# HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG SOUTHEAST ASIA

### **ASEAN Region – Press Review December 2021**

Contact: info@th.boell.org



#### **ASEAN** and Myanmar

ASEAN must hold the line on junta – Alba, Darusman, Chutikul, and Baguilat Jr. | Bangkok Post How Will Cambodia as ASEAN Chair Handle the Myanmar Crisis? – Joshua Kurlantzick | Council on Foreign Relations

Cambodia's 'cowboy diplomacy' in Myanmar isolates ASEAN | Al Jazeera

Hun Sen's Outreach to Myanmar's Junta Gets ASEAN Tenure Off to Tumultuous Start – Aung Chhengpor | VOA

Myanmar official in Cambodia for talks as global censure grows | Al Jazeera

Is progress on Myanmar possible in 2022? - Rizal Sukma | The Jakarta Post

US plans ASEAN summit, weighs new sanctions against Myanmar | Al Jazeera

### **ASEAN and Geopolitics**

G7, ASEAN declare 'shared interest' in free and open Indo-Pacific | Radio Free Asia ASEAN members, Russia conclude first joint naval exercise amid rising tensions in South China Sea |

SCMP/Reuters

ASEAN running out of time to recast role as buffer in US-China great power competition – Shuxian Luo | SCMP

<u>Cambodia, Vietnam call for upholding int'l law in South China Sea</u> | Philippine News Agency <u>Philippines, 4 other ASEAN member-states urged to form coalition in South China Sea</u> – Carmela Fonbuena | Rappler

China Wants to Join Southeast Asia's Nuclear-Free Zone. Why Now? – Ryan Musto | Lawfare Blinken slams 'aggressive' China; vows stronger Indo-Pacific ties | Al Jazeera

### ASEAN and RCEP

Lauding RCEP: free trade for (almost) all – Kavi Chongkittavorn | Bangkok Post The RCEP ratification and its implications – Niels Graham | Atlantic Council RCEP: Coming into force on 1 January 2022 | Baker McKenzie RCEP: Weighing the good, bad in world's biggest free trade pact – Cristina Baclig | Inquirer

#### **COVID-19 Situation**

<u>Omicron stalks SE Asia's post-Covid hopes and dreams</u> – Nile Bowie | Asia Times <u>'Wait-and-see' approach in Southeast Asia towards Omicron Covid-19 variant</u> - Jeffrey Hutton |The Straits Times

<u>Omicron poses threat to Asean's trade recovery</u> – Sithanonxay Suvannaphakdy | Today Online <u>Omicron Variant Threatens to Upend Southeast Asia's COVID-19 Recovery</u> – Sebastian Strangio | The Diplomat



### COVID-19 Situation

Brunei reports first Omicron case – Shareen Han | The Scoop Booster is crucial amid rise of Omicron, says Brunei expert | The Star/Borneo Bulletin Brunei to bring forward COVID booster jabs in wake of Omicron – Shareen Han | The

Brunei to bring forward COVID booster jabs in wake of Omicron – Shareen Han | The Scoop

Brunei's vaccination rate at 94.4pc, says its Ministry of Health | The Star

COVID-19 Country Tracker: Brunei | WHO



#### Politics

Cambodia's Hun Sen confirms his son as choice for next prime minister | Radio Free Asia Cambodia ruling party endorses PM Hun Sen's son as future head | Nikkei Asia/Reuters Cambodian refugee monk arrives in Switzerland following brief arrest in Thailand | Radio Free Asia Norodom Ranariddh, Royal Player in Cambodian Politics, Dies at 77 – Seth Mydans | The New York Times PM outlines ambitious new year as ASEAN chair – Sochan | The Phnom Penh Post Cambodian PM says Myanmar junta has right to attend ASEAN | Reuters Cambodia's Hun Sen names ASEAN envoy to Myanmar | Radio Free Asia 'Don't Bother Me' Hun Sen Tells Critics of Plan to Meet Myanmar Junta Leader | The Irrawaddy

