

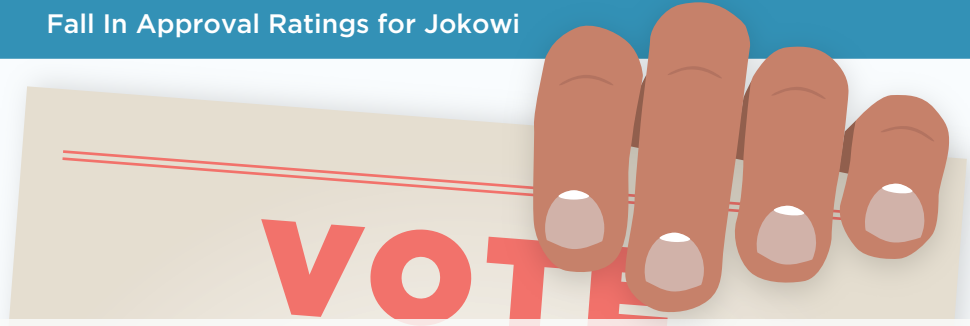
CARI CAPTURES



01 JOKOWI SEES FALL IN APPROVAL RATINGS

INDONESIA

Fall In Approval Ratings for Jokowi



Channel News Asia

Despite sound economic reforms having been set in motion, President Jokowi's approval ratings have seen levels uncharacteristic of an administration's first 100 days.

▶ The president's recent decisions to nominate Comr. Gen. Budi Gunawan as the next National Police chief caused uproar amongst his constituents, many whom believe Jokowi to be going back on his commitment to eradicate corruption; Indonesia's very own Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) named the general a suspect in an ongoing corruption investigation just says prior to his confirmation

▶ A recent survey conducted by the Indonesian Survey Circle (LSI) polling 1,200 respondents showed that Jokowi's initial approval rating of 71.3% in August 2014 had fallen to 42.3% in January 2015; a fall which can clearly be attributed to the unpopularity of slashing fuel subsidies and hardline stance against illegal overfishing

▶ Whilst the subsidy cuts, infrastructural investment, social reform, and looser foreign investment regulations will stand to place Indonesia's economy in good state, short term economic woes and political scandals will continue to drive down Jokowi's approval ratings; only time will tell if the resultant economic response will be enough to blot out the early perception's of Jokowi's administration

Tech in Asia (27 January 2015)

02 THAILAND UPHOLDS ANTI-DUMPING STEEL DUTIES



In a move to protect domestic steel producers from an influx of cheap imports, the Thai government has elected to uphold its anti-dumping duties; this controversial move could impede free trade initiatives within the region.

- ▶ According to Commerce Minister Chatchai Sarikulya, Thailand's production capacity use in the country is currently only at 30% of full capacity, making investment into the industry premature; in the meantime, existing domestic producers of steel will however need to be protected against cheaper foreign imports
- ▶ Whilst duties on cheaper steel will be upheld, the minister also affirmed his commitment towards supporting the importation of higher quality steel which Thailand does not produce; meanwhile, industry leaders have further prompted the government to continue to analyse steel production costs to come to an appropriate import levy
- ▶ Currently Under the country's anti-dumping measures, imported steel, mainly hot- and cold-rolled steel, structural steel and stainless cold-rolled steel, is subject to tariffs of 7-27%; the tariff is based off a quota calculation which prevents foreign nations from dumping their products into Thailand

[Bangkok Post \(27 January 2015\)](#)

Top 10 Steel Importing Countries in Asia

Importer	million tonnes		% Change
	2012	2013	
1. South Korea	19.9	18.5	-7
2. Thailand	14.9	15.6	4
3. China	13.8	14.4	4
4. Indonesia	11.7	12.0	2
5. Vietnam	7.6	9.8	28
6. Taiwan	7.3	7.6	3
7. India	9.0	7.1	-22
8. Malaysia	5.7	6.4	13
9. Singapore	5.1	5.9	15
10. Japan	5.3	5.0	-6
Other	12.4	13.3	7
Total	112.8	115.3	2

[Bloomberg](#)

03 THAILAND'S INVESTMENT APPLICATIONS NEARLY DOUBLE IN 2014



Thailand's investment agency said on Monday total investment applications submitted to the country nearly doubled in 2014 as investors rushed to submit their proposals in December.

