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# *INSIGHT* SOUTHEAST ASIA

Looking Eastwards From New Delhi



ASEAN Secretary General Mr. Le Luong Minh Addressing the Audience at IDSA on 7 March

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**Centre Activities For March And April**

The months of March and April were eventful for IDSA's Southeast Asia and Oceania Centre. Delhi Dialogue VI, bringing together delegates from India and ASEAN countries was organized on March 6- 7. This edition carries a conference report with photographs.

As the tension between China and Vietnam increased in the East Sea, the two sides have agreed to establish a direct phone link connecting the two defence ministries. China also issued a warning to the Philippines. Even as the Indonesian military chief said that the main challenge of the future would be dispute in the South China Sea (SCS) and border security, there seemed to be no timeframe set for the conclusion of the SCS Code of Conduct. Its Navy held a Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo (MNEK) in the South China Sea to field test a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for disaster relief activities undertaken by ASEAN. Vietnam signed with Israel in March two important agreements relating to inland security and protection of confidential information

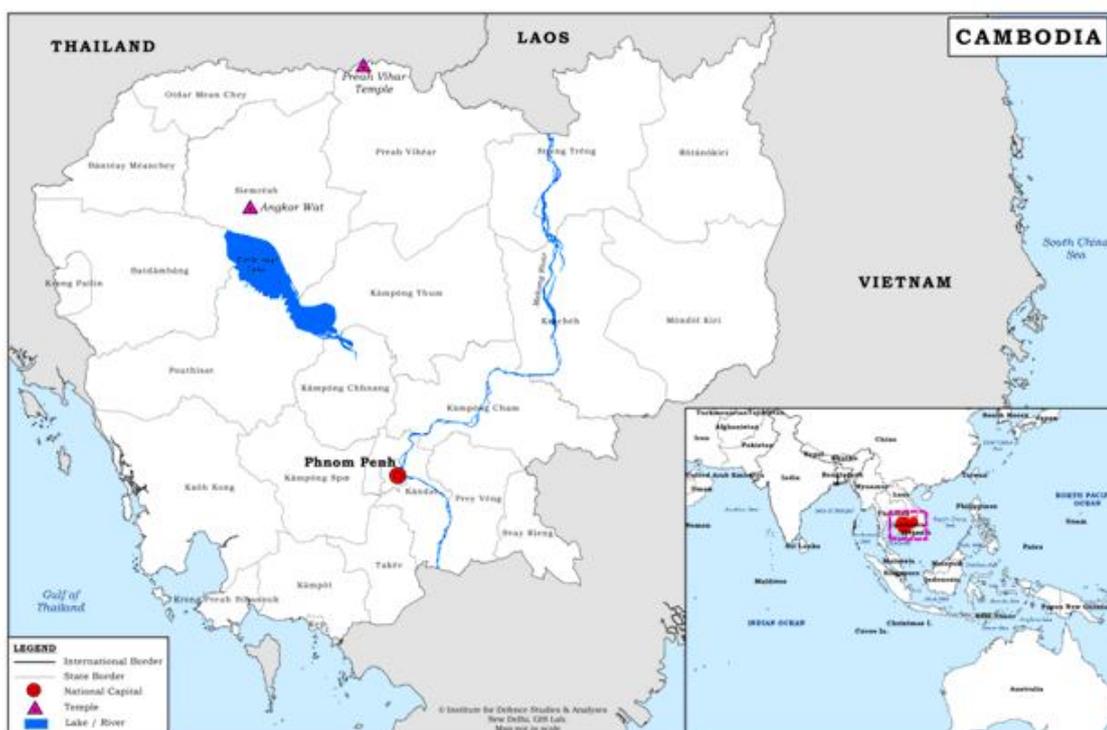
The mysterious disappearance of the Malaysian Airlines flight MH 370 saw the international community cooperating in the search mission, including India's own forces.

Reports emanating in March indicated that four Indian insurgent groups NSCN (Khaplang), ULFA, National Democratic Front of Boroland (Songbijit) and the Manipur-based People's Liberation Army (PLA) were planning to meet in north western Myanmar to form an umbrella organization.

But there was some encouraging news too. Myanmar's media is coming into its own. This was evident from the large and keenly inquisitive media delegation which was at IDSA for an interaction on April 30. It may be recalled that Myanmar's Parliament on March 4 approved two laws (Press Law and the Printer's and Publisher's Registration Bill) to govern the media. The task of media licensing will rest with the Ministry of Information.

**Udai Bhanu Singh**

# CAMBODIA



Source: IDSA

**Capital:** Phnom Penh

**Land and Geography:** Cambodia is situated on the Indochinese Peninsula. It is bordered by Thailand and Laos on the north and Vietnam on the east and south. Gulf of Thailand is located on its west.<sup>1</sup> Total land area of Cambodia is estimated at 68,154 square miles.<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 14.86 million (World Bank, 2012)<sup>3</sup>

**Politics and Government:** Cambodia's politics and government are based on a parliamentary democracy and a

constitutional monarch. His Majesty Samdech Preah Baromneath Norodom Sihamoni is the Head of the State (elected on 29 October 2004) and Hun Sen is the Prime Minister (elected consecutively in 1998, 2003, and 2008). The prime minister is responsible for overall execution of national policies and programmes, and is answerable to the National Assembly. Cambodia has a multiparty system and liberal democratic pattern as its political foundation. The Constitution of Cambodia, promulgated on 21 September 1993, declares the citizens of Cambodia as the masters of the country and

<sup>1</sup> Cambodia, available at <http://www.infoplease.com/country/cambodia.html>, accessed 25 April 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Basic Facts About Cambodia, available at [http://www.east-buc.k12.ia.us/98\\_99/Asia/Cam/cam\\_bfc.htm](http://www.east-buc.k12.ia.us/98_99/Asia/Cam/cam_bfc.htm), accessed 25 April 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Cambodia Country Profile, Cambodia Country Information Center, <http://www.cambodia.org/facts/>, accessed 25 April 2014.

they possess all powers and exercise it through the National Assembly, Senate, Royal Government, and Judiciary. At present the country is divided into twenty four provinces and four municipalities namely Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville, Kep, and Pailin. In July 2013, at the National Assembly election, the ruling party, led by PM Hun Sen, Cambodian People's Party won only 55% vote and the opposition, Cambodia National Rescue party, led by Sam Rainsy won 45% of the popular votes. However, the opposition raised questions over the outcome of the election and boycotted the parliament. Since then the political stalemate continues in Cambodia with sporadic violence between the government deployed forces and the opposition making everyday life of the Cambodians a difficult one.<sup>4</sup>

### **Religion and Ethnic Composition:**

Theravada Buddhism is the religion of the majority in Cambodia. Buddhism was reinstated as the state religion in 1989. The ethnic groups are Khmer, Vietnamese and Chinese. Khmer community represents almost 94% of the population.<sup>5</sup> Khmer is the main language.

**Economy:** In the 1970s, Cambodia's economy was devastated by the civil war

and the oppressing rule of the *Khmer Rouge*. Till today, Cambodia is regarded as one of the least developed countries in the world. The main agricultural products are rice, rubber, corn, vegetables, cashews and tapioca.<sup>6</sup> Exports, foreign direct investment, construction and tourism are the main pillars of the economy on which depends the growth in Cambodia's economy. Economic growth is expected at 7.5% in 2014.<sup>7</sup> It is also endowed with some natural resources like oil and gas, timber, gemstones, some iron ore, manganese, phosphates and hydropower potential. The GDP of Cambodia was estimated at US\$14.04 billion in 2012.<sup>8</sup> Inflation was estimated at 6% and unemployment at 3.5%, according to estimates of 2011.<sup>9</sup> Cambodia acceded to the WTO in 2004.

