

CARI CAPTURES



01 US SEEKS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH VIETNAM



US - Vietnam Trade Statistics (US\$ Million)

	Exports	Imports	Trade Balance
2008	2,789	12,901	-10,111
2009	3,097	12,287	-9,190.6
2010	3,705	14,867	-11,162
2011	4,315	17,487	-13,172
2012	4,622	20,267	-15,644
2013	5,036	24,654	-19,617
2014	30,588	5,734	-24,854

KEY US-VIETNAM TRADE AGREEMENTS

US-Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)

Signed in 2001, the BTA normalised trade between both nations, including Vietnam under WTO trade rules as well as US appropriations of US\$4-5 million to support economic reforms.

US-Vietnam Trade & Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA)

In line with US efforts to establish FTA agreements with ASEAN nations, the US-Vietnam TIFA allowed for extended talks between the two nations in implementing WTO commitments.

Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP)

Currently slated to be approved by member states, the TPP is set to develop both job creation and economic growth through a variety of policy changes.

[US Census Bureau](#)

Following progress in extended negotiations surrounding the Trans-Pacific-Partnership (TPP), the US has extended overtures in developing stronger bilateral relations with Vietnam.

▶ Vietnam's Communist Party Leader Nguyen Phu Trong visited the White House on 7 July in a bid to deepen both economic and military ties with the United States; the visit comes at a time that President Obama has made overtures to longtime US adversaries, including Cuba, Iran, and Myanmar

▶ Amongst other political commentary on diplomatic relations between both nations, human rights advocates have criticised US openness to a state which has allegedly imprisoned more than 100 Vietnamese citizens on political charges

▶ Whilst the US state department has affirmed that President Obama would pressure Trong on human rights, official policy emphasised that no promises had been made between both states; instead, primary priorities lie with the continued development of multi and bilateral trade and defence agreements

[Washington Post \(7 July 2015\)](#)

02 FOREIGN CURRENCY TRANSACTION BAN IMPLEMENTED

INDONESIA

As the Indonesian Rupiah continues to deteriorate against the US dollar, Indonesia's Central Bank has banned all domestic transactions from utilising foreign currency.

- ▶ The ban, which covers transactions from hotel accommodation payments, to flights, and rental fees, has been enacted to prevent a further fall in confidence in the Rupiah; anyone found in violation of the new law is to be sentenced to a year in prison or a fine of US\$15000

- ▶ Exceptions include a payment of wages to foreign employees by international companies, which include companies in energy, infrastructure, and investing sectors; on the other hand, the hospitality and restaurant industries are being targeted by said law specifically
- ▶ Whilst the regulations are meant to stabilise the Rupiah, fears that the stipulations will increase operating costs due to currency volatility may continue to hurt Indonesia's currency

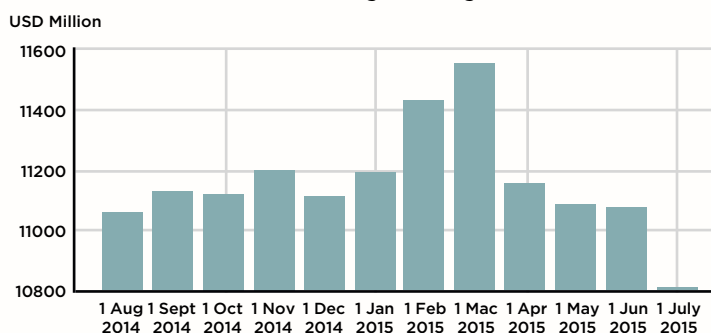
[International Business Times \(1 July 2015\)](#)

Performance of Indonesia's Currency and Foreign Exchange Reserves

Indonesia Rupiah



Indonesia Foreign Exchange Reserves



[Trading Economics](#)

03 THAILAND AND MALAYSIA AGREE ON \$30 BN TRADE GOAL BY 2018

THAILAND MALAYSIA

Thailand and Malaysia agreed at their Joint Trade Committee meeting in Bangkok at the end of last month to work together to boost two-way trade to US\$30 billion (Bt1 trillion) by 2018. To expand trade between the two countries, measures would be taken to lower trade barriers via the easing of some regulations and to facilitate cross-border trade.

