

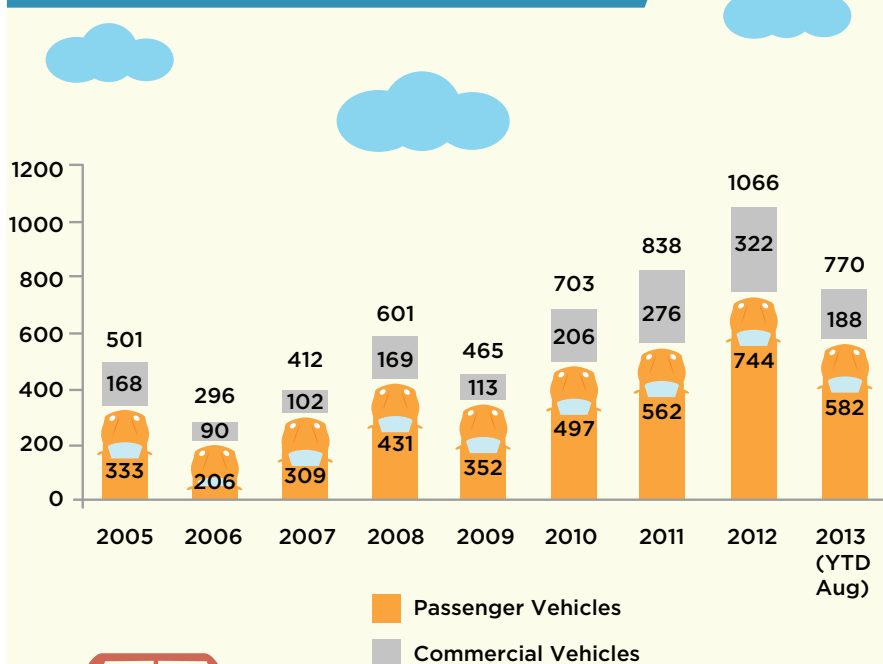
# CARI CAPTURES



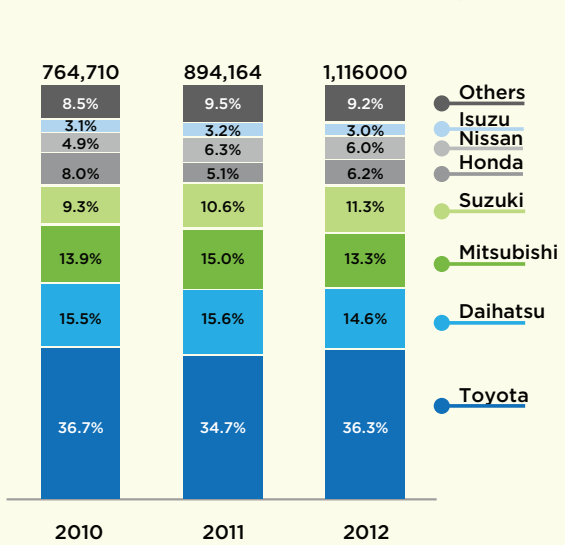
## 01 GM CLOSES INDONESIAN PLANT



Vehicle production in Indonesia, 2005-2013 (YTD August)  
in thousand units



Vehicle Market Share by OEMs (FY10 - FY12)



Note: Other OEMs also includes Peugeot and UD Trucks  
Source: Frost & Sullivan, "Indonesia Automotive Outlook: 2013," January 2013

**In a move to address struggling international operations, General Motors Co. announced the closure of an assembly plant in Indonesia, cutting 500 jobs.**

▶ In the face of higher material costs, limited access to local parts suppliers, and lower foreign labour costs in the region, GM has chosen to shut down its Bekasi plant in Indonesia; the plant, which had sat idle from 2005 to 2013, had begun production of the seven-seat Chevrolet Spin which was targeted at Indonesian markets in 2014

▶ The move follows GM's announcement to cease the production of cars in Australia in 2017; GM will, however, maintain its presence in the region through the use of local dealership networks, and manufacturing plants in Thailand

▶ GM will also be affirming its presence within the region through the use of a partnership with SAIC Motor Corp, a Chinese firm building and distributing low cost vehicles in Indonesia; the partnership has yielded plans of a smaller plant being built in Indonesia to produce vehicles in select Asian markets

KPMG

## 02 S&P PRAISES SINGAPOREAN FISCAL BUDGET



SINGAPORE

In a recent statement, the Standard & Poor's (S&P) rating agency affirmed Singapore's institutional and governance effectiveness as per the nation's latest financial report on its fiscal budget.