- ▶ Foreign and Thai firms submitted investment applications worth a combined 2.19 trillion baht (\$67.2 billion) in 2014, with nearly two-thirds applying in December alone
- ▶ Under the Board of Investment (BOI) new strategy, the agency replaced the previous policy by gearing its incentives to more value-added sectors and provided special offers to those investing in the government's special economic zones and designated provinces throughout Thailand
- ▶ Among them will be tax exemption of up to 8 years, and exemption of import duty on machinery or raw materials for industries that focus on areas such as research and development, electronics designs, aircraft manufacturing and aircraft parts

[Reuters \(26 January 2015\)](#)

04 VIETNAM'S ENTERPRISES NOT YET READY FOR INTERNATIONAL INTEGRATION



Vietnam and the Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan recently reached a consensus on the main content of a free trade agreement between the two sides (VCUFTA). A joint statement on the conclusion of VCUFTA negotiations was issued. The agreement is expected to be signed in early 2015.

- ▶ The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) is the closest event to Vietnam, with the deadline set for December 2015. Ten ASEAN countries will become a free economic community with the scale of \$2.3 trillion and a population of 600 million. In this community, the flow of goods, services, investment, capital and skilled labor (firstly doctors, dentists, nurses, engineers, architects, accounting, inspectors and tourism workers) will run completely free
- ▶ A special feature of Vietnam, according to the latest ranking of the World Economic Forum (WEF), of the 12 countries participating in the TPP, Vietnam is the country with the lowest competitiveness
- ▶ More remarkably, among TPP countries, Vietnam has the lowest ranking of the nature of competitiveness. According to the classification of the World Economic Forum, in the TPP, the seven countries of Japan, Singapore, the USA, Malaysia, Australia, Canada and New Zealand are in the group of countries with innovation-based economic development

[Vietnamnet \(27 January 2015\)](#)

05 INDONESIA STOCKS, RUPIAH HURT BY POLICE ROW WITH ANTI-GRAFT BODY



Indonesian shares fell the most in Asia and the rupiah snapped a four-day advance as a dispute between the police and the nation's anti-corruption agency threatened to cast a shadow on President Joko Widodo's economic reform agenda.

► Widodo's nominee for police chief, Budi Gunawan, was named a suspect by the KPK agency on charges related to a 2010 local election. Gunawan is a former aide to Megawati Soekarnoputri, who chairs the party that nominated Widodo for president. Police arrested a KPK official Friday and the army was sent to guard the agency's headquarters amid rumors of a possible police raid. Widodo is known popularly as Jokowi

► The president has pledged to tackle graft, cut red tape, streamline the bureaucracy and increase spending on roads, ports and power stations as he seeks to boost economic growth to 5.8 percent this year, from an estimated 5.1 percent in 2014

► The rupiah weakened 0.3 percent to 12,510 a dollar, the biggest decline since Jan. 7, prices from local banks show. The currency strengthened 1.2 percent over the previous four days.

[Bloomberg \(26 January 2015\)](#)

06 MALAYSIA'S CENTRAL BANK AFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO STABILITY



In response to concerns regarding 1malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB)'s large outstanding debt, Bank Negara Malaysia declared that it would not allow for any one company to systematically impact the national economy.