- ▶ A Joint Thai-Malaysia Border Trade Committee has been set up to implement the policy
- ▶ Malaysia clarified the criteria that are lacking and are required for Thailand to meet to export more products to Malaysia while the Thai government revealed the industries that will be concentrated in the special economic zone that will be set up at Sadao in the border province of Songkhla
- ▶ The promoted businesses are value-added rubber products, furniture, automobile parts, apparel, processed seafood, Halal food and industrial estates
- ▶ Malaysia is Thailand's fourth-largest trading partner globally and the largest in ASEAN. Border trade accounts for 60 per cent of the total between the two countries

[Nation Multimedia \(8 July 2015\)](#)

04 PRESIDENT JOKOWI URGES TO OPTIMALLY DEVELOP BORDER REGIONS

INDONESIA

President Joko Widodo has called to optimally develop areas of potential in the border regions by improving their infrastructure facilities and developing economic centers to boost exports and imports.

- ▶ Apart from infrastructure development, which is not yet maximal, the president affirmed that economic opportunities such as exports and imports also need to be utilized optimally.
- ▶ Citing the importance of border development, he referred to Malaysia that has identified a location in Sarawak as an international airport to boost its exports and imports
- ▶ As an initial step, the president noted that the government had allocated Rp1 trillion for improving the border post facility in Entikong, West Kalimantan

[Antara News \(7 July 2015\)](#)

05 JAPAN, MYANMAR, THAILAND TO CO-OPERATE ON DAWEI PORT DEVELOPMENT



Japan, Myanmar, and Thailand have signed an agreement for a mutual development of the Dawei Special Economic Zone in Myanmar. The agreement was signed in Tokyo on 4 July, on the sidelines of the 7th Mekong-Japan Summit. The summit also adopted the 'New Tokyo Strategy 2015 for Mekong-Japan Cooperation' (MJC2015), which outlines Mekong-Japan Cooperation in the next three years.

- ▶ The first piece of infrastructure now likely to be built is a 138-km road from Dawei to Kanchanaburi province, 119 km northwest of Bangkok
- ▶ If successful, the project will allow cargo to bypass the narrow and congested Strait of Malacca to forge shorter trade routes from the Middle East and Africa to China and Japan. One reason for Japan's interest in the project is to counter Thailand's influence
- ▶ Thailand is keen on the project because it will underscore its role as one of Japan's largest offshore bases, while Myanmar needs the infrastructure
- ▶ It is a significant step-up for Japan's involvement in the region and is backed by JPY750 billion (USD6.1 billion) in Official Development Assistance loans assigned by Tokyo earlier in 2015

[IHS Maritime 360 \(5 July 2015\)](#)

06 CAMBODIA ASKS FOR ORIGINAL MAPS FROM UN TO VERIFY BORDER LINE WITH VIETNAM



Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen on Monday requested all original maps deposited at the United Nations to verify the authenticity of maps the government is using to demarcate border line with its neighboring countries.

- ▶ Border dispute between Cambodia and Vietnam flared in recent months after the opposition party lawmakers and activists inspected border line and clashed twice with Vietnamese security personnel and civilians
- ▶ Also, the Cambodian government said it has found that Vietnamese authorities had dug eight ponds deeply inside northeast Cambodian territory, constructed a military post, and built roads at non-demarcated border areas
- ▶ Cambodia shares a 1,270-km border in the east with Vietnam. To date, about 80 percent of the border demarcation between the two countries has been completed

[Khmer Times \(6 July 2015\)](#)

