



CACCI to hold Summit Meeting in Taipei

CACCI will be holding a Summit Meeting on November 24, 2016 in conjunction with the 30th CACCI Conference in Taipei. The meeting will review the Confederation's accomplishments over the past 50 years and discuss how the organization should move forward in the next five to 10 years in light of the continuing changes and developments in the world's economies.

The Summit Meeting aims to provide CACCI member chamber leaders the opportunity to address the following topics:

Re-visiting the CACCI Mission

How should the CACCI Mission – “To serve as a forum for promoting the vital role of businesses in the region, increasing regional business interaction, and enhancing regional economic growth” - be amended, if at all, taking into account recent trends and developments in regional and global market environment?

Moderator: Mr. Jemal Inaishvili, CACCI President

The Role of CACCI to Promote and Facilitate Trade and Investment

What new activities or services should CACCI develop to promote and facilitate trade and investment in the region?

Moderator: Mr. Peter McMullin, CACCI Vice President and Board Member, International Chamber of Commerce Australia



The Role of CACCI Within the Framework of APEC, ASEAN and SAARC Regional Groupings

How can CACCI strengthen its role in the APEC, ASEAN and SAARC processes?

Moderator: Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, CACCI Vice President, and Former Vice President of SAARC-CCI

Geographical Scope of CACCI's Membership

What are CACCI's priorities for geographical expansion?

Moderator: Mrs. Monowara Hakim Ali, Director & Former First Vice President, FBCCI

Review of CACCI's Organizational Structure

How should CACCI's organizational structure be changed, if at all, to enable it to achieve its objectives effectively?

Moderator: Mrs. Magvan Oyunchimeg, CEO, Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and CACCI Executive Committee Member

CACCI Foundation Funds

What can CACCI do to build up the Foundation's Funds to at least US\$1 million?

Moderator: Mr. Kenneth Court, CACCI President Emeritus and CACCI Advisory Board Chairman

New Priority Areas of Work for CACCI

What other areas of work should CACCI consider undertaking in the years ahead to help achieve its objectives?

Moderator: Amb. Benedicto Yujuico, Former CACCI President and CACCI Advisory Board Member ■

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CACCI takes part in ASEAN-Business and Investment Summit



CACCI Director-General Amb. Victor C. Y. Tseng and Deputy Director-General Mr. Amador Honrado Jr. represented the Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry at the ASEAN AND BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT SUMMIT (ASEAN BIS) held on September 5-7, 2016 in Vientiane, Laos.

Organized by the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC) and the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI), the ASEAN-BIS was attended by some 500 representatives from the private and government sectors of ASEAN and non-ASEAN member economies. It was held in conjunction with the 28th and 29th ASEAN Summits and Related Summits, the annual gathering of ASEAN Leaders and their Dialogue Partners.

The ASEAN-BIS

The ASEAN-BIS provides a platform for the business community to engage with ASEAN leaders, business leaders, entrepreneurs, key decision makers and representatives from the academe. Focusing on the theme “Operationalizing the ASEAN Economic Community: Turning Vision into Reality”, the ASEAN-BIS

brought into focus the opportunities, requirements and questions facing the private sector, and explore the myriad of possibilities brought forth by the onset of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC).

Various sessions featured speakers who exchanged views on issues such as Complementing Regional and Global Trade Agreements; Fast Tracking Business Development and Integration in Energy, Infrastructure and Environment; Global Megatrends and Regional Integration; AEC Sustainable Economic Development; The future of Technology; MSMEs’ Engine of Growth and the Role of Youth and Women in Business; as well as Trade and Transport Facilitation.

As part of the ASEAN BIS 2016, the AEC Symposium was also held with the theme “Global Megatrends and their Impact on the AEC”. It aimed at building awareness and understanding of global megatrends, its multiple drivers and change factors, as well as contributing towards ASEAN-wide efforts and support for the implementation of relevant measures in the AEC Blueprint 2025.

The ASEAN-BAC also presented the 2016 ASEAN Business Awards to outstanding companies that

have contributed to the growth and prosperity of the ASEAN economy, particularly ASEAN small and medium-sized enterprises that have the potential of becoming global economic players.

This year’s ASEAN-BIS also saw the launching of the ASEAN Investment Report 2016: Foreign Director Investment and MSME Linkages prepared by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

There were also presentations on the following: (1) The ASEAN Solutions for Investments, Services and Trade (ASSIST), which is a trade facilitation tool aimed at delivering practical solutions to ASEAN based enterprises for specific intra-ASEAN cross border problems in a time-bound manner, developed in collaboration with the ASEAN Regional Integration Support from the EU (ARISE); (2) The ASEAN Tariff Finder, which is a tool to help businesses, especially MSMEs, to obtain up-to-date information on the preferential tariffs applied under ATIGA and the ASEAN+1 free trade agreements.

Some of the eminent speakers at the ASEAN BIS included: Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan; H. E. Rodrigo Duterte, President of the Philippines; H. E. Thongloun Sisoulith, Prime Minister of Lao PDR; H. E. Khenmani Pholsena, Minister of Industry and Commerce of Lao PDR; H. E. Dato’ Sri Mustapa Mohamed, Minister of Trade and Industry of Malaysia; H. E. Pan Sorasak, Minister of Commerce of the Kingdom of Cambodia; H. E. Drs. Enggartiasto Lukita, Minister of Trade of Indonesia; Prof. Mari Elka Pangestu, Former Minister of Trade of Indonesia; Tan Sri Madam Rafidah Aziz, Former Malaysian Minister of International Trade and Industry; Madame Christine Lagarde, Managing Director, IMF; and Mrs. Arancha Gonzales, Executive Director, International Trade Centre. ■



Globalisation's benefits right in front of us

By James Pearson, Chief Executive Officer, ACCI

“All right, but apart from the sanitation, the medicine, education, wine, public order, irrigation, roads, a fresh water system and public health, what have the Romans done for us?”

“Brought peace.”

“Oh, peace. Shut up!”

Sound familiar? This excerpt from Monty Python's *Life of Brian* sums up the current public discussion on free trade. A growing number of Australians and some politicians are ignoring the benefits of globalisation, despite them experiencing these benefits many times every day.

A person may start their day with Kellogg's Corn Flakes, dress in Gap clothes made of synthetic fibres, jump in their BMW or ride in a Hitachi commuter train, head to the office listening to their iPhone, grab an Arabica coffee, work on a Lenovo laptop, connect to the internet via Optus, seek out information from Google and use a tool made by Makita.

All this before lunchtime. Imagine doing this without globalisation. Impossible.