- ▶ The nation state's SGD\$68.2 billion budget is aimed at fostering the country's economic potential through a renewed focus on human capital and an ever changing landscape; initiatives such as the "SkillsFuture Initiative" to retrain Singaporean workers and address the nation's ageing population were states as pivotal points in the rating agency's confidence in said budget
- ▶ Following a nearly balanced budget in the current fiscal year, the Singaporean government estimates a budget deficit of approximately SGD\$6.7 billion, almost 1.7% of its GDP, as the cost of budgetary reforms aimed at ensuring entitlements for years to come
- ▶ The Singaporean budget itself is being funded by an increase in the top income tax rate from 20% to 22% in 2017, which is still currently 40 - 50% lower than most other countries; another key budget expenditure in addition to the SkillsFuture initiative for workers would be the Silver Support initiative, which extends a limited pension to up to 30% of the elderly population

[Asia One \(2 February 2015\)](#)

### Overall Budget Balance

	Revised FY2014 \$ Billion	Revised FY2015 \$ Billion	Change over Revised FY2014	
			\$ Billion	% change
OPERATING REVENUE	61.35	64.27	2.92	4.8
Less:				
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	57.20	68.22	11.02	19.3
<b>PRIMARY SURPLUS/ DEFICIT</b>	<b>4.15</b>	<b>(3.95)</b>		
Less:				
SPECIAL TRANSFERS	12.83	11.67	(1.16)	(9.1)
Special Transfers Excluding Top-ups to Endowment and Trust Funds	4.33	5.67		
<b>BASIC SURPLUS/ DEFICIT</b>	<b>(0.18)</b>	<b>(9.62)</b>		
Top-ups to Endowment and Trust Funds	8.50	6.00		
Add:				
NET INVESTMENT RETURNS CONTRIBUTION	8.55	8.94	0.39	4.6
<b>OVERALL BUDGET SURPLUS /DEFICIT</b>	<b>(0.13)</b>	<b>(6.67)</b>		

[Singapore Ministry of Finance](#)

## 03 NO INCREASE IN FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT LAST YEAR



CAMBODIA

Cambodia received roughly \$4 billion in foreign direct investment last year—roughly the same amount as in 2013, the secretary-general of the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) said after a meeting with the National Assembly's environment and rural development commission. Speaking to reporters following the meeting at the Assembly in Phnom Penh, Sok Chenda Sophea said Chinese investors stumped up the largest amount of capital last year, followed by Malaysia and Japan.

- ▶ He warned that Cambodia's entry into the Asean Economic Community at the end of this year would increase competition for foreign investment
- ▶ "Every country in Asean wants to attract more investments than the

others, and there are many factors that can attract investors' interests, including minimum wages, electricity prices, transportation costs, land rent and so on," he said

- ▶ Opposition CNRP lawmaker Pol Ham, who chairs the environment commission, told reporters that foreign investment projects sometimes produced negative effects
- ▶ "For example, people in Svay Rieng province are able to get jobs in the Manhattan Special Economic Zone in Bavet City, but 7NG [a development firm] builds roads through people's land," he said

[The Cambodia Daily \(25 February 2015\)](#)

## 04 PHILIPPINES, FRANCE BOOST TIES WITH SIGNING OF COOPERATION AGREEMENTS



PHILIPPINES FRANCE

The Philippines and France strengthened their bilateral relations with the signing of cooperation agreements. The signing of the memoranda of understanding on tourism cooperation and in higher education and research were witnessed by President Benigno Aquino III and visiting French President Francois Hollande following their expanded bilateral talks in Malacañang.