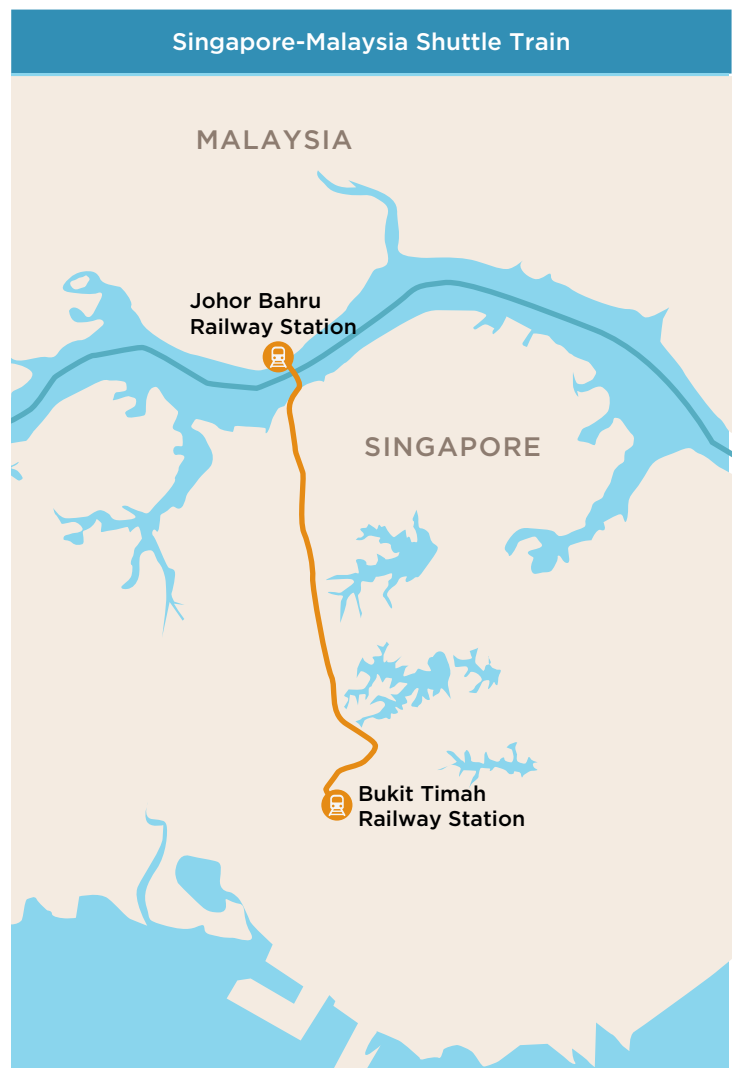
07 SINGAPORE-MALAYSIA SHUTTLE TRAIN LAUNCHED



A new shuttle train run by Malaysian rail operator Keretapi Tanah Melayu (KTM) was launched on 1 July, helping to alleviate infrastructural stress between Malaysia and Singapore.

- ▶ The shuttle, which costs S\$5 per trip is more expensive than existing bus transport which costs S\$2 and runs only during peak traveling hours; the added advantage of the new shuttle train line would be the removal of traffic related issues and delays
- ▶ Despite the large number of commuters crossing the border via the new train service, it did not appear to visibly ease congestion at the Causeway
- ▶ The shuttle service by Malaysia's KTM Intercity currently runs 14 trips between Singapore and Johor Bahru daily, with seven trips in each direction; the hope from commuters is that KTM's service offerings and the reliability of its trains will increase in time

[Malaysia Chronicle \(2 July 2015\)](#)



08 MYANMAR MONITOR

POLITICS

► Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi has confirmed that the National League for Democracy (NLD) party will contest elections in November despite her being barred from the presidency. There was widespread speculation that the NLD might boycott the election after the parliament voted last month against constitutional amendments that would allow Suu Kyi to run for the presidency.

[The Guardian \(13 July 2015\)](#)

► Myanmar president Thein Sein has decided not to run in a parliamentary election in November, according to a senior official. USDP chairman Shwe Mann held a meeting with opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi after receiving a letter from Thein Sein on 13 July saying that he will not run due health reasons. Details of the meeting have not been released.