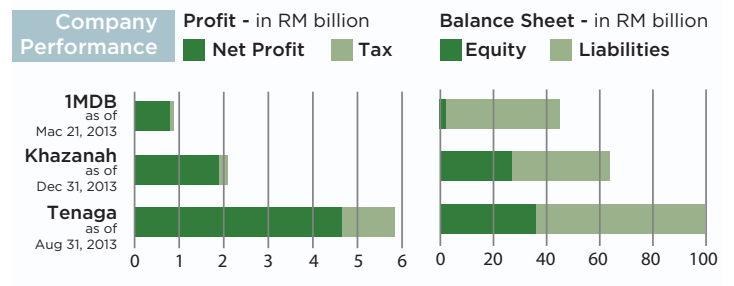
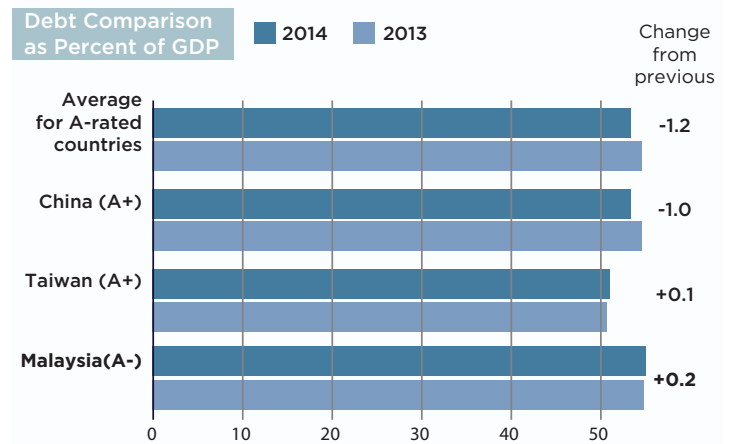
► In the same statement released to the public, Malaysia also played off fears of capital outflows in line with Europe's quantitative easing programme, with Zeti Akhtar Abdul Aziz head of the central bank, stating that stability within the global economy would benefit the domestic economy

► In comments relating to the Ringgit's recent fall, Zeti stated that the country's strong underlying fundamentals will be reflected in time once current global economic events such as the falling oil prices subside

► Zeti also stated that the country's projected inflation rate of between 2.5% and 3.5%, highly capitalised banking system and credit growth of 10% supported sustainable growth

[Free Malaysia Today \(27 January 2014\)](#)

Malaysia's Debt Burden



[Fitch Ratings, company report](#)

07 THAILAND COUP: US ENVOY URGES 'MORE INCLUSIVE' POLITICS



The military took power shortly after a court removed Ms Yingluck from office. The military said it was acting to restore order after months of protests against Ms Yingluck's elected government.

► It has promised reforms and an eventual return to democratic rule, but critics say the army has stifled free speech. Ms Yingluck's party, meanwhile, remains very popular in rural areas

► Mr Russel, the assistant secretary of state who heads the bureau of East Asian and Pacific affairs, is on a scheduled trip to the region, which will take in Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia and Cambodia

► The US State Department said he had told Foreign Minister Tanasak Patimapragorn that America's relationship with Thailand "cannot return to normal until democracy is re-established"

► In a speech at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Mr Russel said the US was "particularly concerned that the political process doesn't seem to represent all elements in Thai society"

[BBC News \(27 January 2015\)](#)



08 MYANMAR MONITOR

NATIONAL

► Heavy fighting between Myanmar soldiers and ethnic insurgents from 2-5 February has killed at least 20 people near the northeastern border with China, government said on 5 February. Nine soldiers and 11 rebels were killed in a series of clashes in northern Shan and Kachin states.

[Reuters \(5 February 2015\)](#)

POLITICS

► NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi has insisted she can still lead Myanmar, despite her fears that the transition from dictatorship has become a “parody of democracy”. Suu Kyi said she had not given up on being President, even though many doubt she can overturn a constitutional provision that bars her selection by a post-election Parliament because her children are not Myanmar nationals.

[Today Online \(5 February 2015\)](#)

ECONOMY

► A two-day Singapore government visit to Myanmar has resulted in a drive to increase economic ties and cooperation in the field of banking and finance, especially banking supervision and capacity building. The move comes after nine foreign banks, including two Singaporean, were awarded licences last October to provide restricted banking services.

[Mizzima \(4 February 2015\)](#)

► Myanmar is considering a sale of baht-denominated bonds as to raise funds to fund infrastructure projects, according to Thailand’s Securities and Exchange Commission. Thailand, which is seeking to become a financial hub for smaller countries in the region, has also approached Cambodia and Vietnam to sell bonds in Thailand, where sovereign issuers aren’t required to have a credit rating.

