Indonesia’s parliament has voted to ratify the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution.

Indonesia’s Environment Minister, Professor Balthasar Kambuaya, said: “This (ratification) is best for our people in Indonesia. So, we will continue, and we still make a lot of efforts, on how we handle forest burning and its impact - haze, especially.”

The Agreement was ratified after Singapore passed a bill that carries fines of as much as US$1.6 million for foreign companies for illegal emissions a year after the city-state endured its worst-ever air quality.

Parliament had earlier delayed in ratifying the 2002 pact which became a sticking point during last year’s haze when pollutant levels reached record highs in Malaysia and Singapore.

Countries That Have Ratified The Transboundary Haze Agreement

- Indonesia: 16 September 2014
- Vietnam: 24 March 2003
- Laos: 9 December 2004
- Thailand: 10 September 2003
- Cambodia: 24 April 2008
- Malaysia: 1 December 2012
- Brunei: 27 February 2013
- Singapore: 13 January 2013
- Philippines: 1 February 2010
- Myanmar: 5 March 2003
- Laos: 24 December 2004
- Malaysia: 10 September 2003
- Cambodia: 24 April 2008
- Vietnam: 24 March 2003
- Philippines: 1 February 2010
- Indonesia: 16 September 2014

Channel News Asia (16 September 2014)
US NAVY SAYS MALAYSIA OFFERS TO HOST SURVEILLANCE PLANES OVER THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

On 15 September, Admiral Jonathan Greenert, the US Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) said that the Malaysian government recently asked the US to operate the P-8 Poseidon aircraft from the Sabah air base in northeast Malaysia, giving the Americans greater proximity to the South China Sea.

- If realised, Malaysia will allow the US Navy to operate P-8 and P-3 surveillance aircraft from the country during the search for Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, which disappeared in March on a flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing.
- "The US Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) did not talk about approving flights. What he was discussing was nurturing future opportunities, like responding to emerging issues in the region, which was done with MH370 search operations," Navy Captain Danny Hernandez, a spokesman for Greenert told Reuters.
- The Malaysian government has not confirmed the offer.
- Wu Xinbo, the director of the Center for American Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai, said China would interpret an agreement between the US and Malaysia as a direct challenge to Beijing’s insistence that the American spy flights were an infringement of China’s sovereignty.

LAOS TO PUSH ENERGY INTEGRATION AGENDA AT AEMM

In a bid to facilitate the trade of electricity within the region, Deputy Minister of Energy and Mines Viraphorn Viravong has called for energy integration to be a topic of priority at the upcoming 32nd ASEAN Energy Ministers Meeting (AEMM).

- The agenda item has also been supported by Thailand, which recently proposed a plan to increase electricity purchase from Myanmar from 1,500 megawatts to 10,000 megawatts, and to widen cooperation on petroleum purchase from that country; Thailand also seeks to increase energy purchases from Laos.

- Various issues were on the agenda for discussion at the 32nd AEMM including cooperation on a gas pipe connectivity project and ASEAN oil stockpile project; Panel discussions initiated by Laos are set to be convened on the sidelines of the meetings where energy experts will be invited to share energy-related views such as energy development, use and trade.
- Officials from Laos, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand have held several talks on electricity integration with Singapore agreeing in principle to purchase 100 MW of electricity from Laos under a pilot scheme, while Thailand and Malaysia offered their support.