- ▶ Aquino said the agreement on tourism will allow for the formal sharing of knowledge and best practices in ecotourism and sustainable tourism development, management of tourism destinations, product development, and skills improvement of employees, among others
- ▶ The deal on higher education and research will foster closer collaboration between students, faculty, experts, researchers, and administrators from

both nations and promote joint research in various fields, Aquino said

- ▶ He also conveyed to Hollande an invitation for French companies to explore investing in the Philippines, particularly in the aerospace, IT-BPM, renewable energy, and infrastructure sectors
- ▶ "Filipino workers have proven themselves to possess the skills, loyalty, and drive necessary to spur any industry to success, and given the economic resurgence that our country has experienced these last few years, there is no more opportune time than today to invest in the Philippines," Aquino said

[Philstar \(26 February 2015\)](#)

## 05 SME AWARENESS OF AEC LACKING

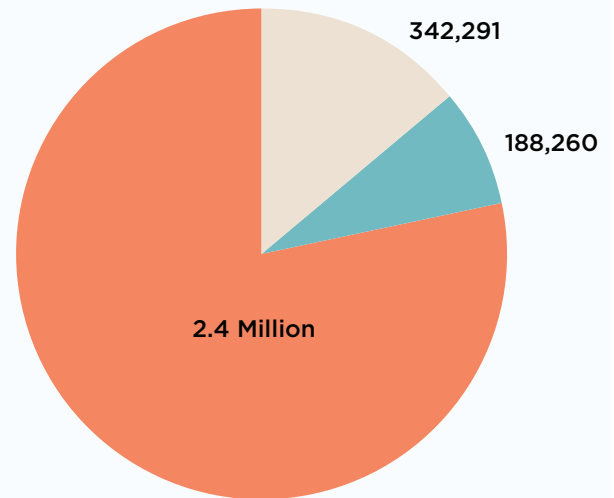


A study conducted by the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (UTCC) showed that small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) had little to no in depth understanding of the goals and impact of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC).

- ▶ The survey found 14.3% of Thailand's 2.4 million SMEs had no understanding of the AEC, whilst the remaining 2.23 million only understood basic information regarding regional integration; analytical information, potential markets, rules, regulations and operating costs were all areas of importance highlighted as areas requiring further awareness
- ▶ According to Aat Pisanwanich, director of the UTCC's Centre for International Trade Studies stated that "A lack of profound understanding of the AEC and its impact may lead SMEs to miss trade and investment opportunities over the next five years when they have to confront stiffer competition from not only the entry of ASEAN investors but also products"
- ▶ Whilst a lack of information is one area of concern for SMEs, the UTCC has also highlighted that product distribution centres for Thai SMEs is another area which requires both effort and awareness if domestic businesses are to remain competitive in the face of regional integration

[Bangkok Post \(25 February 2015\)](#)

### SME Awareness of AEC Lacking



- No understanding
- Profound understanding
- Moderate understanding

[University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce \(UTCC\)](#)

## 06 JAPAN, BRUNEI TO DEVELOP ENERGY-SAVING PAINT



Japanese tech firm Pixela Corporation and its subsidiary Pialex Technologies reaffirmed their intention to develop products with Brunei as their official lab in Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) has launched.

- ▶ According to Dr Susumu Kuwabata, professor of Osaka University and Pixela Corp's representative, Pixela Corporation and Pialex Technologies are aiming to develop their photo-catalytic coating technology through the research collaboration with UBD
- ▶ Pialex Technologies received around US\$ 3 million dollars in research funding through the Brunei Economic Development Board (BEDB)'s national research incentive scheme to develop a technology that will produce stain-resistant and energy-saving paint. The product is expected to be marketed in the next one and half years

[The Brunei \(27 February 2015\)](#)

- ▶ In a speech delivered at yesterday's opening ceremony, Kuwabata said Brunei Darussalam is the best country to conduct research on energy saving owing to its highly educated population and a typical tropical rainforest climate with high temperature, humidity and strong sunshine
- ▶ "Considering these as big advantages, we are hoping that we will build our sales and business network based in Brunei towards neighbouring countries with cooperation of the government and business entities of Brunei Darussalam," he said

## 07 GOVERNMENT PROMISES NATIONWIDE BROADBAND



The Thai government Thursday vowed to make cheap Internet service accessible to all villages in Thailand within two-and-a-half years as part of its digital-economy strategy.

- ▶ Mr. Pridiyathorn Devakula, deputy prime minister responsible for economic issues, said the government would try to make Internet access available to the largest numbers of Thai people at low cost

- ▶ The government aimed to set up a public-private venture to develop broadband infrastructure across the country. Government agencies should convert the value of fibre-optic cable under their ownership into capital for the new venture. The process is expected to take about 18 months
- ▶ Another year will be required to lay fibre to all almost 75,000 villages in the country, said MR Pridiyathorn. He said there would data centres networking all government agencies will be developed within a year

[Bangkok Post \(26 February 2015\)](#)

# 08 MYANMAR MONITOR

## POLITICS

▶ Tens of thousands of refugees from fighting in the northern Myanmar region of Kokang near the border with China are being evicted from at least two camps in China, refugees and aid workers said on 4 March. Aid workers are in the process of moving relief supplies into Myanmar after being told by the Chinese government that their storehouse was in the way of the spring crop-planting.