[Bangkok Post \(4 February 2015\)](#)

► The government will begin issuing licenses for outbound international tour operators starting from this month, according to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism. This means that travel companies can now begin applying for licenses to offer overseas trips for Myanmar nationals and local operators will be able to legally partner with foreign companies.

[Irrawaddy \(5 February 2015\)](#)

► In an effort to tighten the country’s loosely enforced tax system, nearly 200 domestic companies will be de-registered for evasion, officials announced on 4 February. After years of skirting payments, the 197 companies set for deregistration have until the end of the month to settle debts and re-register.

[Irrawaddy \(5 February 2015\)](#)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

► Myanmar on 4 February condemned a UN official for using the term Rohingya to describe a persecuted minority that the government refers to as Bengali, which implies they are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. The UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Myanmar, Yanghee Lee, said conditions were “abysmal” in camps where almost 140,000 Rohingya remain after being displaced in clashes with ethnic Rakhine Buddhists in 2012.

[Reuters \(4 February 2015\)](#)

09 SEB-BRUNEI POWER DEAL



Sarawak Energy Bhd (SEB) and Brunei authorities are expected to begin detailed negotiations on the planned exports of renewable energy to the sultanate and a proposal that Brunei comes up with capital investment to jointly develop hydroelectric dam projects in northern Sarawak.

- The “final report for the feasibility study on the Sarawak-Brunei power interconnection system” was completed about five years ago. The study was carried out under a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between SEB, Brunei’s Prime Minister office and Brunei’s Department of Electrical Services (DES) to collaborate on generation, connection and distribution of power as well as management of electricity supply between the Brunei and Sarawak governments
- It was reported that to facilitate the export of electricity to Brunei, probably 100MW at the start, SEB would have to build a 40km power transmission line to link Miri and Brunei
- The proposed first phase of power export would be from Tudan to Brunei via border point at Sungai Tujuh while the second phase might be via Limbang, where a 200MW hydro dam project has been planned. Brunei currently uses gas to generate electricity

[The Star \(26 January 2015\)](#)

10 THE QUEST FOR LOW COST HOUSING



Vo Trong Nghia, along with other architects around the world have begun testing a design utilising bamboo, steel struts, and coconut leaves able to withstand typhoons, flooding, and earthquakes.

- The initial prototype, which was termed the S-House 3, was designed to be built by five people in three hours, and will cost less than \$4000 when fully rolled out; the S-house is also designed to be attached together to other structures, allowing for the weather resistant structures to be converted to be schools or other communal buildings
- The project was inspired by one of Vo Trong’s first projects in Vietnam’s Ho Chi Minh City, an ecologically-conscious take on a traditional Vietnamese tube home known as Stacking Green house, built in 2011 for around \$150,000; the building is made of a series of concrete slabs and gaps filled with plants to provide privacy while still allowing plenty of air and light
- The project has been publicly endorsed by organisations such as the Red Cross, Women’s Unions, and the UN; all of the above citing the private industry’s involvement in housing projects to be vital to the nation’s success

[The Daily Star \(25 January 2015\)](#)

Admin-istration	Percentage of households using (%)								
	Safe water	Toilet facilities	Elec-tricity	Tele-vision	Radio	Tele-phones	Com-puter	Washing Machine	Fridge
Entire Country	86.7	54.0	96.1	86.9	22.5	45.7	13.5	14.9	31.6
Urban	96.3	87.8	99.6	91.3	26.7	61.7	31.8	31.8	57.4
Rural	82.5	39.0	94.6	84.9	20.7	38.6	5.4	5.4	20.2

Admin-istration	Floor space per capita (m ²)	Proportion of households by type of housing (%)				Proportion of households by ownership (%)		
		Housing per-manent	Housing semi-per-manent	Housing less per-manent	Housing simple per-manent	House private	House rented/borrowed	Houses with unclear ownership
Entire Country	17.9	46.7	38.2	7.8	7.4	92.8	6.5	0.17
Urban	22.0	41.4	52.7	3.3	2.6	85.5	13.7	0.32
Rural	16.1	49.0	31.7	9.8	9.5	96.0	3.3	0.11

[General Statistic Office of Vietnam](#)