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**ASEAN Plan of Action on Energy Cooperation (2010 - 2015)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAMME AREA</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASEAN Power Grid</td>
<td>- Accelerate the development of the ASEAN Power Grid Interconnection projects</td>
<td>HAPUA (Head ASEAN Power Utilities/authorities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Optimize the generation sector vis-a-vis the available indigenous energy resources in the region</td>
<td>ASCOPE (Asan Council On Petroleum)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Collectively implement the ASEAN MOU on TAGP by ASCOPE Members</td>
<td>AFOC (ASEAN Forum On Coal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- PERTAMINA and PSC Partners to undertake detailed feasibility study for East Natuna Gas Field Development</td>
<td>RE-SSN (Reneable Energy Sub-Sector Network)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Implement the approved Roadmap for TAGP by respective ASCOPE Members</td>
<td>REPE-SSN (Regional Energy Policy &amp; Planning-Subsector Network)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Implement the approved 5-year ASCOPE Gas Centre (AGC) Work Program</td>
<td>(ACE as Secretariat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans-ASEAN Gas Pipeline</td>
<td>- Collectively implement the ASEAN MOU on TAGP by ASCOPE Members</td>
<td>AFOC (ASEAN Forum On Coal)</td>
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<td>(ACE as Secretariat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal and Clean Coal</td>
<td>- Strengthen Institutional and Policy Framework and build an ASEAN Coal Image</td>
<td>AFOC (ASEAN Forum On Coal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>- Promote Coal and Clean Coal Technologies</td>
<td>REPE-SSN (Regional Energy Policy &amp; Planning-Subsector Network)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Promote Intra-ASEAN Coal Trade &amp; Investment</td>
<td>(ACE as Secretariat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Enhance environmental planning and assessment of coal projects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Efficiency &amp;</td>
<td>- Develop Energy Efficiency Policy and Build Capacity</td>
<td>AFOC (ASEAN Forum On Coal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>- Enhance awareness raising and dissemination of information</td>
<td>REPE-SSN (Regional Energy Policy &amp; Planning-Subsector Network)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Promote good energy management practices, especially for industrial and commercial sectors</td>
<td>(ACE as Secretariat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewable Energy</td>
<td>- Increase the development and utilization of RE sources to achieve the 15% target share of RE in ASEAN power generation mix</td>
<td>HAPUA (Head ASEAN Power Utilities/authorities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Enhance awareness and information sharing and strengthen networks</td>
<td>ASCOPE (Asan Council On Petroleum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Promote Intra-ASEAN cooperation on ASEAN-made products and services</td>
<td>AFOC (ASEAN Forum On Coal)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Promote renewable energy financing scheme</td>
<td>REPE-SSN (Regional Energy Policy &amp; Planning-Subsector Network)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Promote the commercial development and utilization of biofuels</td>
<td>(ACE as Secretariat)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Develop ASEAN as a hub for renewable energy</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Energy Policy &amp;</td>
<td>- Enhance energy policy and supply security information sharing network</td>
<td>HAPUA (Head ASEAN Power Utilities/authorities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>- Conduct capacity building in energy and environmental policy planning and energy supply security assessment</td>
<td>AFOC (ASEAN Forum On Coal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Prepare regional energy outlooks and conducting ASEAN energy policy reviews and analysis series</td>
<td>REPE-SSN (Regional Energy Policy &amp; Planning-Subsector Network)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Strengths collaboration and dialogue with ASEAN partners and with national, regional and global institutions</td>
<td>(ACE as Secretariat)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Monitor and evaluate the progress of APEAC programs</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian Nuclear Energy</td>
<td>- Conduct capacity building among ASEAN Member States</td>
<td>HAPUA (Head ASEAN Power Utilities/authorities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Strengthen public information and public education on nuclear power generation</td>
<td>ASCOPE (Asan Council On Petroleum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Strengthen institutional, legal and regulatory capacities on nuclear energy for power generation.</td>
<td>AFOC (ASEAN Forum On Coal)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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04 THAKSIN SHINAWATRA’S NAME IS ERASED FROM HIGH SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS

THAILAND

Mr Thaksin’s legacy has always been part of the political turmoil in Thailand for the past 10 years. However, high school students will no longer find his name in history textbooks that the country’s military junta recently ordered schools to use.

- Mr. Thaksin is seen as a threat to the junta. Mr. Thaksin was in power from 2001 to 2006, and his political movement has won every election in the past decade and a half, including a number of landslides. His sister, Yingluck Shinawatra, was prime minister from 2011 until she was removed from office in May.
- The Education Ministry’s order last month that all public high schools use the new textbook to instil patriotism among Thai youths.

05 SINGAPOREAN EXPORTS TEMPORARILY UP

SINGAPORE

Singapore’s Non-Oil Domestic Exports (NODX) rose by 6% on year in August despite declining electronic exports.

- The increase comes after two months of declining exports; where Singapore’s NODX decreased by 3.3% in August, and fell by 4.6% in June.
- According to an economist at ANZ, the increase in export numbers is not permanent, and can be attributed to a temporary increase in petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, and shipbuilding related materials.
- On a year-on-year basis, NODX to all of Singapore’s top 10 export partners, except Hong Kong, Japan and Thailand, rose last month; the top three contributors to the rise were South Korea, Taiwan and China.

06 COMPREHENSIVE TIES BETWEEN VIETNAM AND AUSTRALIA URGED

VIETNAM

Party General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong urged Vietnam and Australia to bolster economic and trade ties as he welcomed Speaker of the Australian House of Representatives Bronwyn Bishop during her official visit to Hanoi from September 13 to 14.