Many of these products come from global value chains. Raw materials, assembly and marketing can happen in multiple places, meaning that many products are simply Made in the World. Look at the example of the Boeing 787 Dreamliner. The production of the Dreamliner involves the collaboration of 43 suppliers spread over 135 sites around the world, including in Melbourne. If we put up barriers to these links in the chain, the product becomes impossible to produce – at least at the price and quality that consumers rightly expect.

For hundreds of years the Australian economy has been connected to the rest of the world. Since European settlement we have relied upon global trade, firstly with the British Empire and then later with trading partners in Asia and across the world. The global interconnectedness has accelerated in the past 50 years.

Opponents of globalisation want to isolate our industries, shutting us off from international buyers and sellers. But Australia's economic history shows the important role they play: our wool industry thrived on international demand for our products in the early decades, and more recently our minerals have been keenly sought. And in the other direction, overseas technology and investment has helped to make these successes: Spanish merino breeding sheep launched our wool trade and multinational resources companies helped to build our mines and oil and gas projects.

The digital economy provides a test for whether Australians are still open to trade. Consumers expect the things they buy will be delivered almost instantly and robotics is revolutionizing production and supply chains. Inconceivable only a few years ago, 3D printing is now reducing the time and costs for production of goods from housing to dentistry. Protectionist policies will deny Australians these advances in technology.

International demand has fuelled the success of many Australian innovations, including the black box flight recorder, the electronic pacemaker, medical application of penicillin, polymer bank notes, the bionic ear, the electric drill, wi-fi technology and Gardasil and Cervarix cancer vaccines.

Without access to global markets these inventions may never have happened. We would be denied their life-changing benefits, as well as the thousands of jobs that flowed from them.

For Australia to maximize these benefits, we need to do more than just reduce our trade barriers. We need to equip our economy so that we are internationally competitive. Over the past decade Australia has fallen from 10th to an 21st on the Global Competitiveness Index, with tax and workplace regulation our biggest

weaknesses. Falling competitiveness means less investment, fewer jobs and missed opportunities.

By exposing our economy to international competition, we expand the range of goods and services we can access and place downward pressure on costs. When we remove barriers to trade, we increase our purchasing power. This is like giving every Australian a pay rise – or a tax cut.

Recent history shows the power of trade as an elixir for poverty. In the past 25 years the value of Australia's trade with the world has increased five-fold, reflecting a trend apparent in most developed economies. In that same time the proportion of the world's population living in poverty (under US\$1.90 a day) has shrunk by two-thirds, to about 12 per cent.

The correlation is no coincidence. Developing countries that opened up to international trade in the 1990s grew more than three times faster than those that maintained high protection to international competition, according to World Bank research.

That's why it is so worrying that opposition to globalisation is gaining momentum. Growth in world trade is expected to remain sluggish this year at 2.8 per cent. While the World Trade Organization estimates that it should pick up to 3.6 per cent next year, this is still well below growth rates before the Global Financial Crisis. Last year there was a 40 per cent increase in trade barriers, marking the biggest rise in protectionist activity since the GFC.

The consequences of prolonged low trade growth will be profound. That's why the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, our partners in the International Chamber of Commerce and other business organizations are working hard to make the case for free trade.

So as Monty Python might say, apart from the quality of life, cheaper and better quality products, new ideas, culture and job opportunities, what has globalisation ever done for us?

Reduced poverty.

Oh, poverty. Shut up! ■

Timor-Leste, Australia's northern exposure

by Mark Skulley, Freelance Journalist

Thirsty visitors to Timor-Leste might expect the dominant beer will be Indonesia's top-selling drop, Bintang.

Yet the Dutch brewing giant Heineken is building a \$US40 million brewery and soft drink plant in Dili (even though it also owns Bintang). It is the first time a global brand has set up as a manufacturer in Timor and is a milestone for a poor country trying to diversify into non-oil investments.

The output is aimed at a domestic market which is relatively small at about 1.2 million people but is growing.

Meanwhile, the Australian-owned \$US520 million TL Cement plant and renewable-power plant is being built at Baucau east of Dili, and the Timor-Leste government has a \$US290 million public-private partnership with a French company to build a new port at Tibar about 10 kilometers west of the capital.

These are all welcome signs of the Timorese economy slowly evolving. Timor has made much progress since the tumultuous end to 24 years of Indonesian occupation 1999, followed by the rapture of independence in 2002.

But the country still faces a unique economic challenge, including a sovereign-wealth fund containing about \$US16 billion being whittled down over time.

The aim was to spend no more than 3 percent of the wealth fund annually,

making the fund self-sustaining based on its investment income and the value of known reserves. But budget drawdowns have exceeded this target as the government pursues national development through spending on badly needed infrastructure.

Revenue is a central challenge for whichever government is elected in 2017. Oil revenue peaked at \$US3.72 billion in 2012 and is now down to about \$US719 million, partly due to falls in global oil prices in recent years. Production from existing fields is forecast to end in the early 2020s and the Petroleum Fund might be depleted by 2030.

Timor hopes new oil wells will be developed. It is also looking to resolve a long-running dispute with Australia on maritime boundaries, thereby gaining a bigger share of new oil and gas reserves such as Woodside Petroleum's Greater Sunrise field.

A positive outcome there however is still too limited. In an interview with BlueNotes, Timor-Leste Prime Minister Rui Maria de Araújo stressed his country had to "move swiftly and soon towards economic diversification" regardless of the maritime boundary dispute.

"We had to strike the right balance between preserving the longevity of the fund and also investing in effective and efficient assets within the country in order to support the economic diversification policy that," he said.

"It's all very well to say ... because we want to preserve the value of the fund for the future, it would be cautious not to take out investment for infrastructure."

"But on the other hand, if you don't invest in infrastructure," he continued, "The economic diversification process will slow down."

"We're trying hard to make sure the funds are being accessed through our state budget ... are for things like



Timor-Leste Prime Minister Rui Maria de Araújo

roads, bridges, ports, airports ... those basic infrastructure components of economic diversification."

POLICY CHALLENGES

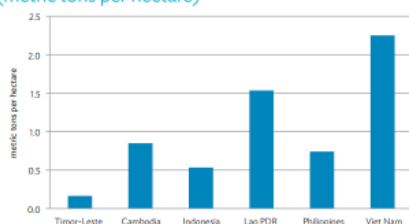
Yet the Asian Development Bank noted a divergence between policy and practice in a report published last year, "Growing the Non-Oil Economy: A Private Sector assessment for Timor-Leste".

The government has ambitious plans for the multi-billion dollar Tasi Mane project on the south coast, including a liquefied LNG plant and a refinery-petrochemical complex. The related work includes a logistics base, a new seaport and airport, plus roads and bridges.

