

<sup>63</sup> US Rescinds Ban On Military Sales To Fiji, Papua New Guinea Today, May 31, 2015, available at <http://news.pngfacts.com/2015/05/us-rescinds-ban-on-military-sales-to.html>

<sup>64</sup> India, New Zealand Set to Exchange Navy Men, The New Indian Express, June 20, 2015, available at <http://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/kochi/India-New-Zealand-Set-to-Exchange-Navy-Men/2015/06/20/article2876104.ece>

# Papua New Guinea

## Papua New Guinea hit by 7.1 magnitude quake

According to US Geological Survey, a 7.1 magnitude earthquake hit off Papua New Guinea on May 1, 2015, 110 kilometres south-southwest of the town of Kokopo. There were no tsunami warnings, the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said. A 6.7 magnitude quake hit the same region on April 30, 131 kilometres southwest of Kokopo, but there were no reports of serious damage on either occasion.<sup>65</sup>

Back to back quakes hit the region because the region lies on the 2,500-mile-long Pacific Australia plate, which forms part of the “Ring of Fire”, a hotspot for seismic activity due to friction between tectonic plates.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Papua New Guinea hit by 7.1 earthquake, The Indian Express, May 1, 2015, available at <http://indianexpress.com/article/world/world-others/7-1-magnitude-earthquake-hits-papua-new-guinea-no-tsunami-warning-issued/>

<sup>66</sup> Tsunami threat passes after 7.2 earthquake hits Papua New Guinea, The Telegraph, May 7, 2015, available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/papuanewguinea/11588339/Local-tsunami-possible-as-7.2-earthquake-hits-Papua-New-Guinea.html>

## ABOUT US

The Southeast Asia and Oceania Centre focuses on policy-relevant research in respect of the ten ASEAN states, East Timor and Oceania, including Australia and New Zealand. The Centre studies India's bilateral and multilateral relations with states of the region with a view to providing contemporary relevance to India's Look East policy. It has a futuristic approach and examines the emerging trends in the regional security architecture. The Centre studies the potential for India's enhanced defence cooperation (including maritime issues) and cooperation in non-traditional security issues with the region. It examines internal developments of countries in this region, especially political transition and the role of the military, and their implications for India. The Centre seeks to promote Track-II institutional linkages with the region.

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