[Radio Free Asia \(4 March 2015\)](#)

▶ Myanmar President Thein Sein had a rare meeting on 2 March with opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi amid a sharpening debate over a constitution that grants a powerful political role to the military but bars Suu Kyi from becoming president. Thein Sein approved a constitutional referendum law last month following domestic and international pressure to reform the political system.

[The Irrawaddy \(3 March 2015\)](#)

▶ On the third day of tense deadlock, Myanmar riot police on 4 March corralled dozens of student protesters calling for education reform after activists defied official orders to disband. Students have rallied for months against controversial education legislation, calling for changes to the new law including decentralising the school system, giving students the right to form unions and teaching in ethnic minority languages.

[Channel News Asia \(4 March 2015\)](#)

## ECONOMY

▶ Myanmar has upgraded six major airports in terms of safety and security by installing new equipment with the aid of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The upgrade, worth about US\$10.3 million, is a part of a bilateral aid programme between Myanmar and Japan. The six airports of Yangon, Mandalay, Nyaung U, Heho, Thandwe and Dawei, are used by about 3 million passengers annually.

[Mizzima \(3 March 2015\)](#)

▶ The voluntary Code of Conduct established by the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association (MGMA) is seen a sign of its commitment to becoming a responsible sourcing destination. Myanmar has made massive strides in apparel production with export revenues reaching around US\$1.5 billion in 2014 and the MGMA registering at least one new garment factory opening each week, bringing the total to around 275.

[Just-style \(4 March 2015\)](#)

▶ Myanmar took the crown of ASEAN countries for the steepest growth in tourism arrivals in 2014, recording 3.08 million visitor arrivals, a surge of more than 50% from the previous year, according to data from the Myanmar Ministry of Hotels and Tourism. Thailand on the other hand suffered a drop of 6.7% in visitor arrivals.

[Gulf Times \(27 February 2015\)](#)

# 09 MALAYSIA, INDONESIA TO SHARE INTEL IN FIGHTING IS THREAT

## SINGAPORE

**Malaysia and Indonesia agreed to cooperate and share intelligence information, besides monitoring the movements of members of the Islamic State (IS) militant group who have fought in Syria and Iraq, as well as the social media. Malaysia's Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said Malaysia and Indonesia's role in this was important and critical as together; both countries had the biggest Muslim population in the Asean region.**

- ▶ On the maritime border issue, Hishammuddin said the two countries agreed not to prolong the provocation and dispute that might exist and could adversely affect diplomatic relations between Malaysia and Indonesia
- ▶ On the initiative to set up the Asean Peacekeeping Force, Hishammuddin said he had expressed to Ryamizard, Malaysia's wish to obtain the support of Indonesia in realising it under the United Nations flag
- ▶ He said there would be three phases under the Asean Peacekeeping Force: Phase I - acceptance of use of the "Asean Badge" among the member states, Phase II - sending out of Asean mission teams, and Phase III: use of the UN flag

[The Borneo Post \(27 February 2015\)](#)

# 10 DEATH PENALTY ON HOLD FOR AUSTRALIAN TRAFFICKERS

## INDONESIA AUSTRALIA

**Following talks between Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott and Indonesian President Joko Widodo, the death penalty for convicted Australian drug traffickers Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran has been temporarily halted.**

- ▶ In a statement released by PM Abbott, no details were released as to the particulars of the conversation except that President Widodo was considering the country's stance on the execution of said individuals; the pair were caught trying to smuggle heroin in 2005 as part of the infamous Bali Nine drug ring scandal
- ▶ Any move to execute the individuals will only serve to inflame tensions between both countries which have been less than ideal in recent times; two recent examples of bilateral tensions would involve Australia's wire-tapping related scandal and asylum seeking policies
- ▶ The two individuals are currently being held in preparation for their execution after a last ditch legal plea for clemency failed, however the execution has been postponed indefinitely for the time being until talks are concluded

[The Guardian \(25 February 2015\)](#)