According to the ADB, the 2015 Budget cut the allocated spending on the Tasi Mane project to \$US433 million between 2015 and 2019, but it still accounted for about 14 percent of

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Coffee Productivity in Timor-Leste versus Selected Southeast Asian Countries, 2012 (metric tons per hectare)



Lao PDR = Lao People's Democratic Republic.
Source: ADB, United Nations

Timor-Leste

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the country's total capital spending in that period.

"As the project is focused almost exclusively on the petroleum industry, it is unhelpful in addressing the challenge of diversifying the economy, away from oil dependency," the ADB wrote. "The industry's capital-intensive nature also means that few domestic jobs will likely be created."

"Moreover, because a comprehensive project cost-benefit analysis has not been prepared, it is unclear what net benefits will actually be realized."

There are further hurdles for the Tasi Mane plan, which envisages natural gas being piped ashore along deep (and rough) seas. The Greater Sunrise partners, led by Australia's Woodside, have a stated preference for a floating offshore LNG plant.

Similar queries have been raised over plans for the new PPP port near Dili, and whether it would make more economic sense to redevelop the existing port in the centre of the capital.

ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS

Since 2009, the Australian government has been funding a group of academics at Monash University to study economic development issues in Timor. One of their number, economist Brett Inder, argues oil produces few spill-over economic benefits apart from royalties and taxes.

Modelling by Inder and his colleagues finds a \$US2 billion increase in petroleum revenues would reduce poverty from 50 per cent to 45 percent; while a \$US200 million increase in agricultural production reduced poverty from 50 percent to 30 percent.

Inder cites the real-life example of a local business on the outskirts of Dili which buys and processes salt, meaning hundreds of farmers each earn several-hundred dollars a year.

The salt enterprise is built around agriculture, and is a step towards manufacturing, but is harder for governments to structure compared to

attracting foreign investment.

He argues low productivity is the core reason for poverty and output can be greatly increased through farmers learning and learning how to learn. Growers of coffee, Timor's main export cash crop, are reluctant to replant and prune both coffee and shade trees and there is little on-farm investment.

THE TRAP OF SUBSISTENCE

Annual food shortages are common in Timor-Leste, as is early childhood malnutrition. The outlook has been worsened by the El Niño phenomenon which has only just ended after producing drought conditions in some Timorese districts.

Nevertheless, the ABD has forecast GDP growth will reach 4.5 per cent in this year, rising to 5.5 per cent in 2017.

"While the economic outlook for Timor-Leste remains bright, the country is facing declining oil royalties and this highlights the need to diversify the economy," according to the ABD's country director in Timor-Leste, Shane Rosenthal.

"Timor-Leste's growing youth population brings about a real opportunity to raise long-term growth prospects by investing in human capital and encouraging broader participation in the labour market."

Apart from being a young country, Timor is also youthful with some 60 per cent of its 1.2 million people aged less than 25. Since Independence, infant and child mortality rates have almost halved, but there is still much poverty in the rural districts that rely on subsistence agriculture.

PROPERTY RIGHTS, LAND RIGHTS

One of the problems in developing agriculture is a tangled web of land ownership. There are old Portuguese land titles, Indonesian land titles, community based customary land systems and long-term occupation. Many land titles were destroyed in the violence following the independence referendum in 1999.



ANZ's CEO in Timor-Leste, told a recent investment conference in Dili a transitional Land Reform Act presented to the Council of Ministers was still a "work in progress" but it was increasingly easy to do business on many fronts.

These include improved company registration, continuing work on a company code, fiscal reforms, increased investment in education, a new trade and investment authority, the launch of an electronic-payments platform for all banks and a planned interchange between financial institutions in 2016/17.

"Like anywhere with opportunities like those we see in Timor-Leste, there are challenges to be aware of, and as always, solutions to be tailored," Dennis says. "Timor-Leste is a young nation, and in the midst of a number of critical enabling reforms which will improve the attractiveness to do business in Timor Leste."

"You need to come here with your eyes wide open. You need a good local lawyer, a good local accountant, assistance with language if that's a barrier, and so forth."

"These are not unique challenges to Timor Leste, but they are nonetheless things you should consider. With the right risk appetite, there are many prospects for those willing to turn these challenges into opportunities. We certainly have, and we've seen our business grow consistently over time."

THE OPPORTUNITY

An Australian business leader, Peter McMullin, has been visiting Dili since 2002 and helped establish the

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Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Timor-Leste. He says the investment conference was focused on more immediate opportunities rather than Tase Mane.

McMullin has seen a “remarkable” transformation since Independence, even though more work is needed to overcome “deficits” in areas such as health and education.

“There’re quite a lot of things happening,” he told Blue Notes. “Ten years ago, you couldn’t have imagined a conference like this happening, there was no story to tell.”

“It’s a developing country making some of the right decisions. There’s a lot of things that are going to take time to resolve, but they are doing them and they are committed. You can’t say that about every developing country.”

One strength for Australian businesses are the people-to-people links of the Timorese diaspora in centres like Darwin, Melbourne and Perth. Indeed, Dili is only 80 minutes’ flying time away from Darwin, with the Tiwi Islands in between.

For example, a Timorese of Chinese descent, Jape Kong Su, came to Australia and founded a family-owned commercial property business in Darwin in 1976. After success in the Top End, the Jape group developed the Timor Plaza in Dili, an important landmark in the rebuilding of the capital, and has a big tourism project on the drawing board.

Tourism has strong potential, although the support services are under-developed and airfares are relatively expensive (via Darwin, Bali and Singapore).

There is a cult sporting event in the Tour de Timor, an international mountain-bike race, and a Dili marathon. There is also world-class diving and snorkeling.

THE PEOPLE

For this first-time visitor, the attraction of Timor-Leste lay mostly with the people. They are friendly,

proud of being independent and largely supportive of the government’s direction, but desperately keen to have paying jobs.

At first, flying into Dili feels like approaching an extension of Darwin and the Top End. Then the island appeared, through clouds, with the odd mountain peak poking through. The runway seems to start just about where the beach ends.

Downtown, Dili buzzes with scooters and motorbikes but it shuts up fairly early of an evening. The flashiest buildings, like the Presidential palace, were built by Chinese money but the city is mostly low-rise, apart from a new multi-story headquarters for the Finance ministry.

The vibe is more rural Indonesia or the Malaysian state of Sabah than a tourist destination like Bali. There are pointers to past turbulence, like the statue of Christ (“Cristo Rei”) built on a point west of Dili. It was built in the Suharto-era and is 27 metres tall (symbolising Timor then being the 27th province of Indonesia). The statue is looking past Dili, across the sea towards Jakarta.