**Defence:** Cambodia's current defence and national security policy emphasises on border defense, natural disasters response, maritime security, Mekong River water resource security, counter terrorism and international crimes capabilities, and security sector reform and governance. In November 2013, Cambodia celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Independence Day as well as the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the brave Royal Cambodian Armed Forces, founded by late king Norodom Sihanouk. At the commemoration, PM Hun Sen

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<sup>4</sup> Cambodia, available at <http://www.infoplease.com/country/cambodia.html?pageno=5>, accessed 25 April 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Cambodia Country Brief, Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, available at [http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/cambodia/cambodia\\_brief.html](http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/cambodia/cambodia_brief.html), accessed 30 April 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Cambodia, available at <http://www.infoplease.com/country/cambodia.html?pageno=6>, accessed 25 April 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Cambodia, available at Asia Regional Integration Center, <http://aric.adb.org/cambodia/overview>, accessed 25 April 2014

<sup>8</sup> Cambodia, World Bank, available at <http://data.worldbank.org/country/cambodia>, accessed 25 April 2014

<sup>9</sup> Cambodia, available at <http://www.infoplease.com/country/cambodia.html?pageno=6>, accessed 25 April 2014.

## Export and Import Trade of Cambodia<sup>10</sup>

<p><b>Major Exports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garments</li> <li>• Fisheries Products</li> <li>• Rubber</li> </ul>	<p><b>Major Exporting Countries</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United States (34%)</li> <li>• Hong Kong (16%)</li> <li>• Singapore (7%)</li> <li>• Germany (6%)</li> <li>• United Kingdom (6%)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Major Imports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gold</li> <li>• Knit or crochet fabric</li> <li>• Refined petroleum oils</li> <li>• Floating or submersible drilling platforms</li> <li>• Other woven fabrics of synthetic staple fibers</li> </ul>	<p><b>Major Importing Countries</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Singapore (26%)</li> <li>• China (22%)</li> <li>• Hong Kong (14%)</li> <li>• Thailand (12%)</li> <li>• Viet Nam (5%)</li> </ul>

commented, "Since its establishment, the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces have been bravely protecting peace, national integrity, and happiness of the people as well as temples, priceless heritage left by our ancestors, from aggression".<sup>11</sup> In 2014, Cambodia's defence budget represents 14% of its total annual expenditure and approximately 3.3% of its GDP. The 2014 defence budget of Cambodia is a 17% rise from that of 2013 and stands at USD 468 million.<sup>12</sup>

**Foreign Relations:** The foreign policy of the Kingdom of Cambodia, since its inception in 1993, has largely been outward looking. Cambodia shares noteworthy bilateral relations with China with the latter becoming one of the principal sources of its import. China's aid and grants to Cambodia is also significant. Thailand is another important source of import for Cambodia. However, historical sensitivities related to border demarcation act as an irritant in Cambodia's relations with Thailand. Cambodia also shares cordial bilateral relations

<sup>10</sup> Cambodia Country Profile, Cambodia Country Information Center, available at <http://www.cambodia.org/facts/>, accessed 25 April 2014.

<sup>11</sup> Vannarith Chheang, "PM Hun Sen's Remarks, 9 Nov 2013 on Cambodian Defence Policy", available at <http://vannarithchheang.wordpress.com/2013/11/29/pm-hun-sens-re/>, accessed 30 April 2014.

<sup>12</sup> Jon Grevatt, "Cambodian defence budget increases 17%", available at <http://www.janes.com/article/29957/cambodian-defence-budget-increases-17>, accessed 30 April 2014.

with Japan and the US. In 2007, US lifted a ten-year ban on direct bilateral aid to Cambodia. In January 1995, Cambodia acceded to the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation and in the same year, participated in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) for the first time. In 2012, Cambodia was the Chair for ASEAN Summit and East Asia Summit. Previously, Cambodia chaired the Summit of ASEAN in 2003.<sup>13</sup> Cambodia is also involved in peacekeeping operations in Sudan, South Sudan and Lebanon.

**Relations with India:** Cambodia shares a very cordial relation with India. India's role in International Control Commission on Indo-China was widely appreciated in Cambodia in the 1950s. Later, India's participation in Paris Peace Accord and restoration of peace in Cambodia were also welcomed by Cambodia. In 2007 PM Hun Sen visited India and both sides signed agreements/MoUs on Credit line, defense cooperation, water resources management, transfer of sentenced persons, agricultural development, oil and

natural gas and foreign office consultations.<sup>14</sup> PM Manmohan Singh paid a high level visit to Cambodia in 2012. PM Hun Sen too visited India in 2012 to participate in the commemorative summit to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ASEAN-India partnership. Cambodia-India Entrepreneurship Development Centre, Cambodia-India Centre for English Language Training, India- Cambodia Centre of Excellence & Talent Development are some of the instances of India's support to Cambodia's human resource developments. India also offers one hundred scholarships to Cambodia under the ITEC programme. In 2012, INS *Sudarshini* visited Sihanoukville Port of Cambodia to celebrate the 20th anniversary of ASEAN-India partnership. In December 2005, Cambodia and India signed the Agreement on Combating International Terrorism, Organized Crimes and Illicit Drug Trafficking. At the South Summit Conference in Havana in April 2000 PM Hun Sen declared Cambodia's support to India's bid to permanent seat in the UNSC. Around 1500 Indian nationals, based in Phnom Penh, are working in Cambodia.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Cambodia Country Brief, Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, available at [http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/cambodia/cambodia\\_brief.html](http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/cambodia/cambodia_brief.html), accessed 30 April 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Cambodia and India Relations, available at [http://www.iac-cambodia.org/cam\\_ind\\_relations.php](http://www.iac-cambodia.org/cam_ind_relations.php), accessed 25 April 2014.

<sup>15</sup> India Cambodia Relations, available at [http://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Cambodian\\_Bilateral\\_Relations\\_-MEA\\_Website.pdf](http://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Cambodian_Bilateral_Relations_-MEA_Website.pdf), accessed 25 April 2014.

# In Focus: Delhi Dialogue VI

Sampa Kundu\*



**Photo 1: Delhi Dialogue VI at IDSA, 7 March 2014**

Since its initiation in 2009, Delhi Dialogue has promoted exchanges of ideas, shared concerns and recommended future actions on an annual basis to augment ASEAN-India partnership. It has been an engaging platform where government officials, academicians, businessmen and investors from India and Southeast Asia interact with each other and a large audience. This year, the process of Delhi Dialogue has reached its sixth year and themed as 'Realizing the ASEAN-India Vision for Partnership and Prosperity'. The Ministry of External Affairs, India has organised the sixth edition of Delhi Dialogue on March 6-7, 2014, with dynamic support from the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FICCI), the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA),

the SAEA Group Research (SAEA) Singapore, the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) Singapore, and the Economic Research Institute of ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) Jakarta.