### **COVID-19 Situation**

Cambodian back from Ghana is country's 1st omicron case | ABC/Associated Press WHO warns of Omicron overload as Cambodia's cases increase to 33 since December 14 | Khmer Times Cambodia keeps eye on all entries and exits in order to control Omicron variant | The Star/Phnom Penh Post 'Just surviving': For Cambodian tourism, recovery out of sight | Al Jazeera COVID-19 Country Tracker: Cambodia | WHO

## Indonesia

#### Politics

<u>Jokowi consolidates power amid health crisis</u> | The Star/The Jakarta Post <u>Who Will Succeed Joko Widodo as Indonesia's President?</u> – Asmiati Malik | The Diplomat <u>How Prabowo Subianto Has Helped Shape Indonesia's Foreign Policy</u> – Noto Suoneto | The Diplomat <u>PDI-P expands political, ideological sway through strategic institutions</u> – Yerica Lai | The Jakarta Post <u>NU's new leader marks era of 'reorientation'</u> – Yerica Lai | The Jakarta Post

#### **COVID-19 Situation**

Indonesia records first Omicron community case | Al Jazeera

<u>Gov't to Tighten Quarantine Rules after Omicron Patient Flees</u> – Jayanty Shofa | Jakarta Globe <u>President warns against complacency as Indonesia finds first Omicron case</u> | Reuters <u>Omicron discovery could delay economic recovery</u> – Karyza and Harsono | The Jakarta Post <u>Indonesian man's claim of 14 extra vaccine shots spotlights hesitancy problem as many refuse to roll up</u> <u>sleeves</u> – Aisyah Llewellyn | SCMP COVID-19 Country Tracker: Indonesia | WHO

# 🚺 Laos

#### Infrastructure Development

All aboard the Laos-China railway – Tangsathaporn and Kham | Bangkok Post

China-Laos railway begins with limited service - Marimi Kishimoto | Nikkei Asia

Laos Unlocked – Nicolas Bosoni | The Diplomat

Lao-China Railway feels 'similar to when I rode the Shinkansen in Japan' | Radio Free Asia

Laos-China Railway Project to be Profitable After 23 Years | The Laotian Times

Thai Journalist Apologizes to Laos for Criticism of Laos-China Railway – Phayboune Thanbouasy | The Laotian Times

### **COVID-19 Situation**

Laos Reaches Over 100,000 Total Cases of Covid-19 – Thippachan Manivong | The Laotian Times Laos tightens border controls to prevent Omicron variant | Vietnam Plus

Laos on high alert as cases are rising and Thailand had confirmed first case of Omicron Covid-19 variant | The Star/The Laotian Times

Laos to get 1.7 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine from US | The Star/The Vientiane Times Reclusive Laos to re-open to foreign travelers | France 24/AFP COVID-19 Country Tracker: Laos | WHO

# Malaysia

### Politics

<u>Mahathir vs Najib: new memoirs add more thrill to Malaysian politics, lift lid on power struggles</u> – Hadi Azmi | SCMP

Najib: Dr M 'racist, liar' for switching stance in Forest City project - Kow Gah Chie | Malaysia Kini

Malaysia's Najib loses appeal of 1MDB-linked convictions – P Prem Kumar | Nikkei Asia

Is it time for Anwar Ibrahim to step aside? – Kamles Kumar | Al Jazeera

A Tumultuous Year in Malaysian Politicking – Sophie Lemière | The Diplomat

Politics: Warisan to spread its wings to Peninsular Malaysia - Philip Golingai | The Star

### **Floods and Climate Change**

14 dead, 70,000 displaced in Malaysian floods | France 24/AFP 'Where's the help?': Malaysia PM under fire after deadly floods | Al Jazeera Flooded Malaysians vent fury at PM Ismail Sabri on Twitter over slow relief effort | SCMP/Bloomberg Malaysia to spend \$335 million for flood relief | Reuters Malaysia seeks US\$3 million from UN climate fund amid deadly floods | SCMP/Reuters