Timor-Leste feels different, even a bit mysterious. It’s a crossroads between Southeast Asia and Melanesia, mixed with a Portuguese presence dating from 1515. They people are strongly Catholic, with an underlying strain of indigenous animism. But there is familiarity, too, with so many Timorese having ties to Australia – through family, work and study.

This visitor wants to go back, even though it can be blazing hot getting around Dili (where a suit and tie is expected for high-level meetings).

But you can regroup at the end of the day with a cold beer (or soft drink) and gaze across the Timor Sea at the brief but fiery sunset.

There’s much to be done, but good signs for the local economy.

Mark Skulley is one of Australia’s most-respected business journalists, a veteran of more than two decades at Fairfax Media including The Australian Financial Review. ■

Chamber Personality

CACCI Lifetime Special Member from Bangladesh nominated to the Global Empowerment Fund Board



Ms. Farzana Chowdhury, Managing Director and CEO of Green Delta Insurance Company Limited, has recently been nominated as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Global Empowerment Fund by the Junior Chamber International (JCI).

The Global Youth Empowerment Fund is a partnership of JCI and SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) Action Campaign. It is an initiative to empower young people around the world to impact their communities by investing in grassroots, community projects.

Ms. Chowdhury is one of the six members of the Board of Trustees selected from around the world. She has also been recently recognized as a Local SDG Pioneer during UN Global Compact Leaders Summit 2016 held on June 22-23 in New York. A pioneer of women’s economic security, Ms. Chowdhury was honored for her efforts that align with SDG 5 on Gender Equality. Her company, Green Delta Insurance Co. is one of the leading non-life insurance companies in Bangladesh.

Ms. Chowdhury completed her Master of Business Administration from Business School, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia (Aus-Aid Scholarship). She earned Diploma from Malaysia Insurance Institute (DMII) in 2013.

PRODUCT & SERVICE COUNCILS

Asian Textile and Garment Council

US to double garment exports to Myanmar

US President Barack Obama says trade benefits will be returned to Myanmar under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) with manufacturers hoping exports will spiral as a consequence.



It is a US trade program designed to promote economic growth in the developing world by providing preferential duty-free entry for up to 4,800 products from 129 designated countries and territories.

The United States granted the GSP in 1976 and withdrew it in 1989, one year after the 8888 uprising was violently crushed by the military.

Myint Soe, the chairman of Myanmar Garment Entrepreneurs' Association, said that the main market for clothing was the United States and he expected it to double next year. *Eleven Media Group*

Asian SME Council

Germany-Singapore SME Funding Program launched



In a bid to strengthen business collaborations between Germany and Singapore companies, the inaugural Germany-Singapore SME Funding Program was launched by Trade and

Industry Minister (Industry) S Iswaran on August 29.

It was launched at the Germany-Singapore Business Forum, where two new agreements were also signed during the event.

As part of the Germany-Singapore SME Funding Program, the first agreement was a Memorandum of Understanding between AiF Projekt GmbH, on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy, and SPRING Singapore. Funding support will be provided for joint research and development (R&D) projects, and hopes to encourage collaboration between German and Singaporean small and medium-sized enterprises.

Participating enterprises from both countries will be supported through SPRING Singapore's capability development grant, and the BMWi's Central Innovation Programme for SMEs. *Channel News Asia*

Asian ICT Council Government may soon allow Wi-Fi in flights



The government is planning to allow Wi-Fi onboard aircraft flying in and out of India, as the home, telecom and aviation ministries have reached on a consensus on the issue after detailed discussions over the security aspects of such a decision.

"In about ten days, it will be possible for us to announce that (Wi-Fi inside aircraft)," Civil Aviation Secretary RN Choubey said at the silver jubilee celebrations of the Air Passengers Association of India (APAI) on August 24.

Chaubey was replying to a question on how soon can the

government allow Wi-Fi on aircraft flying in and out of India.

Speaking on the occasion, textiles minister Smriti Irani said that the recently-announced National Civil Aviation policy will correct the regional imbalance of air connectivity in the country and also aid skill development. *Indian Express*

Women Entrepreneurs Group Singapore 5th in Asia Pacific for fostering women entrepreneurs



Singapore took fifth place in a ranking of Asia Pacific countries with the most favourable conditions for women entrepreneurship by Mastercard.

In its ranking of 16 Asia Pacific nations, Singapore was beaten by top-placed New Zealand, followed by Australia, Thailand and the Philippines in fourth place.

At the other end of spectrum, India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, had the lowest overall scores in fostering female entrepreneurship.

Not surprisingly, Mastercard's inaugural Women's Entrepreneurial Index showed that developed economies in Asia Pacific provide better supporting conditions for their women entrepreneurs to prosper compared to emerging markets.

Developed countries also tended to nurture more "opportunity entrepreneurs" who are driven by the desire to progress. This contrasts with emerging countries which tended to breed more "necessity entrepreneurs" who were driven by the need to survive. *The Straits Times*

ECONOMIC COOPERATION NEWS

Singapore, Vietnam set to expand industrial ties

Ties between Singapore and Vietnam are poised to grow even stronger, with the two countries celebrating two decades of a successful joint venture.

In the southern province of Binh Duong on September 14, Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean and Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister Trung Hoa Binh marked 20 years of the Vietnam-Singapore Industrial Park (VSIP) joint venture.

The two parties signed memoranda of understanding to explore two new expansions in the provinces of Binh Duong and Bac Ninh, potentially adding 1,500 hectares to the already occupied 6,600 hectares.

According to The Straits Times, new industrial parks are in the pipeline.

Vietnam's state-owned enterprise Becamex IDC and a consortium led by Sembcorp Development, part of the conglomerate Sembcorp Industries, are behind the VSIP. *The Straits Times*

India sees huge potential to boost trade with Brunei

The Indian high commissioner said she believes there is "enormous potential" to boost trade and investment ties with Brunei, as a three-day exhibition organised by the Indian Chamber of Commerce of Kolkata at the International Convention Centre on September 15.

Dubbed "India Investrade 2016," the multi-sector buyer-seller meet aimed at matching Indian companies with potential trade partners in Brunei, said Nagma M Mallick.

Some 30 Indian companies participated in the event displaying industrial machinery, electronics and electrical equipment, as well as food processing machinery.

"I believe that there are good opportunities for Brunei, both in the government and the private sector, to invest and trade with India now thanks

to the excellent price-quality match that Indian products offer," Mallick told The Brunei Times. *The Brunei Times*

Japan, South Korea pact could be turnaround

The Japan-South Korea agreement reached on August 27 to launch discussions on resuming a currency swap pact could be a turning point for strengthening the two countries' economic ties.