**Photo 2: Minister of Commerce, Mr. Anand Sharma Inaugurating the Academic Sessions at IDSA on 7 March 2014**



**Photo 3: Panelists Speaking at IDSA on 7 March 2014**

The inaugural programme of Delhi Dialogue VI was marked by the speeches delivered by the Honourable External Affairs Minister of India, Secretary General of ASEAN and ten distinguished ministerial representatives from ASEAN countries. It was organised in Hotel Oberoi, New Delhi. In order to explain the significance of the vision statement, Salman Khurshid, EAM, India mentioned, "The Vision Statement builds on the civilizational foundation to our relationship and the dynamism and increasing strategic relevance that it has acquired over the last 20 years. It seeks an ambitious engagement on the basis of identity of purpose and interests and the unique absence of irritants. It takes into account the value of the ASEAN-India strategic partnership to the realization of the ASEAN Community as an economic as also a political-security entity. The Vision Statement looks at constructive engagement, supported by the ASEAN way of dialogue and consensus and progress at a pace which is comfortable for all".

Mr. Le Luong Minh, Secretary-General of ASEAN mentioned,

"ASEAN and India need to work closely to implement the ASEAN India Vision Statement by undertaking practical and action-oriented projects, programs and activities which should be prioritized and aligned to the two sides' common strategic orientations evolving broad spectrums of stakeholders so that the benefits of the partnership will be felt by all".



**Photo 4: ASEAN Secretary General Mr. Le Luong Minh Addressing the Audience at IDSA on 7 March**

On 7 March, the academic sessions were hosted by the IDSA. A large pool of panelists participated in the academic sessions. They spoke on issues relating to "Translating the Vision Statement", "Role of Northeast India in India's Look East Policy", "Regional Architecture in Asia-Pacific: Roles of India and ASEAN" and "Delhi Dialogue: The Way Forward". In the last session titled "Delhi Dialogue: The Way Forward" while speaking on how Delhi Dialogue process can be improved, the panelists stressed that the Delhi Dialogue should be "more than an annual talk shop" and should move forward to "act, execute, implement". It needs to focus on broader themes to move beyond physical connectivity and

promote issues like cultural and tourism links within the region. Amongst the distinguished panelists were Anand Sharma, Minister of Commerce, India; Anil Wadhwa, Secretary (East), MEA; the Chairman of Research and Information System Amb. Shyam Saran, the Director General of ICWA Amb. Rajiv Bhatia, Director General of IDSA Dr. Arvind Gupta, Executive Chairman of ERIA, Dr. Hidetoshi Nishimura, Amb. Gopinath Pillai and Prof. Tan Tai Yong and many others. The chief ministers of Assam and Manipur and the trade and economy minister of Mizoram too participated in the two-day conference. The members of ACCC and 20 journalists from ten ASEAN countries were invited for the conference.

China Sea issue. Laura Q. Del Rosario, the Philippines' deputy minister for international economic relations, recently insisted that "India should go East, and not just Look East." The Outlook India has mentioned on 6 March, "The two-day meeting has been organised to explore ways to further strengthen ties between India and ASEAN countries, particularly to link northeastern states with emerging markets of the key grouping".

As India aspires to be a great power it was inexorably agreed that India should not be reluctant towards Asia-Pacific and engage in a more deep and comprehensive manner with ASEAN countries. This will indeed help in advancing peace and stability in the region.



**Photo 5: Director General of IDSA, Dr Arvind Gupta Addressing the Audience**

This year the Delhi Dialogue attracted wide media attention. The Diplomat reported on 12 March, "For their own part, ASEAN nations have long called on India to deepen its involvement in the South

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# When Singapore sojourn came real!

**ARENLA\***

*May 9, 2014*

Even before I stepped into this land, I was already in awe of the country for reasons I cannot wholly tell. I was overwhelmed by the organized lifestyle, by the education system, by its economy and with the world as its market. One month after this brief sojourn, I still set my wrist watch at Singapore standard time that constantly reminds me that I am 90 minutes ahead of Indian Standard Time! Call me sourly crazy, but I call this as the beginning of "Singapore Dreams!" (Whatever that may be, sans the fundamental 5 C's of Singapore).

Upon my arrival at Changi International Airport, I quickly sensed I would be safe and that perception of security instantly interposed. One of my friends from India who have been working there for four years described the city-state in four lettered word-SAFE! And I couldn't agree with her more. Before embarking on the field trip for my research work, I read a couple of articles in the news about the scarcity of rain that the country was facing. But to my delight, I was welcomed with the slow sweet rain as I landed and headed towards Bishan Street, which was my home for ten days.



**Photo 1**

I set an inerasable itinerary that these ten days trip will be purely for data collection, visiting universities, libraries and think tanks/institutes,



**Photo 2: Merlions are supposed to be the Guardian of Prosperity. Sentosa Merlion (37m) is taller than the other four Merlions in Singapore (16.6m). There are supposedly five official Merlion statues recognized by the Singapore government and I managed to be at the Sentosa Island where Sentosa Merlion is located**

interviewing experts in my field area with whom I had prior appointment and therefore, sightseeing was kept away from my bucket list.

I deliberately missed on seeing the tourist attractions such as the Universal Studios Singapore, Singapore flyer, Singapore Zoo, Singapore Botanical Gardens, National Orchid Gardens, Singapore Science Centre etc, due to time constraints. But I somehow managed to be at the Marina Bay Sands, National Museum of Singapore, Boat quay and Clarke Quay, and Sentosa Island, Bugis Street, Orchard Road, National Museum, and China Town.

The NUS and NTU overfilled my treasurable heart with academic knowledge and with the state of the art facility.

I was soulfully thrilled and felt the utmost satisfaction. Frequent visits to NUS and NTU have been a crushing defeat for my myopic thoughts and result in a willingness to learn and seek beyond my monotonous work.

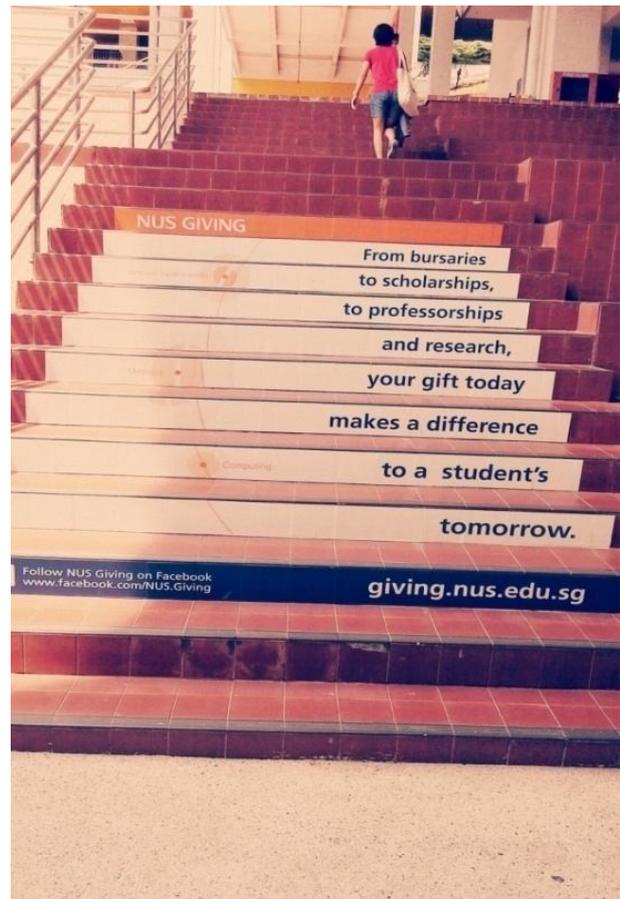
The Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) Library in the NUS, houses a unique collection of materials on applied social sciences. While its main emphasis is on contemporary Southeast Asia, as a



**Photo 3**

research library it also collects non-print materials such as unpublished dissertations, microfilms historical manuscripts and private papers, photographs and audio-visual recordings. It also houses various research programmes, country programmes and other centres such as ASEAN Studies Centre (ASC), Nalanda-Sriwijaya centre (NSC) and Archaeology Unit (AU).