[ABC News \(14 July 2015\)](#)

ECONOMY

► The planned opening of Myanmar's first stock exchange will be delayed for months due to upcoming elections. "Actually, we are almost getting ready for the launch, but we decided to postpone it as the election is more important for the country's democratic transition," Deputy Finance Minister Maung Maung Thein said on 13 July. "Only about five companies will be listed at the beginning of the stock market," he said.

[Bangkok Post \(14 July 2015\)](#)

► Dutch beer giant Heineken announced on 13 July it has opened a US\$60 million-dollar brewery in Myanmar, which has a total capacity of 330,000 hectolitres per year and which will directly employ more than 200 local people. The new brewery is located at Hmawbi township outside the capital Yangon and will brew Heineken beer for the market's premium segment as well as a new local brand called Regal Seven.

[Daily Mail \(13 July 2015\)](#)

SOCIAL

► Myanmar's navy has discovered more than 100 Bangladeshi migrants stranded for nearly a month on a southern island, state media said on 14 July, following a regional migrant crisis. The find was the first major rescue reported by Myanmar since May, when more than 700 migrants were found by the navy in the Andaman Sea.

[Reuters \(14 July 2015\)](#)

09 TEACHERS IN LAOS TO GET ENGLISH TRAINING



The English Language Institute of China (ELIC) in cooperation with the Laos Ministry of Education and Sports will implement the first ever English language teacher training programme for in-service secondary English teachers. The training programme for secondary school English teachers will start this month.

- ELIC instructors and Lao teacher trainees will convene for a month-long training course using a government issued secondary English language curriculum at the Teachers Training College in Keun village, Thoulakhom district, Vientiane
- This pilot programme will showcase one complete year-cycle of a proposed three-year training programme for Lao secondary school English language teachers serving in the most impoverished districts nationwide
- Some nine native English speaking teachers from America and Canada will teach and train 130 teacher trainees from four of the most impoverished districts - Vientiane province's Meun, Hinheup, Vang Vieng and Maed

[China Daily \(6 July 2015\)](#)



10 BOTANIC GARDENS DECLARED UNESCO HERITAGE SITE



Following UNESCO's approval of Singapore's application on 4 July, the Singapore Botanic Gardens has been declared the nation state's first UNESCO Heritage Site.

- Leading the Singapore delegation in Bonn was Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Lawrence Wong who said Singapore now has the honour and privilege of "being home to one of these world treasures"
- The 156-year-old gardens' nomination was put up for discussion and decision-making by the 21-member committee today; including the Botanic Gardens, the committee will be examining 36 proposals nominated to be inscribed on the World Heritage list
- To qualify, the site must possess an "outstanding universal value" that reflects their unique position in global history, whilst also meeting at least one out of the ten selection criteria to be successfully inscribed; the Botanic Gardens met two of these criteria as it reflected an interchange of human values and illustrated a significant stage in human history

[Today Online \(4 July 2015\)](#)

ASEAN UNESCO Heritage Sites		
 <p>Borobudur Temple Komodo National Park Prambanan Temple Ujung Kulon National Park Sangiran Early Man Site Lorentz National Park Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra Subak System</p>	 <p>Hue Monuments Ha Long Bay Hoi An My Son Sanctuary Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park Central Sector of Imperial Citadel Citadel of the Ho Dynasty Trang An Landscape Complex</p>	 <p>Baroque Churches Tubbataha Reefs Rice Terraces Town of Vigan Puerto-Princesa Subterranean River National Park Mount Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary</p>
 <p>Luang Prabang Vat Phou Cultural Landscape Champasak Cultural Landscape</p>	 <p>Ayutthaya Sukhothai Thungyai-Huai Kha Khaeng Ban Chiang Dong Phrayayen-Khao</p>	 <p>Angkor Temple of Preach Vihear</p>
 <p>Gulung Mulu National Park Kinabalu Park Lenggong Valley Malacca/ Georgetown City</p>	 <p>Singapore Botanic Gardens</p>	 <p>Pyu Ancient Cities</p>

[ASEAN Up](#)

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