During the session of Japan and South Korea's dialogue on financial issues in Seoul, South Korean Strategy and Finance Minister Yoo Il Ho said a new pact would be evidence of improved bilateral economic cooperation. If signed, the new pact would stabilize the financial situation of not only the two countries but of Asia overall.

The expiration of the previous agreement in February last year demonstrated that the deteriorated relationship caused by the issue of comfort women and other factors had also harmed the countries' economies and financial situation.

The South Korean economy has since become more dependent on China.

China was South Korea's largest import partner in 2015, with South Korea taking in about \$90.2 billion worth of Chinese goods. Runner-up Japan was far behind at \$45.9 billion. *The Japan News*

Myanmar businesses eye closer ties with Indonesia

Business communities in Indonesia and Myanmar are looking forward to strengthening their relations, following an Indonesian delegation's recent visit to explore new opportunities.

The 22-member delegation expressed optimism underpinned by Myanmar's better political climate and enabling business environment.

Halim Alamsyah, head of the

delegation and chairman of Indonesia Deposit Insurance Corp, said on the sidelines of a business-matching event that further cooperation is anticipated with focus on promising sectors like agribusiness, oil and gas, telecommunications, tourism and education.

Businesses in the delegation also operate in other industries like crude oil, palm oil, logistics, warehousing, biomass, insurance, banking, real estate, construction, paper business, pharmaceutical production and distribution, distribution of animal feed and industrial parts.

"We are looking forward to seeing more Indonesian business people visit Myanmar to enhance Myanmar people's capacity," he said. *The Nation*

Japan, Sri Lanka exploring port infrastructure deals to counter reliance on China: source

Japan plans to dispatch a team to Sri Lanka in the coming months to inquire about the potential for infrastructure investment in the key port of Trincomalee, a government source said.

The move is aimed at strengthening bilateral cooperation through infrastructure and helping Sri Lanka achieve its goal of reducing its dependence on Chinese assistance, the source said.

For Japan, closer cooperation with Sri Lanka could help secure vital sea lanes used to import oil from the Middle East.

The two countries are also expected to improve cooperation on maritime security in light of China's expansionary activities in the Indian Ocean, the source said.

As in the East and South China seas, Japan is pushing — along with the United States and other countries — to preserve freedom of navigation and the rule of law in the Indian Ocean. *Japan Times*

CACCI Highlights



CACCI President Mr. Inaishvili attends B20 Summit in Hangzhou - CACCI President Mr. Jemal Inaishvili was invited to participate in the B20 Summit held on September 3-4, 2016 in Hangzhou, China. Coinciding with the G20 Summit in Hangzhou, the B20 Summit 2016 gathered G20 leaders, CEOs and leading thinkers to deliberate on key issues facing the global economic development by sharing views on "Innovation-Driven Growth", "More Efficient Global Economic and Financial Governance," "Robust Trade and Investment" and "Inclusive and Connective Development".



CACCI Vice President Mr. Hisarciklioglu serves as panelist at B20 Summit in Hangzhou - Mr. Rifat Hisarciklioglu, President of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) and concurrently Vice President of CACCI, was invited as Panelist at the B20 Summit held on September 3-4, 2016 in Hangzhou, China. Mr. Hisarciklioglu, who served as Chair of B20 Turkey in 2015, spoke during the session on "Promoting Inclusive and Interconnected Development." He focused on the importance of inclusive policies, particularly for small and medium enterprises, and the need for G20 countries to create better opportunities for youth and women.



CACCI President visits Taipei to discuss conference preparations - Mr. Jemal Inaishvili recently visited Taipei to meet with key officers of the Chinese International Economic Cooperation Association (CIECA), the Chinese National Association of Industry and Commerce (CNAIC), the CTBC Bank, and the CACCI Secretariat to discuss preparations of the upcoming 30th CACCI Conference to be held on November 23-25, 2016 in Taipei, Taiwan. Discussions focused on the latest Conference program, speaker line-up, promotional activities, and preparations for the various meetings and social functions, among others.



CACCI Director General Visits Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry - CACCI Director-General Amb. Victor C. Y. Tseng called on Mr. Oudet Souvannavong, President of the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI), during his recent trip to Vientiane, Laos. Amb. Tseng introduced CACCI to Mr. Oudet, and invited the LNCCI President to consider the possibility of membership in CACCI. He also invited Mr. Oudet to attend the 30th CACCI Conference to be held on November 23-25, 2016 in Taipei, Taiwan and make a country presentation during the special session on "Discover Business Opportunities Through CACCI."

INVESTMENT & JOINT VENTURES IN THE REGION

▲ **Visa chooses PH for new BPO hub** - Global payments technology firm Visa Inc. has opened a new business processing outsourcing (BPO) hub at the Mall of Asia in Pasay City, handpicking the Philippines as one of its four 24/7 service centers around the world. Visa's Philippine hub occupies a 6,300-square-meter state-of-the-art facility at the Bay area and currently hosts 570 employees who will provide support services to Visa cardholders and clients worldwide. "This site demonstrates Visa's commitment to insourcing its third-party global operations, allowing us to build the function from within, to provide superior service to our cardholders and clients," said Tommy Jacobs, senior vice president for client support services at Visa. The center provides consumer support services for Visa's global customer care services group and will later expand to include merchant support. In the near future, the Philippine center will also support debit-processing services and technology. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*



▲ **Kickstarter crowdfunding site launches in Asia** - Kickstarter, one of the world's leading crowdfunding websites, has launched in both Hong Kong and Singapore, its first sites in Asia. The crowdfunding concept allows people to present innovations or business ideas online to ask for funding. Until now, Kickstarter has operated in North America, Australia and Europe. As a result, entrepreneurs in Singapore or Hong Kong had to co-operate with overseas partners if they wanted their ideas on the website. With Kickstarter now launching in Hong Kong and Singapore, people can present their projects from a local base and with their fundraising goals set in Hong Kong or Singapore dollars. Kickstarter will have to compete with local crowdfunding platforms such as Singapore's MoolahSense and OurCrowd or Hong Kong's FringeBacker. Crowdfunding sites offer a platform to present a project or business idea and ask for financial support. *BBC News*