The S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) is an autonomous school within the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Research takes place within RSIS' six centres that includes the Institute for Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS), The International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism



**Photo 4: The stairs at National University of Singapore caught my attention**

Research (ICPVTR), The Centre For Excellence For National Security (CENS), the Centre For Non Traditional Security (CNTS), The Temasek Foundation Centre For Trade And Negotiations (TFCTN) and The Centre For Multilateralism Studies (CMS). In all of these libraries, we need to use the EZ-link card and help ourselves in photocopying according to the Copyrights Act.

University Canteens: I was told that



**Photo 5**



**Photo 6**

Singaporean food and everyday items are largely imported. Incredibly satisfying food of varied types are available at a subsidized rates in the university canteens. But the reverse is, barring a few places, eating in a decent restaurant can be very expensive in the city state.

Traffic, Transportation and costs: As far as transport is concerned, travelling on a public transport is significantly cheaper than most other cities in the world. Taxi fares are not very expensive but owning a car is an expensive affair in Singapore. The Singaporeans are highly disciplined and extremely hardworking people something that is reflected in their mundane activities. Nobody screams when they talk, or talk when they walk.. Eating and drinking inside the train, inside the buses,



**Photo 7: The frames in the lobby of RSIS at NTU have been neatly displayed**



**Photo 8: The Deck (Arts Canteen) is Singapore's first eco food court, situated at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at NUS**

inside taxis are strictly prohibited. Freedom to dress is uninterrupted. People are well dressed and well mannered.

We will not see the line breaking even as the passengers get in and out of the Mass Rapid transit (MRT). Same applies to queues in buses and taxi stands. Things are extremely organized. Above all, besides providing a clean transport, there is safety and security while travelling too. The roads are shiny as if the city has been polished only some minutes ago. The significant investment in their road infrastructure says it all. I just thought to myself, a simple shoe will be wearable for 10 years unless we have thorns on our feet! Singaporeans are very polite people and always willing to help. I was amazed! For a Global Commercial Hub like Singapore, language is not a barrier because almost everyone understands English.



**Photo 9: Kent Ridge MRT Station is an underground MRT on the Circle Line**

The Changi Airport, as my hostess would say 'it is a tourist destination in itself.' Changi Airport has massive stores, and it is best when we spend decent hours, if not for buying, for window shopping. It is also interesting to see how the small/medium sized enterprises (SME's) have come a long way, especially in promoting its home brands abroad. In the retail sector, it is Charles & Keith (CK), one of my favorites. I managed to pick few pretty good shoes from CK at the Singapore Airport, comparatively cheaper than in India, ten minutes before the boarding call started for return back to India. That was icing on the cake!

Perhaps, I need to visit the country again, for a longer time, to give tongue to the flipside of the city-state. Well, which countries do not have that? Or, is it, the grass is always greener on the other side!

I call it "Singapore dreams"...if nothing of the five C's, at least I can try disciplining and working hard like the Singaporeans do!

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## ASEAN

### Jakarta International Defence Dialogue

The fourth Jakarta International Defence Dialogue (JIDD), themed "Building Maritime Collaboration for Security and Stability", was held in the third week of March 2014 with the aim to enhance trust and collaboration between the Indo-Pacific nations. The Indonesian Defense Minister Purnomo Yusgiantoro commented, "It is expected that the informal nature of the forum could create a conducive atmosphere that would encourage confidence-building and collaboration in maritime security affairs". The two-day conference was held along with the anniversary of the Indonesian Defense University. The JIDD was attended by around 500 delegates including scholars, military personnel and government officials. Australian Defense Minister David Johnston; Vice Adm. R.K. Pattanaik from the Indian Defense Ministry; The People's Liberation Army's (PLA) Deputy Chief of General Staff, Adm. Sun Jianguo; Adm. Harry Harris, Commander of the US Pacific Fleet attended the conference.<sup>2</sup> JIDD is a good platform for small countries like East

Timor to express their concerns and perceptions regarding their national security issues.

### Dialogue on HADR Between ASEAN and US Secretary of Defense

The defence ministers from ASEAN, Secretary General of ASEAN, Mr. Le Luong Minh and the US Secretary of Defense, Mr. Chuck Hagel met for an informal discussion on the regional security issues and concerns like humanitarian assistance and disaster relief on 3 April 2014 in Honolulu, Hawaii. Secretary General Minh also visited Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator of the United Nations, Ms. Kyung-wha Kang for a bilateral meeting. Both discussed issues like lessons learnt from Typhoon Haiyan that hit Philippines last November.<sup>3</sup>

### Obama's Visit to Asia Crucial for TPP Agreement

US President Obama paid a weeklong visit to Japan, South Korea, Malaysia and the Philippines in the last week of April 2014. On his tour to these Asian countries, President Obama stressed on the TPP agreement which is expected to boost up US trade with these countries. The National Security Adviser Susan Rice, in one of her statements before this trip, said, "We expect that... we will be able to conclude an agreement".<sup>4</sup> She further

<sup>1</sup> The Jakarta Post, "Jakarta dialogue stresses maritime peace", 20 March 2014, Jakarta, available at <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/03/20/jakarta-dialogue-stresses-maritime-peace.html>, accessed 21 March 2014.

<sup>2</sup> The Jakarta Post, "Jakarta dialogue stresses maritime peace", 20 March 2014, Jakarta, available at <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/03/20/jakarta-dialogue-stresses-maritime-peace.html>, accessed 21 March 2014.

<sup>3</sup> ASEAN Secretariat, "ASEAN Defence Ministers Meet US Secretary of Defense", 8 April 2014, available at [http://www.asean.org/news/asean-secretariat-news/item/asean-defence-ministers-meet-us-secretary-of-defense?category\\_id=27](http://www.asean.org/news/asean-secretariat-news/item/asean-defence-ministers-meet-us-secretary-of-defense?category_id=27), accessed 9 April 2014.

<sup>4</sup> International Business Times, "Obama's Asia Trip 2014: Examining Potential Trans-Pacific Partnerships (TPP) In Japan, Korea, Malaysia and The Philippines", by: Michelle FlorCruz, 23 April 2014, available at <http://www.ibtimes.com/obamas-asia-trip-2014-examining-potential-trans-pacific-partnerships-tpp-japan-korea-1575460>, accessed 24 April 2014.

elaborated, "This remains a very important aspect of our rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region, one that holds great promise for the countries in the region as well as for the United States."<sup>5</sup> Last year President Obama's trip to Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines was cancelled and hence, this early 2014 trip to the ASEAN countries occupies a significant position.

## ASEAN-India

### Delhi Dialogue VI to Translate the Vision Statement

The sixth edition of Delhi Dialogue, a Track 1.5 annual dialogue process, initiated to enhance cooperation between ASEAN and India was organised on March 6 and 7, 2014. The programme was jointly organised by the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), Indian Council for World Affairs (ICWA), Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FICCI), Institute for South Asian Studies (ISAS), Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) and SAEA Group, with active help from the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. The last three partners are based in ASEAN while the first three are based in India. This year, Delhi Dialogue's theme was *Realizing the ASEAN-India Vision for Partnership and Prosperity*.