### **COVID-19 Situation**

<u>62 Omicron cases detected in Malaysia so far, shorter booster interval expected</u> – The Straits Times/The Star <u>Malaysia lifts African travel ban, cuts booster wait amid Omicron fears</u> | Reuters Khairy: Malaysia halves Covid-19 booster wait time for Pfizer, AstraZeneca recipients to three months –

Yiswaree Palansamy | Malay Mail

97.6% of Malaysia's adult population fully vaccinated | The Star

COVID-19 Country Tracker: Malaysia | WHO



# Myanmar

### **Political Situation/Coup**

<u>'Burn it all down' How Myanmar's military razed villages to crush a growing resistance</u> – Kelly, Mahtani, Lee, Mirza and Moriarty | The Washington Post

Myanmar's Army Is Accused of Massacring Dozens of Civilians – Richard Paddock | The New York Times More than 30 killed, bodies burned in Myanmar's Kayah state | Al Jazeera

Save the Children staff confirmed dead in Myanmar Christmas Eve attack – Jessie Yeung | CNN

Myanmar Military's Pyrrhic Victory – David Steinberg | The Irrawaddy

Aung San Suu Kyi appears in Myanmar court in prison uniform | The Guardian/Reuters

Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi: The Legal Challenges | Associated Press

### **COVID-19 Situation**

<u>Treating COVID patients in secret Myanmar clinics</u> | Bangkok Post/AFP <u>Myanmar: The rebel nurses treating Covid-19 in secret</u> – Sam Ball | France 24 <u>Myanmar confirms four cases of Omicron variant of COVID-19</u> | ANI <u>Can Myanmar handle the Omicron variant under the current leadership</u> | Mizzima <u>Coup, COVID to Impoverish Nearly Half of Myanmar People by Early 2022: UN</u> | The Irrawaddy <u>Myanmar junta 'working with China on a domestic COVID-19 vaccine'</u> | Mizzima <u>COVID-19 Country Tracker: Myanmar</u> | WHO



### Super Typhoon Rai/Odette

<u>'Help Us': After Typhoon Rai, Miles of Destruction and the Smell of Death</u> – Jason Gutierrez and Ezra Acayan | The New York Times

<u>Thousands left homeless and hungry at Christmas as Philippines faces up to climate crisis reality of super</u> <u>typhoon</u> – Mascariñas and Mogul | CNN

'Complete carnage': Hundreds dead in typhoon-hit Philippines | Al Jazeera

Philippines: Typhoon Rai death toll nears 400 as diseases spread | DW

Typhoon Rai: more than 3m people directly affected in Philippines – Rebecca Ratcliffe | The Guardian As Philippines mops up from Typhoon Rai, government response could become an election issue – Raissa Robles | SCMP

### Philippine Election 2022

2022 look ahead: Democracy at stake in Philippines election circus – Criselda Yabes | Nikkei Asia Philippines' Duterte quits senate race in new election twist | CNN/Reuters 2021: How the opposition broke down into separate teams – Ramos and Lalu | Inquirer Late dictator's son Marcos takes clear lead in Philippine election – poll | Reuters What is behind the resurgence of the Marcos dynasty? – Richard Heydarian | Al Jazeera Bongbong Marcos-Sara Duterte tandem assures 'Odette' victims of aid – Daphne Galvez | Inquirer Leni-Kiko HQ accepting donations for 'Odette' victims until Dec 30 – Maria Reina Tolentino | The Manila Times Social Media Misinformation and the 2022 Philippine Elections – Japhet Quitzon | The Diplomat

### **COVID-19 Situation**

Philippines detects 4th Omicron case | Rappler DOH says Philippines 'well-prepared' for Omicron variant | Phil Star Philippines halves COVID-19 booster wait time to three months | Reuters Low vaccination rate puts PH at risk of new surge | Inquirer Philippines approves use of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine in children aged 5-11 – Xave Gregorio | Phil Star