▲ **IBM to open innovation center in Thailand** - Big data is becoming a key to boost business competitiveness

as more and more enterprises become fully digitized. U.S.-based giant IBM plans to open a full-fledged innovation center in Thailand later this year to combine its cognitive computing technology with customer experience and design thinking. In addition, IBM and its Thai partner Digital Ventures will organize the world's first IBM Watson Business Case competition here later this year to promote financial technology or "fintech"



startups. According to Parnsiree Amatayakul, country general manager of IBM Thailand, the innovation center will provide an eco-system for businesses and educational institutes to help deliver new products and services to drive the country's digital economy. IBM has also opened a Watson Centre at Marina Bay in Singapore to connect 5,000 professionals in cognitive solutions in the Asia-Pacific region, including researchers, data scientists, software engineers, developers and analytic experts. *The Nation*

▲ **Chinese firm keen on setting up oyster farm joint venture in Brunei** - The Chinese company looking to establish a joint venture with Brunei to set up an oyster farm said the sultanate's natural disaster-free climate, healthy marine environment and stable political climate will ensure the success of their investment. Guangxi Zhongli Enterprise Group had earlier signed a memorandum of understanding with the Brunei Economic Development Board on September 12 for their proposed investment to set up an oyster production farm in Brunei. The signing took place on the sidelines of the China-Asean Expo 2016 in Nanning. The company's Chief Operating Officer Chan Yongson told *The Brunei Times* that when fully implemented in five years, the entire operation will create 200 jobs for Bruneians. "The project will be implemented in three phases from establishing a hatchery to adult oyster farming and finally setting up the processing facilities. Once all three phases have been completed, we are projecting \$100 million in our annual revenue," Chan remarked. *The Brunei Times*



FAIRS & EXHIBITS IN ASIA-PACIFIC

DATES 2016	NAME OF FAIR (Further Information)	VENUE				
2-5 Nov.	Food Week Korea 2016 (Coex, contact: Mr. Sam Jin, Tel: 82-2-6000-8195, Email: foodweek.info@coex.co.kr, URL: koreafoodweek.com/)	Seoul Korea		16-19 Nov.	Int'l Mining & Machinery Exbn (Confederation of Indian Industry, Tel: 91-44-42444564, Email: imme@cii.in, URL: www.immeindia.in/)	Calcutta India
4-7 Nov.	S'pore Jewellery & Gem Fair (UBM Exbn S'pore Pte. Ltd., Tel: 65-6592-0888, Email: SJGF-SG@ubm.com, URL: www.singaporejewellerygemfair.com/)	Singapore		16-19 Nov.	Int'l Building and Construction Exbn (Akdeniz Tanitim A.S., Tel: 90-242-316-4600, Email: faith@yapex.com, URL: www.yapex.com/)	Antalya Iran
5-8 Nov.	Int'l Electricity Exbn (M&T Solutions Co., Contact: Mr. Ali Tolouei, Tel: 98-21-4291-7000, Email: sales@elecshow.ir, URL: elecshow.ir/English/default.aspx)	Tehran Iran		17-22 Nov.	Japan Int'l Machine Tool Fair (Tokyo Big Sight Inc., Tel: 81-3-5530-1333, Email: jimtof@tokyo-bigsight.co.jp, URL: www.jimtof.org/en/index.html)	Tokyo Japan
7-9 Nov.	2nd TEXTILE TOKYO (Show Management, Tel: 81-3-3349-8508, Email: fw@reedexpo.co.jp, URL: www.textile-expo.jp/en/home_autumn/)	Tokyo Japan		21-23 Nov.	CPhi India 2016 (UMB EMEA, Tel: 31-20-4099-544, Fax: 31-20-3632-616, Email: martin.cheung@ubm.com, URL: www.cphi.com/india/)	Mumbai India
8-11 Nov.	Moscow Int'l Tool Expo (Euroexpo, Tel: 7-495-925-6561, Fax: 7-499-248-0734, Email: office@euroexpo.ru, URL: www.mitexpo.com/)	Moscow Russia		22-24 Nov.	City Infrastructure Philippines (HQ Bizlink Int'l Pte Ltd., Tel: 65-9182-9748, Email: mail@hqbizlinkintl.com, URL: www.cityinfraphils.com/)	Manila Philippines
9-11 Nov.	Indonesia Infrastructure Week 2016 (PT Infrastructure Asia, Tel: 62-21-391-3037, Fax: 62-21-391-3349, URL: www.indonesiainfrastructurereek.com/)	Jakarta Indonesia		23-25 Nov.	INDOMEDICARE EXPO 2016 (Kristamedia Pratama, Tel: 62-21-634-5861, Email: info@kristamedia.com, URL: indomedicare.com/)	Jakarta Indonesia
9-11 Nov.	Taiwan Int'l Fisheries and Seafood Show (TAITRA, Tel: 886-2-2725-5200, Email: taiwanfishery@taitra.org.tw, URL: www.taiwanfishery.com)	Kaohsiung Taiwan		23-26 Nov.	Daegu Int'l Machinery Industry Expo (EXCO, Tel: 82-53-601-5229, Fax: 82-53-601-5069, Email: damex@exco.co.kr, URL: www.damex.co.kr/eng/)	Daegu Korea
9-11 Nov.	VIETWATER 2016 (UBM Vietnam Office, Tel: 84-8-5401-2718, Fax: 84-8-5401-2717, Email: vietwater@ubm.com, URL: www.vietwater.com/)	HCMC Vietnam		23-26 Nov.	Int'l Textile & Garment Industry Exbn (Chan Chao Int'l Co., Ltd. VietBranch, Tel: 84-8-3827-9156, Email: salesc@linkage-vn.com, URL: www.vtgvietsnam.com/)	HCMC Vietnam
10-12 Nov.	HK Int'l Wine & Spirits Fair (HKTDC, Tel: 852-1830-669, Fax: 852-2824-0026, Email: exhibitions@hktcdc.org, URL: www.hktcdc.com)	Hong Kong		23-27 Nov.	Taiwan Int'l Machine Tool Show (TMBA, Tel: 886-4-2350-7584, Email: tmmts@tmbsa.org.tw, URL: www.tmmts.tw/en/)	Taichung Taiwan
11-14 Nov.	Malaysia Int'l Jewellery Festival (MIJ Exbn Sdn Bhd., Tel: 60-3-2171-2564, Fax: 60-3-2171-1597, Email: info@mij.com.my, URL: www.mij.com.my/)	K.L. Malaysia		24-26 Nov.	Agro Bangladesh Expo (Extreme Exbn Dhaka and Event Solution Ltd., Tel: 880-2-871-3440, Email: agro@agrobangladesh.com, URL: www.agrobangladesh.com/)	Dhaka Bangladesh
11-15 Nov.	AGROVIET 2016 (AGRITRADE, Tel: 84-4-3755-5458, Fax: 84-4-3754-0131, Email: nhan.doantran@gmail.com, URL: http://agroviet.com.vn/)	Hanoi Vietnam		24-26 Nov.	EcoLightTech Asia 2016 (N.C.C. Exbn Organizer Co., Ltd., Tel: 66-2-203-4260, Email: ecolight@qsncc.com, URL: www.ecolight-tech.com/)	Bangkok Thailand
15-17 Nov.	Int'l Sourcing Expo (Int'l Exbn. & Conf. Group Pty Ltd., Tel: 61-3-9596-9205, Email: info@intexpogroup.com, URL: www.internationalsourcingexpo.com)	Melbourne Australia		24-27 Nov.	HK Int'l Jewelry Manufacturers' Show (HK Jewelry Manufacturers' Assn., Tel: 852-2766-3002, Email: visitor@jewelry.org.hk, URL: www.jewelryshows.org/en/)	Hong Kong
16-18 Nov.	Intex South Asia (Worldex India Exbn & Promotion Pvt Ltd., Tel: 91-22-4037-6700, Email: intexfair@worldexindia.com, URL: www.intexfair.com/)	Colombo Sri Lanka		29 Nov. - 2 Dec.	Int'l Oil & Gas Industry Exbn (S'pore Exbn Services Pte Ltd., Tel: 65-6233-6638, Email: huihui@sesallworld.com, URL: osea-asia.com/)	Singapore
				30 Nov. - 3 Dec.	2016 Vietnam EcoTech (VINEXAD, Tel: 84-4-38255546, Fax: 84-4-3936-3085, Email: yenpnh@vinexad.com.vn, URL: www.ecotechvietnam.com/)	HCMC Vietnam