- Trong thanked the Australian government for its assistance in education, personnel training and construction of My Thuan and Cao Lanh bridges as part of the central Mekong Delta region connectivity project.
- National Assembly Chairman, Nguyen Sinh Hung asked for further national defence, security and education co-operation and used the occasion to invite Bishop to the 132nd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, slated for next March in Hanoi.
- Bishop told Hung that her visit aimed to tighten relationships between the two legislative bodies and peoples, adding that both countries should launch more co-operation channels in order to realise their commitments. She agreed that the potential of joint work in education had not yet been fully tapped.

07 THE 11TH CHINA-ASEAN EXPO OPENS IN NANNING

CHINA

The 11th China-ASEAN Expo (CAEXPO 2014) kicked off in Nanning, capital of south China’s Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region on 16 September with over 2,300 companies from China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) attending the event.

- Chinese Vice-Premier Zhang Gaoli and leaders of ASEAN member countries attended the opening ceremony. With the theme of “jointly building the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road”, the expo hosted 4,600 exhibitors, 1,259 of which are from ASEAN countries.
- The CAEXPO was initiated in 2004 and serves as an important platform to promote bilateral trade and relationships between China and the ASEAN.
- China is ASEAN’s largest trading partner, while ASEAN ranks as China’s third-largest trading partner. The bilateral trade between China and the ASEAN increased 10.9% year-on-year to 443.61 billion U.S. dollars in 2013, around 5.7 times that of 2003.
**POLITICS**

- Tensions continue to rise in Karen State’s Myawaddy after Karen rebel groups defied orders from a local Myanmar Army commander not to carry weapons or wear uniforms. The news comes just days after the discovery of two small bombs in and around Myawaddy.

  The Irrawaddy (17 September 2014)

- Nine Myanmar police officers were injured as they sought to free officials held hostage by dozens of angry workers demanding wages and compensation after their factory was closed in June, authorities said on 18 September. The labour ministry has filed a lawsuit against the South Korean-owned factory after it closed without informing or paying its 757 staff.

  Channel NewsAsia (18 September 2014)

**ECONOMY**

- Foreign investment in August alone totalled US$2.443 billion, from 48 companies, including 15 in the export sector and 13 in oil and gas sector. Total investment in the 2014-2015 fiscal year had reached US$3.183 billion at the end of August, less than US$2 billion short from the targeted US$5 billion.

  Mizzima (18 September 2014)

- Mismanagement of land ownership and land grab issues has hampered the ability of Myanmar to feed itself, according to members of the agricultural community. The government’s inability to deal with the problem of land grabs provides farmers with instability, and the increasing price of land is tempting farmers to sell rather than farm the land, according to industry players.

  Mizzima (16 September 2014)

- Myanmar’s state oil and gas enterprise (MOGE) will jointly conduct inland crude oil exploration in Magway region with the Brunei National Petroleum Company and IGE Ptd Ltd of Myanmar, on a production sharing basis. Earlier in September, MOGE signed contracts with two Canadian companies, to undertake exploration at other inland oil blocks in central Myanmar.

  Global Post (17 September 2014)

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

- A special police taskforce has been set up to look into whether the murders of twenty people in Penang, Malaysia this year are related to religious disputes between Muslims and Buddhists from Myanmar. The flashpoint of this violence is Seberang Prai where Rohingya Muslims from the western Rakhine state are the main suspects in the killings.

  Malay Mail (18 September 2014)

**DUTCH REPORT SUGGESTS MH17 SHOT DOWN FROM GROUND**

A report by Dutch investigators indicated that the Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 over Ukraine crashed due to a “large number of high-energy objects” penetrating the fuselage and there were no signs that the MH17 crash was caused by a technical fault or by actions of the crew.

- The report finds there were only three other aircraft in the vicinity: two Boeing 777s and one Airbus A330

- Tim Ripley, a defense analyst with Jane’s Defense Weekly magazine mentioned that although the report did not mention a missile, but the impact with a large number of fragments would be consistent with a “proximity” warhead, designed to explode in the air and hurl shrapnel at its target

- “The preliminary report suggests that high energy objects penetrated the aircraft and led it to break up midair. This leads to the strong suspicion that a surface-to-air missile brought MH17 down, but further investigative work is needed before we can be certain,” Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak said in a statement.

  Reuters (14 September 2014)

**FILIPINO FERRY SINKS**

102 rescued, two dead, after a ferry sank off the coast of Central Philippines.

- The ferry left Liloan port in Southern Leyte province and an order to abandon ship was given just North-West of Panon Island after big waves and strong currents damaged the ship

- Meanwhile communities in the North-East of the main island of Luzon are preparing as Typhoon Kalmaegi heads towards the country

- Vulnerable areas being told to expect flash floods and landslides, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council has warned

  BBC News Asia (14 September 2014)