### Third BIMSTEC Summit in Nay Pyi Taw

The third Summit of BIMSTEC was conducted on March 4, 2014 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar after a gap of 6 years followed by the second BIMSTEC Summit happened in New Delhi in 2008. The member nations of BIMSTEC signed three documents and those are as follows; Memorandum of Association on the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat, Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Commission (BCIC) and BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Observatory (BCIO) and Memorandum of Association Among BIMSTEC Member Countries Concerning Establishment of a BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate. In his second tour to Myanmar, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said, "Ours is a natural grouping of countries. We are bound by geography and linked by history. We share land and maritime boundaries. Our culture, religions and architecture bear eloquent testimony to our ancient bonds. Across the Bay of Bengal, the monsoon renews our lands while maritime trade nurtures our economies. We face many common challenges- from natural disasters to terrorism. At the same time, we also share many opportunities in the fields of trade, economic cooperation and connectivity, all of which presage a bright future for us".<sup>6</sup>

### India's First Ambassador to ASEAN Appointed

Amb. Suresh K. Reddy has been appointed as India's first ambassador to ASEAN and East

<sup>5</sup> International Business Times, "Obama's Asia Trip 2014: Examining Potential Trans-Pacific Partnerships (TPP) In Japan, Korea, Malaysia and The Philippines", by: Michelle FlorCruz, 23 April 2014, available at <http://www.ibtimes.com/obamas-asia-trip-2014-examining-potential-trans-pacific-partnerships-tpp-japan-korea-1575460>, accessed 24 April 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, Statement by Prime Minister at 3<sup>rd</sup> BIMSTEC Summit, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, March 4, 2014,. Available at <http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/23028/Statement+by+Prime+Minister+at+3rd+BIMSTEC+Summit+Nay+Pyi+Taw+Myanmar>, accessed 5 March 2014.

Asian Summit. Currently, he is serving as the Indian ambassador to Iraq. He is expected to join his new assignment very shortly.<sup>7</sup>

## Northeast India-Look East Policy:

### Closer Ties Between Northeast and Neighbours Important, said, former foreign secretary

In an international conference, organised by the Manipur University in collaboration with the Association of Asia Scholars and Indian Council of Social Science on the theme "Northeast India in India's Look East Policy" in March 2014, Amb. Sudhir T. Devare mentioned that a trilateral development between India, Myanmar and Thailand would be crucial for fostering the Look East Policy of India. The former secretary added that all stakeholders including the Northeastern states should come forward to contribute to the LEP and simultaneously, the indicators of under-development needs to be overcome in Northeast India.<sup>8</sup>

### Look East Policy Conclave in Shillong

A day-long roundtable on "India's Look East Policy: Strengthening the Look South Aspect: Exploring Win-Win Synergies through Indo Bangladesh Border Trade and Tourism" was organised by the Asian

Confluence at Shillong on 21 April 2014. The Directorate of Commerce and Industry, Meghalaya Government supported the roundtable. Mr. M. P. Bezbaruah, member of the North Eastern Council mentioned, "We have not really articulated what we need from the Look East Policy. I would expect civil society to come up with state-wise schemes on what we want from this policy. Myanmar and Bangladesh will play an important role in development of North-East."<sup>9</sup> Among many other issues, the conclave stressed on creating a flexible VISA processing System which include a visa office in northeast, non-government body to enhance tourism in northeast, a tourism circuit in the region, connectivity to Southeast Asia, promoting Shillong as a hub for tourism and trade with the neighbours. The tourism boards and divisions from ministries of Northeastern states and Bangladesh as well as international and national tour operators and civil society members participated in the conclave. The important role played by the civil society in enhancing bilateral relations between India and Bangladesh should be promoted, opined, Sabyasachi Dutta, Director of Asian Confluence.<sup>10</sup>

## Brunei

### Energy Week 2014 in Brunei

ENERGY Week 2014 themed "Sustainable Energy for Brunei Darussalam's Prosperity" was celebrated in Brunei in March. In the event, the energy white paper of Brunei, "You Can Make A Difference (Brunei Oil and Gas: Where

<sup>7</sup> Business Standard, "Suresh K. Reddy appointed as India's first Ambassador to Indian Mission to ASEAN and East Asia Summit", 23 April 2014, New Delhi.

<sup>8</sup> Hueiyen News Service, "NE States should have close ties with neighbouring countries: former Foreign Secy", 25 March 2014, available at <http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=19..240314.mar14>, accessed 26 March 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Nagaland Post, "Conclave on India's Look East Policy in Shillong", 21 April 2014, Dimapur.

<sup>10</sup> Nagaland Post, "Conclave on India's Look East Policy in Shillong", 21 April 2014, Dimapur.

Opportunities Await You)” was promoted. Over 70 companies participated in the event.<sup>11</sup>

### **Implementation of Tough Sharia Law Gets Delayed in Brunei**

Brunei has delayed the implementation of the Sharia Law which was supposed to be enacted from 1 April 2014. As the Sharia Penal Code includes stoning to death, severing of limbs and other harsh methods of punishments for all citizens of Brunei irrespective of religion, race, caste and sex, it evoked much criticism especially by the youth groups of the country who enjoy access to the internet as well as the United Nations. While delaying the enactment of the Sharia Law, Brunei has not declared any new date to implement the law.<sup>12</sup>

## **Cambodia**

### **Stability in Cambodia Remains Difficult**

The Cambodian National Rescue Party and the Cambodian government are negotiating on various issues including reforms of the National Election Council, a new and fresh country-wide election to elect a new government etc. However, not much progress has been made so far and in between violence erupted once again when six CNRP supporters were injured during an attempt to enter the Freedom Park as a part of a protest to increase the

minimum monthly wage of the garment workers to USD 160 and to release some of the protesters arrested during another protest held in January this year.<sup>13</sup>

### **Prince Ranariddh Formed New Political Party**

Prince Norodom Ranariddh, son of late King Norodom Sihanouk has formed a new political party as he neither trusts the government led by Prime Minister Hun Sen nor the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party. In August 2012 Prince Norodom Ranariddh had announced his resignation from active politics and since then, he has been serving as the supreme Privy Council to his half-brother, King Norodom Sihamoni. However, through his decision to enter active politics once again Prince Ranariddh wants to mobilize the royalists. He was the ‘first prime minister’ with current PM Hun Sen and then ousted by the later in a violent coup in 1997. He was removed from the royalist party of Cambodia, FUNCINPEC in 2006 and his self-named party won only 2 seats in the assembly election in 2008.<sup>14</sup>

### **Draft Cyber Law in Cambodia**

A London-based media advocacy group *Article 19* got a leaked copy of the draft cyber law, designed by the Cybercrime Law Formulation Working Group of the Council of Ministers of Cambodia. Like other countries, the cyber law of Cambodia will protect the internet users from various malpractices as well as restrict

<sup>11</sup> Xinhuanet.com, ENERGY Week 2014 opens in Brunei, 24 March 2014, available at [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/sci/2014-03/24/c\\_133210461.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/sci/2014-03/24/c_133210461.htm), accessed 25 March 2014.