TECHNOLOGY

Taiwan-designed bracelet wins Red Dot 'Best of Best'



A health-monitoring bracelet designed by two Taiwanese students so that diabetes patients can measure their blood sugar levels and receive insulin injections without pain has won a Red Dot Design Award for 2016, in the "Best of the Best" category.

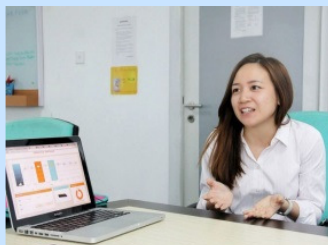
The bracelet, named Circle Life, was created by Lin I-hsiang, who is studying industrial design at the National Taipei University of Technology (NTUT), and Yeh Chia-yu, a student of commercial design at the National Taiwan University of Science and Technology.

Commenting on their award-winning product, Lin said on August 16 that some of his friends and relatives suffer from diabetes and have to monitor their blood-glucose levels all the time and take insulin shots.

He found that these vital procedures affect their day-to-day lives, and cause inconvenience, Lin said. That made him to want to help them with his design, he said.

After collecting relevant data, he discovered that the medical expenses of diabetes patients account for 11.6 percent of all medical expenses of mankind, globally. *Focus Taiwan*

Startup develops online system to raise crop yields across SE Asia



A local agro-technology startup is aiming to improve farming practices in Brunei with its digital platform, called FoodNotes, which collects and analyses data for farmers to help them raise crop yields.

In an interview, Vanessa Teo, founder of Zeneco Solutions, said most farmers in Brunei and Southeast Asia do not have enough data to make improvements to their farming practices.

Teo, who wrote her dissertation on agricultural systems modeling at the Universiti Brunei Darussalam-International Business Machines center, said many farmers cannot determine the baseline conditions for their farms as they do not have a proper data collection method or the ability to make sense of the data.

"Farmers want to spend most of their time on the ground and don't want a complicated system. So I created a system that is easy enough for farmers to use to be able to make decisions based on the information provided. The farmers will only have to input certain information such as estimated yield or weather forecasts," she said during the interview facilitated by Darussalam Enterprise at the iCentr. *The Brunei Times*

Firms in aging Thailand bet on demand surge for robots and diapers



Chalermpon Punnotok, CEO of CT Asia Robotics. *REUTERS/Athit Perawongmetha*

Thai elderly care robot Dinsow can not only keep track of your medication and video-phone your relatives, but can also exercise with you and even entertain you with its karaoke skills.

Its manufacturer, CT Asia Robotics, is one of many Thai firms investing heavily in healthcare for the aged in a country where the working-age population will decline this year - a first among the emerging economies of Southeast Asia.

By the end of 2016, almost 15 percent of Thailand's roughly 68 million people will be over the retirement age of 60. The government expects the proportion to reach 20 percent by 2020, adding strain to an already stretched healthcare sector.

"Doctors and nurses have responded positively to Dinsow because it helps them monitor patients," said Chief Executive Chalermpon Punnotok. CT Asia Robotics has got 1,000 orders from Thailand and Japan for the 85,000 baht (\$2,445) droid, he said.

Thailand's population swing toward the elderly comes as living and education costs rise along with economic development that has outpaced neighbors, according to the World Bank. *Reuters*

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POLICY UPDATES

(A compilation of rules, laws and policies on trade and investments in CACCI member countries)

Hong Kong

Hong Kong tops Global Freedom Ranking again

Hong Kong has welcomed its retention of the Fraser Institute's annual ranking as the world's freest economy, due in part to its commitment to low taxation.

Out of 159 countries and territories, Hong Kong and Singapore again occupy the top two positions in the Institute's annual Economic Freedom of the World report. The other nations in the top 10 are New Zealand, Switzerland, Canada, Georgia, Ireland, Mauritius, United Arab Emirates, and Australia and the United Kingdom (equal 10th).

Among the major areas of assessment, Hong Kong ranks first in "size of government" and "regulation," and second in "freedom to trade internationally."

"Size of government" includes variables such as the top marginal income tax rate and the top marginal income and payroll tax rate in each country. *Tax-News Hong Kong*

India

India Finance Ministry to address tax woes, hear out FPI suggestions

The finance ministry held a meeting on September 20 with foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) to address their concerns on taxation and in order to attract more investments in India. Around 35 FPIs including Citi, JP Morgan, Goldman Sachs participated in the interaction and gave their suggestions to ministry officials on various issues, some of which may be even considered in the Budget for next financial year.

"Suggestions both in terms of process simplification as well as some new suggestions have come ... some taxation issues were raised. Department of Revenue also participated in the meeting so we will examine and look at the suggestions they have made," Economic Affairs Secretary Shaktikanta Das said after the meeting.

