

# THE HABIBIE CENTER

## ASEAN ROUND-UP



Regional news round-up for the week ending : 25 May 2015

### [Asean, China should conclude pact to ease tensions in South China Sea](#)

*Straitstimes.com - May 19, 2015*

Asean and China should “expeditiously” ink an agreement that is aimed at easing the tensions in the South China Sea, urged Singapore Defence minister Ng Eng Hen. China and the claimant states should “expeditiously conclude” the Code of conduct, a pact that would forbid the first use of force in potential conflicts and reduce miscalculations at seas, he said.

### [SEA consumer confidence hits record high: Nielsen](#)

*Digitalmarket.asia - May 20, 2015*

Southeast Asian consumer confidence continued its steady rise in the first quarter of 2015, reaching the highest level recorded to date and far out-stripping other global markets, according to the latest Nielsen Global Survey of Consumer Confidence and Spending Intentions. Southeast Asia (comprising Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) posted a score of 114 points in Nielsen’s Q1 2015 Consumer Confidence Index, up two points compared to the previous quarter and 17 points above the global consumer confidence index score of 97 points.

### [Indonesia and Malaysia Agree to Care for Stranded Migrants](#)

*Nytimes.com - May 20, 2015*

Indonesia and Malaysia agreed on Wednesday to take in thousands of migrants stranded at sea until they can be sent home or resettled in a third country, in the first official action by Southeast Asian nations to try to resolve a crisis well into its second week. Responding to international pressure to save the migrants, many of whom have been adrift in rickety boats for weeks with little food or water, the agreement by the foreign ministers of Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand was a potential lifesaver even as experts said it offered only a temporary fix to deeper problems.

### [Local businesses to have new growth opportunities with ASEAN Economic Community](#)

*Channelnewsasia.com - May 21, 2015*

The Republic’s businesses will have new growth opportunities with the implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) by end of the year, but progress remains slow in some areas of regional integration. Speaking at the ASEAN Conference 2015 on Wednesday (May 20), Minister for Trade and Industry Lim Hng Kiang said the overall outlook is bright, but cautions against over-optimism as ASEAN is unlikely to fully achieve the AEC Blueprint.

### [Full ASEAN economic integration to come, but ‘benefits already here’](#)

*Todayonline.com - May 21, 2015*

While it may take longer to fully achieve economic integration among members of the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN), companies here have benefited from the progress made

so far, said Trade and Industry Minister Lim Hng Kiang yesterday. But he stressed that members of the regional bloc needed to be more proactive in tackling issues surrounding non-tariff and barriers to trade in services, as well as the ASEAN Open Skies agreement. Pushing ahead in these areas will “facilitate trade, further enhance connectivity, boost investor confidence and make ASEAN more competitive and a better place to do business in”, he said.

### [BOCHK’s possible Asean push may be linked to ‘One Belt, One Road’ initiative](#)

*South China Morning Post - May 24, 2015*

What business does Bank of China Hong Kong have in Southeast Asia? The answer is next to none. That would change, for better or for worse, if the bank sees through a tentative plan for a sizable restructuring that it announced late last week. After a feasibility study, the bank said a complete sell-off of its wholly owned subsidiary Nanyang Commercial Bank “would be consistent with the long-term development strategy of the group”.

### [Trade with ASEAN nations can and does work:](#)

### [B.C. pulp traces circuitous path to washrooms around that world](#)

*Vancouver Sun Columnist - May 24, 2015*

Given Ottawa’s recent focus on trade opportunities in Southeast Asia, it’s natural that people start asking whether such trade is realistic. The countries of ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, combined are the seventh-largest economy in the world with a population of more than 600 million. But logistical challenges abound when it comes to trading with any of the 10 countries comprising the region.

### [Asian shares edge down on U.S. rate hike bets](#)

*Todayonline.com - May 25, 2015*

Asian shares got off to a lackluster start on Monday, after rising inflation and a hawkish tone from the U.S. Federal Reserve Chair rekindled expectations that the Fed is on track to hike interest rates. Activity was likely to be thin this session, as UK and U.S. markets are shut on Monday for the Spring Bank Holiday and Memorial Day respectively. European centers such as Germany will be observing the Whit Monday holiday.

*ASEAN Studies Program of The Habibie Center conduct monthly discussion and bi-monthly policy brief on ASEAN and its current development.*

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