<sup>12</sup> Skynews.com, “Brunei delays introducing Islamic law”, 22 April 2014, available at <http://www.skynews.com.au/world/article.aspx?id=969710>, accessed 28 April 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Global Times, “Six injured in scuffle with Cambodian security forces”, 21 April 2014, available at <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/855814.shtml#.U1YUGKJ5TGg>, accessed 28 April 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Bangkok Post, “Ranariddh forms new political party”, 18 March 2014, available at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/asia/400485/ranariddh-forms-new-political-party>, accessed 19 March 2014.

illegalities like child pornography. However, according to some activists, the bill, if implemented as an act, will jeopardise the freedom of expression through internet and computer. According to them, Article 28 of the proposed bill will criminalise any web content that “hinders the sovereignty and integrity of the Kingdom of Cambodia” and penalise any online publication that “generates insecurity, instability, and political cohesiveness.” The activists claim that the vagueness in these words might go against the freedom of expression of the common users. It will restrict the right to criticise the political parties or the government officials. The primary aim of this provision is to restrict the political cartoonists. The recent political unrest might have pushed the government in designing such a restrictive cyber law in the country as during the last election in 2013 and afterwards, the social media and other internet gateways have been used by the opposition and their supporters to spread messages on corruption and various types of violation of rights of the citizens by the government. Internet was used to spread messages on strikes and protests as well as government’s reactions to them. The youth groups have been mobilised against the government. Therefore, the draft cyber law comes as another reaction from the government in an effort to ensure their hold over the nation.<sup>15</sup>

## Indonesia

### Violence in Aceh before Elections

The beginning of 2014 has upset Aceh through repeated violence and assassinations of the former political rivals and combatants. A non-governmental organisation namely Kontras Aceh reported that violence in Aceh was almost doubled ahead of the election in Indonesia. Gilang Detika, coordinator at Kontras Aceh, said that at least 35 cases of violence happened by March 2014 against 19 cases in 2013. Two rival parties in Aceh, in their effort to prevail peace in the oil and gas rich province of Indonesia, have brought more violence as both are competing for their status.<sup>16</sup>

### General Elections in Indonesia

On 9 April 2014, Indonesia declared a national holiday so that 190 million people could go for voting at 545,000 polling stations for over 235,000 candidates contesting for 20,000 seats.<sup>17</sup> Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) showed a poor result in the exit poll despite declaring Joko Widodo, the popular governor of Jakarta as the presidential candidate. According to the exit poll, PDI-P would get only 19 percent vote in this election. By early May 2014 Indonesia would get the final result of the voting process and on July 9 the presidential election will be conducted. Under the complex electoral rule of Indonesia, in order to nominate a presidential candidate, a party

<sup>15</sup> The Diplomat, “Cambodia’s Draft Cyber Law Threatens”, by, Mong Palatino, 10 April 2014, available at <http://thediplomat.com/2014/04/cambodias-draft-cyber-law-threatens-free-speech/>, accessed 29 April 2014.

<sup>16</sup> Channel News Asia, “More violence in Indonesia’s Aceh province ahead of election”, by, Sujadi Siswo, 19 March 2014, available at <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/more-violence-in/1041442.html>, accessed 20 March 2014.

<sup>17</sup> The Economist, “The chosen one stumbles”, 12 April 2014, available at <http://www.economist.com/news/asia/21600746-parliamentary-election-complicates-life-presidential-front-runner-chosen-one-stumbles>, accessed 14 April 2014.

needs to win minimum 25 percent of the popular votes in the parliamentary election or 20 per cent of the seats. Hence, PDI-P may have to go for coalition with another party. Golkar, the party once led by Suharto, and now led by another presidential hopeful, Aburizal Bakrie, won 12 percent and Gerindra, led by Prabowo Subianto won about 11.5 per cent vote in the exit poll. The poorest result was shown by the outgoing president's party, the Democrat Party which won only 9 per cent vote.<sup>18</sup>

## Laos

### Laos Faced Protests over Mega Dam

The 260 MW Don Sahong dam in Laos has forced many to gather for a protest. An animal lovers group from Cambodia claimed that if the dam will be constructed it will adversely affect the fish and dolphins of the river and contaminate the river water. Vong Kosal, legal aid officer of the NGO Forum, said, "This dam was established against international law and the Mekong Agreement of 1995, which was signed by Laos, and it was not discussed with the people in other countries either."<sup>19</sup> The protesters tried to halt a meeting of

the Mekong River Commission in the first week of April too. Sean Kin, director of Kratie province's fisheries department said, "The dam will slow down the water currents, and the environment will be changed for both animals and people."<sup>20</sup>

## Malaysia

### MH 370 Went Missing

On 8 March 2014, a Malaysian Airlines flight MH 370 went missing on its way from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing along with 239 people on board. Sixteen days later, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Rajak said that flight MH 370 'ended in the southern Indian Ocean'.<sup>21</sup> However, the search for the missing flight is still on with Australia playing a key role in the search and rescue operation. The US Navy's Bluefin 21, an AUV, undertook an extensive underwater search for the missing flight for few weeks after failed manual and aerial searches in various areas on the Indian Ocean. The Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott declared, "I want the families to know, I want the world to know, that Australia will not shirk its responsibilities in this area. We will do everything, to solve this mystery".<sup>22</sup> Abbott further said, "We will not let people down and while the search will be moving to a new phase in coming weeks, it certainly is

<sup>18</sup> The Economist, "The chosen one stumbles", 12 April 2014, available at <http://www.economist.com/news/asia/21600746-parliamentary-election-complicates-life-presidential-front-runner-chosen-one-stumbles>, accessed 14 April 2014.

<sup>19</sup> CPWF Mekong, "Hundreds protest Laos dam", by, Phak Seangly, 31 March 2014, available at <http://mekong.waterandfood.org/archives/4938>, accessed 2 April 2014.

<sup>20</sup> CPWF Mekong, "Hundreds protest Laos dam", by, Phak Seangly, 31 March 2014, available at <http://mekong.waterandfood.org/archives/4938>, accessed 2 April 2014.

<sup>21</sup> The Washington Post, "Malaysian prime minister says Flight MH370 'ended in the southern Indian Ocean", by, Jia Lynn Yang, William Wan and Ashley Halsey III, 24 March 2014, available at [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/malaysian-prime-minister-says-flight-mh370-ended-in-the-southern-indian-ocean/2014/03/24/cb28ffc6-b370-11e3-8020-b2d790b3c9e1\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/malaysian-prime-minister-says-flight-mh370-ended-in-the-southern-indian-ocean/2014/03/24/cb28ffc6-b370-11e3-8020-b2d790b3c9e1_story.html), accessed 29 April 2014.

<sup>22</sup> India Today, Missing flight MH370 search area to be expanded, 28 April 2014, available at <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/missing-flight-mh370-underwater-search-for-mh370/1/357930.html>, accessed 29 April 2014.

not ending".<sup>23</sup> Malaysia has declared its readiness to cooperate and work for an international investigation for the missing flight. Malaysia is also prepared to provide with the death certificates of the passengers of MH 370 and contributed much to the further annoyance among the relatives of the passengers of the flight.