He further said that foreign

investors are looking at bigger opportunities to invest in India and that the government will like to consolidate inflows into Indian markets. "Nobody had reservations about fundamentals and the robustness of where Indian economy is today positioned. They are looking at bigger opportunities for investing in Indian market. So overall outlook, I would say, is very very positive," he said. *Indian Express*

Japan

Bank of Japan overhauls stimulus policy by setting target for long term interest rates

In a surprise move, the Bank of Japan on Sept 21 decided to adopt a target for long-term interest rates, overhauling its policy framework and recommitting to reaching its 2 percent inflation target as quickly as possible.

Japanese stocks rallied and the yen weakened in a volatile session after the BOJ move.

At the two-day rate review that ended on September 21, the BOJ maintained the 0.1 percent negative interest rate it applies to some of the excess reserves that financial institutions park with the central bank.

But it abandoned its base money target and instead adopted "yield curve control" under which it will buy long-term government bonds to keep 10-year bond yields at current levels around zero per cent. *Straits Times*

Mongolia

Investors turn attention to Mongolia

"Invest Mongolia" is one of the country's largest events, serving as a platform to bring together government representatives, key industry players, financial institutions, global investors and media personnel and attracting more than 1000 delegates to discuss socio-political and economic development issues that arose during the year.

This year, the 10th annual Invest Mongolia International Conference, held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on September

5 and 6, covered assessments of the four-year action plan and discussions on whether the new government would adopt investor-friendly measures, the impact of the Asia-Europe Meeting on Mongolia and the rest of the world, the progress and consequences of the Oyu Tolgoi Underground mine and other major economic projects, the launch of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and its involvement in infrastructure development in Mongolia, the Mongolian banking industry and bank strategies, concerns and opportunities related to foreign investment in Mongolia, the outlook of the bond market and the challenges of refinancing. *GoGo Mongolia*

Malaysia

Malaysia starts work on second subway to boost economy

Malaysia has kicked off the construction of a second subway connecting the country's capital to the suburbs. The 32 billion ringgit (\$8 billion) Sungai Buloh-Serdang-Putrajaya line is part of the government's plan to splurge on infrastructure to stimulate the flagging economy and to ease traffic jams in urban areas.

The 52.2km SSP line will link Sungai Buloh in the northwestern outskirts of Kuala Lumpur to the government's administrative center in Putrajaya, passing through Bandar Malaysia, a station earmarked for a high speed rail to Singapore.

"This is a historic moment for Malaysia's infrastructure development," Prime Minister Najib Razak said during the ground-breaking ceremony on Sept. 15. *Asian Nikkei*

New Zealand

Tourism fund opens targeting regional NZ

Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism John Key recently announced the opening of the funding round of the Tourism Growth Partnership. Through the Tourism Growth Partnership, the Government is making \$8 million a

year available to boost innovation and productivity, and the lift the value of international tourism. Half of this funding will now be tagged for projects that grow tourism in the regions and create tourism-related jobs, through the new Regional Stream.

The remaining \$4 million will continue to be invested in innovative projects that enhance productivity, or extend the visitor season. The Tourism Growth Partnership has awarded \$20.7 million to 28 projects and attracted co-funding of \$60.5 million since it was established in 2013. Mr Key says, "Tourism is growing exponentially in New Zealand. Visitor arrivals are expected to reach 4.5 million in 2022, up from 3.1 million in 2015. Part of the Government's tourism strategy is to ensure all parts of New Zealand benefit from this growth which is why half this funding is specifically targeted at the regions." *Beehive*

Philippines

PH eyed as high-income nation by 2040

The government needs to spend P2.3 trillion annually for key public investments to transform the Philippines at par with Malaysia and South Korea by 2040, the Department of Finance (DOF) said.

Based on the presentation of the DOF, the government needs to raise its investments in infrastructure, education, health, social protection, training and other programs from the present P1.27 trillion level to P2.29 billion.

"This can be achieved through tax reform," Finance Undersecretary Karl Kendrick T. Chua said in a meeting with former finance ministers. "Complementary economic reforms will also be crucial."

By the end of the Duterte administration's term, the government aims to become a high middle income nation, equivalent to Thailand and China, with a poverty rate of 17 percent. Ultimately, the Philippines should achieve the high income status by 2040. *Manila Bulletin*

Singapore

Government unveils plans to spur innovation and enterprise

The Government is directing billions of dollars into a strategy aimed at spurring innovation and helping companies bring new technological developments to market.

Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean said on September 20 that \$4 billion out of the \$19 billion allocated for the Research, Innovation and Enterprise 2020 Plan will be directed to collaboration so that enterprises can capture the value of research and development (R&D). The plan, announced in January, directs funds into science and technology research over the next five years.

Mr Teo told participants at the opening of the Singapore Week of Innovation and Technology: "We can do more to bring innovations from R&D to market, seeding and growing enterprises and further expanding high-tech exports.

"To facilitate such collaboration, technology consortia, which bring together industry partners and researchers, will help focus applied research to develop new products and services." *Straits Times*

Taiwan

Taiwan relaxes visa rules for 3 ASEAN countries

Visa requirements for travelers from three ASEAN member states were relaxed as part of the "New Southbound Policy" led pivot toward the region.

Starting September 1, selected passport holders from Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos can apply online for an R.O.C. Travel Authorization Certificate (TAC), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) said in a statement.

The scheme is restricted to applicants who, within the past ten years, have held a valid visa or residents card issued by: Australia, Canada, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, the U.S.,

the UK or any country within the Schengen area.

TACs entitle holders to stay in Taiwan for up to 30 days and allow for multiple re-entries over a 90-day period.

The certificates had previously been made available to nationals of India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam. *The China Post*

Thailand

Thailand to overhaul sugar policy

Thailand, the world's second largest sugar exporter after Brazil, is to overhaul its sugar production and distribution systems for the first time in more than three decades in order to avoid being challenged by Brazil at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The move is unlikely to make any changes on the global sugar trade for at least in the next few years, government and industry officials said.

According to the Office of Cane and Sugar Board (OCSB), Thailand will have to revoke its current 70:30 profit-sharing system, in place since 1984, which will require cancelling its quota system and floating domestic sugar prices. *Bangkok Post*

Vietnam

Vietnam and Thailand strike rice deal with the Philippines

Thailand and Vietnam have won deals to supply a total of 250,000 tons of rice to the Philippines after the two countries reduced their selling prices to suit Manila's budget.

The tender has been a part of the state's plans to import up to one million tons of rice to fulfil the country's food demand for next year at low prices.

Officials at the Philippines' National Food Authority (NFA) said Vietnam will supply 150,000 tons of 25 percent broken rice at US\$424.85 per ton, while Thailand will supply the remaining 100,000 tons at the same price. The price includes freight, insurance and other costs. *Vietnam News*