## Myanmar

### New Media Laws in Place in Myanmar

Since 1 April 2014, the Myanmar government allowed 16 private newspapers to publish news on a daily basis. Prior to that, private newspapers were allowed to publish on weekly basis only. Out of the 16, four newspapers have already started daily publications and those are *Pyidaungsu Daily* (Union Daily), *Shwe Naing Thit Daily* (Golden Freshland Daily), *San Taw Chein Daily* (Standard Times Daily) and Voice Daily. The state-run daily newspapers are as follows; *Myanmar Alin* (Burmese version), *Kyemon* (The Mirror, Burmese version), *Myawaddy* (Burmese version), *The New Light of Myanmar* (English version) and *Yadanarpon* (Burmese version). The Media Bill and the Printers and Publishers Regulation Bill passed in early March 2014, allows the government to retain the power to hold back or invalidate

publishing licenses unilaterally. The Ministry of Information is also in the process of writing additional draft laws for the media, including regulations for broadcasting, film, and the use of libraries.<sup>24, 25</sup>

### Myanmar's Chief Ministers Visited Singapore

Singapore's Foreign Affairs and Law Minister K Shanmugam invited the chief ministers of Yangon, Mandalay and Bago to visit Singapore for a joint study visit under the Singapore-Myanmar Technical Cooperation Programme, where Singapore shares its expertise and experience in relevant developmental areas in order to support Myanmar's in its reform and capacity-building efforts. Singapore's economic development, urban planning and water management policies were some of the issues discussed during the chief ministers' visit to Singapore.<sup>26</sup>

### No Use of 'Rohingya' in Myanmar's Census

On 30 March 2014, the first population census of Myanmar was started after a gap of 31 years. However, the census questionnaire was alleged to raise some ethnic and religious tension in the country. The government of Myanmar considers the Rohingyas as Bengali immigrants and has not given them any legal status as enjoyed by the Buddhist majority and other ethnic minorities in the country. During the population count also, the Rohingyas were asked not to use

<sup>23</sup> India Today, "Missing flight MH370 search area to be expanded", 28 April 2014, available at <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/missing-flight-mh370-underwater-search-for-mh370/1/357930.html>, accessed 29 April 2014.

<sup>24</sup> Radio Free Asia, "Myanmar Parliament Passes First Legislation Granting Media Freedom", 5 March 2014, <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/media-03052014163116.html>, accessed 21 April 2014.

<sup>25</sup> South Asia Monitor, "Press Freedom in Myanmar: Private Daily Newspapers Return", by, Obja Borah Hazarika, 9 April 2014.

<sup>26</sup> Channel News Asia, Myanmar's chief ministers in Singapore on joint study visit, 18 March 2014, available at <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/myanmar-s-chief-ministers/1039506.html>, accessed 20 March 2014.

the word Rohingya to identify themselves. Instead, they were instructed to write 'Bengali' against their names. Besides, in many cases, the sub-tribes of other ethnic clans too were not listed separately.<sup>27</sup>

### Usages of *Yaba* and other Drugs are on High in Myanmar and Neighbouring States

In 2006, Myanmar experienced a decent reduction in opium cultivation. But in 2013, opium cultivation in Myanmar grew by 13 per cent from the previous year, almost more than double from 2006. Another disturbing fact is that Shan state still produces more than nine-tenth of Myanmar's poppy harvest despite several efforts taken by the government and various offices of the United Nations. Myanmar and Laos together produced almost 18 per cent of world's total poppy in 2013. In the borders of Myanmar, where it is connected with China, Laos and Thailand, *yaba* is becoming very popular these days as a cheap drug. *Yaba* is a Thai term which means 'crazy drug'. Sustained use of this drug would be devastating for the social and economic life of Myanmar, reported The Economist. Jason Eligh, head of UNODC, said that *yaba* is abundant because its ingredient chemicals are readily available and the pills can be produced very easily in an infinite volume. Shan state alone produces 1 billion *yaba* per year.<sup>28</sup>

### Veteran Myanmar Democracy Leader Win Tin Died

Win Tin, Myanmar's veteran pro-democratic leader who was the longest-serving political prisoner died at the age of 85 on 21 April 2014. He spent nearly 19 years in jail and was released as a part of amnesty six years ago. He was a journalist.<sup>29</sup>

## Philippines

### Peace Deal Between the Government and MILF

The Filipino government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the largest Islamic rebel group of the Philippines have signed a historic peace deal on 27 March to end a decade old animosity and violence. According to the pact, the region will get its own regional parliament, a separate police force and the vast natural resources of the region will be shared between the autonomous region and the central government in Manila. The pact also calls for unarming the MILF and other rebel groups in Mindanao. MILF Chairman Al Haj Murad Ebrahim said that the treaty will bring in identity, prosperity and power to the Muslims of *Bangsamoro* in the southern island of Mindanao. However, the problem of Muslim rebellion in Mindanao has not been ceded with the Bangsamoro pact as there are some other smaller groups who may continue fighting the government claiming full independence. The government has to be pragmatic in dealing with

<sup>27</sup> Bangkok Post, "Myanmar census bars name Rohingya", 30 March 2014, available at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/asia/402529/myanmar-census-bars-name-rohingya>, accessed 1 April 2014.

<sup>28</sup> The Economist, "Opium-growing is on the rise again, as is drug consumption", 12 April 2014, available at <http://www.economist.com/news/asia/21600748-opium-growing-rise-again-drug-consumption-getting-higher>, accessed 13 April 2014.

<sup>29</sup> BBC News Asia, "Win Tin, 85, dies of kidney failure", 21 April, 2014, available at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-27102426>, accessed 22 April 2014.

these smaller groups who are not happy with the pact. Right now, a transition committee is drafting a bill which will be the foundation stone for Bangsamoro region. The draft bill will be sent to the Filipino Congress for their approval. After that the residents of the region will participate in a referendum to decide whether they want to reside in the new unit. Followed, the borders will be demarcated and then, new leaders will be elected through the coming election in 2016.<sup>30</sup>

### **Military Cooperation Agreement between Philippines and the US**

In the last week of April 2014, US President Barack Obama and his Filipino counterpart, Benigno Aquino signed a military cooperation agreement which escalates the chances of US forces' return to the island nation in significant number for the first time in twenty years, reported Foreign Policy. Just after one year of granting independence to the Philippines, the US signed a Military Bases Agreement which allowed the United States to operate two bases on the islands - Clark Air Base, which housed the 13th Air Force, and Subic Bay Naval Base, which was the largest American naval installation outside of the United States. Though many Filipino politicians did not support the agreement, it was the then President

Manuel Quezon who favoured the agreement. In 1951, both countries entered into another mutual defense treaty which ensured US assistance to the Philippines in case of any third country attack on the later. In the decade of 1990 some changes happened. Manila first withheld the military bases agreement and then claimed a fee of \$825 million a year which was considerably more than the \$360 million a year the U.S. wanted to pay. During the War on Terror after 9/11, US declared Philippines as one of the key fronts of US. A Joint Special Operations Task Force was established in the Philippines. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton paid a visit to Manila after the US Pivot to Asia policy was announced as the Philippines was viewed as one of the US strongholds in Asia. Finally, the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement was signed between the US and Manila after eight rounds of negotiations and in the midst of amplifying tension between China and its neighbors over South China Sea. The agreement reinforces the Philippines' key role in the US's Asia pivot. The pact allows US to access the bases in the Philippine, to construct new facilities, and the preposition the defense equipment.<sup>31</sup> Under this treaty, the Philippines claims, America is obliged to assist it in case of attack on its own territory or in South China Sea. Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario said in a statement, "Under the mutual defence treaty, the United States will come to the assistance of the Philippines if our metropolitan territory is attacked or if our armed forces are attacked in

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<sup>30</sup> Voice of America, "Philippines, MILF Rebels Sign Historic Peace Deal", by, Simone Orendain, 27 March 2014, available at <http://www.voanews.com/content/philippines-govt-milf-rebels-sign-historic-peace-deal/1880267.html>, accessed 28 March 2014.

<sup>31</sup> Foreign Policy, "Old Frenemies: A Timeline of US-Philippine Relations", 29 April 2014, available at [http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2014/04/29/US\\_philippines\\_defense\\_pact\\_history\\_timeline](http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2014/04/29/US_philippines_defense_pact_history_timeline), accessed 1 May 2014.

the Pacific area".<sup>32</sup> This pact is viewed as significant as Philippines is believed to have one of the weakest militaries in the region and it is one of main claimants of the territorial disputes on South China Sea islands. However, a certain section of the Filipinos believe that this treaty gives US another chance to establish its military bases on the island once again and in return, Philippines gets nothing.<sup>33</sup>

## Singapore

### Singapore, World's Most Expensive City, Says a Survey

According to a survey conducted by the Economist Intelligence Unit, Singapore is the World's most expensive city to live in, mostly due to rising living cost, higher cost to run a car and elevated utility bills. Singapore is followed by Paris, Oslo, Zurich, Sydney and Tokyo. The World-wide Cost of Living Survey of the EIU took New York as the basis of the survey and considered almost 400 individual prices to come to the conclusion. On the other hand, cities in the Indian subcontinent are amongst the cheapest cities to live in, the same survey concludes.<sup>34</sup>

## Thailand

### State of Emergency Lifted in Thailand, Internal Security Act Imposed

In the last week of March, Thailand withdrew the emergency imposed on Bangkok and surrounding areas as political violence was on low after several months of heated environment in which at least 23 people were killed. However, a less severe Internal Security Act was imposed to ensure peace and tourism. PM Yingluck Shinawatra still faces criticisms and cases for ignoring corruption filed at the National Anti-Corruption Commission. The last election held on 2 February was declared invalid by the constitutional court of Thailand and the country will undertake a new and fresh election.<sup>35</sup> However, voting for the upper house of the parliament was conducted smoothly on 30 March peacefully without any hassles from the anti-government protesters.<sup>36</sup>

### Thailand Delayed Providing Radar Data to Malaysia

The Royal Thai Air Force was criticised for sharing radar blips of MH 370 ten days later they had actually seen it with the Malaysian

<sup>32</sup> Global Post, "Philippines says treaty obliges US to help in South China Sea", 30 April 2014, available at <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/140430/philippines-says-treaty-obliges-us-help-south-china-sea>, accessed 1 May 2014.

<sup>33</sup> Global Post, "Philippines says treaty obliges US to help in South China Sea", 30 April 2014, available at <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/140430/philippines-says-treaty-obliges-us-help-south-china-sea>, accessed 1 May 2014.

<sup>34</sup> BBC, "Singapore Named the World's Most Expensive City", 3 March 2014, available at <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-26412821>, accessed 5 May 2014.

<sup>35</sup> Voice of America, Thailand to Lift State of Emergency, 18 March 2014, available at <http://www.voanews.com/content/thailand-to-lift-state-of-emergency-officials/1873442.html>, accessed 19 March 2014.

<sup>36</sup> Yahoo News, Thailand's senatorial poll peaceful, 30 March 2014, available at <https://in.news.yahoo.com/thailands-senatorial-poll-peaceful-082003027.html>, accessed 28 April 2014.

authority. However, the Thai spokesperson claimed that the request from Malaysia regarding sharing of radar data was not specific and the Royal Thai Air Force did not pay any attention to the signal as the flight did not enter into Thailand's sky limit and it did not pose any threat to the country.<sup>37</sup>

## Vietnam

### Vietnam Taking Strong Position on South China Sea

In a visit to Japan, Vietnam's President Truong Tan Sang said that Vietnam wants to maintain peace in the seas and Vietnam is keen on some principles like resolution by peaceful means, compliance with international law, and respect for each other's due rights and sovereignty in case of any maritime disputes. He mentioned, "Countries concerned should not make the situation complex, but rather exercise self-restraint. They should neither use force nor threaten to use force."<sup>38</sup> Though President Sang did not mention China directly, Vietnam along with some other ASEAN members like the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei have condemned Beijing's effort to claim sovereignty over

almost all of South China Sea. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and President Sang discussed about regional peace, loans, grants and aid to Vietnam as well as the possibility of Japan sending patrol boats to Vietnam among many other issues. Cooperation between Japan and Vietnam is significant as both of these countries share territorial disputes with China on East and South China Seas respectively.

### Vietnam's Stronger Ties with Russia

The foreign minister of Russia, Sergei Lavrov visited Vietnam on 16<sup>th</sup> April and met Vietnamese President Truong Tan Sang, and its foreign minister, Pham Binh Minh and decided to intensify bilateral collaborations on energy, defence, security and many other issues. Bilateral relations between Vietnam and Russia are improving with Vietnam becoming one of the largest buyers of Russian arms and weapons. According to Paul Burton of IHS Jane's, a London-based consultancy, Vietnam is the fifth largest buyer of Russian arms and weapons behind China, India, Venezuela and Indonesia. A few weeks earlier, Igor Sechin, the chief executive of Rosneft, a Russian oil giant, visited Vietnam as part of his Asia trip which also included stops in Japan, India and South Korea. Russia is also helping Vietnam in building its first nuclear power plant.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Bangkok Post, "Air Force defends delayed radar blips report", by, Wassana Nanuam and AP, 19 March 2014, available at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/local/400695/air-force-defends-delayed-radar-blips-report>, accessed 28 April 2014.

<sup>38</sup> "Vietnam leader warns against use of force in South China Sea row", 19 March 2014, available at <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/353201/news/world/vietnam-leader-warns-against-use-of-force-in-south-china-sea-row>, accessed 29 April 2014.

<sup>39</sup> The Economist, "Vietnam and Russia: Friends in Need", 17 April 2014, available at <http://www.economist.com/blogs/banyan/2014/04/vietnam-and-russia?zid=306&ah=1b164dbd43b0cb27ba0d4c3b12a5e227>, accessed 5 May 2014.

## Activities :Southeast Asia & Oceania Centre

1. Delhi Dialogue VI was conducted on 6 and 7 March. IDSA hosted the academic sessions of Delhi Dialogue VI on 7 March 2014.
2. An Indonesian Delegation visited IDSA and interacted with the Director General, Deputy Director General and a host of other experts from IDSA on 26 March 2014.
3. Ms. Sasiwan Chingchit presented her fellow paper titled, 'From Looks to Action: Thailand-India Strategic Convergence and Defense Cooperation' on 28 March 2014.
4. Ms. Sampa Kundu's web comment titled 'Southeast Asian Democracy: New Time and Take' was published on 7 April 2014.
5. Dr. Udai Bhanu Singh made a presentation on Myanmar at the Conference on "Political Transition in India's Neighbourhood: Afghanistan and Myanmar" at Zakir Hussain Delhi College on 11 April 2014.
6. A group of 19 senior editors/editors and journalists from Myanmar visited IDSA on 30 April 2014.

## 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.

### Contributions are invited for:

Book Review (800 words)

Commentary (900 - 1300 words)

Photo Essay (10-12 photographs, each with a caption,  
accompanied by a 1000 words essay)

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