COVID-19 Country Tracker: Philippines | WHO

# Singapore

#### Politics

<u>(</u>

Succession vacuum looms over Singapore politics – Michael Barr | East Asia Forum

Singapore left out of summit because US doesn't see it as a democracy: Tommy Koh – Justin Ong | The Straits Times

Singapore's non-invite to Biden's democracy summit 'not a judgment': US diplomat Daniel Kritenbrink – Dewey Sim | SCMP

Raeesah Khan, darling of Singapore millennials, resigns as opposition MP after lying in parliament – Bhavan Jaipragas | SCMP

<u>Can Singapore's opposition Workers' Party ride out scandal of its lying lawmaker Raeesah Khan?</u> – Bhavan Jaipragas and Dewey Sim | SCMP

### **COVID-19 Situation**

Singapore finds first local Omicron cluster, expects more cases | Bangkok Post/Bloomberg

<u>Makes sense to live with Omicron and treat it as no different from other Covid-19 variants: Experts</u> – Shabana Begum | The Straits Times

Singapore has done whatever it can to prepare for next COVID-19 wave amid global Omicron spread: Lawrence Wong – Lakeisha Leo | CNA

<u>Singapore Adjusts Omicron Approach on Quarantines, Workplaces</u> – Susanne Barton | Bloomberg <u>Singapore closes its quarantine-free travel lanes to new visitors as Omicron spreads around the world</u> – Wallbank and Chanjaroen | Fortune/Bloomberg

COVID-19 Country Tracker: Singapore | WHO

# Thailand

### Politics

Rough and tumble in halls of power – Aekarach Sattaburuth | Bangkok Post No cakewalk seen for Prayut in next election | Bangkok Post/Kyodo News Most people still see no-one suitable for PM post: poll | Bangkok Post Thai ultraroyalists called out for purging progressive politics – Marwaan Macan-Markar | Nikkei Asia Thaksin denies anti-monarchy plot | Bangkok Post All eyes are on Prayut | Bangkok Post

### **COVID-19 Situation**

Omicron prompts new alert – Apinya Wipatayotin | Bangkok Post First local transmission of Omicron reported in Thailand | Khaosod English Omicron to quadruple Thai COVID numbers in best case – Masayuki Yuda | Nikkei Asia Prayut orders immediate suspension of 'Test & Go' registration | Khaosod English Thailand suspends quarantine-free entry over Omicron fears – Tan Hui Yee | The Straits Times Thailand welcomes 250,000 travelers in December, Gov't says – Pravit Rojanaphruk | Khaosod English Thailand to expedite COVID-19 boosters in anticipation of Omicron | Reuters COVID-19 Country Tracker: Thailand | WHO



# **Timor-Leste**

### **COVID-19 Situation**

<u>Timor-Leste on alert over Omicron variant</u> – Ryan Dagur | UCA News <u>Timor-Leste: Economy Showing Signs of Recovery as COVID-19 Cases Drop</u> | World Bank <u>Dec 2021 Timor-Leste Economic Report: Steadying The Ship</u> | World Bank <u>COVID-19 Country Tracker: Timor-Leste</u> | WHO



### **Human Rights**

Vietnam Sentences Journalist to 9 Years for 'Spreading Anti-state Propaganda' | VOA UN rights office urges Viet Nam to release jailed activists – UN News Vietnam jails activists in widening crackdown on dissent – John Reed | Financial Times Western nations condemn recent jailing of dissidents in Vietnam | Radio Free Asia Vietnam calls itself 'democratic country,' activists disagree | Radio Free Asia Human rights to be taught in Vietnam schools | The Star

### **COVID-19 Situation**

Vietnam detects first Omicron case | Vietnam Plus As Omicron looms, no haste over reopening: Deputy PM | VN Express Why Vietnam took Philippines' spot as worst place to be in COVID | Bangkok Post/Bloomberg Vietnam falls to bottom of Bloomberg Covid resilience ranking – Minh Nga | VN Express Vietnam aims to vaccinate adult population with booster by end-March | Reuters Vietnam Ministry of Health proposes Tet restrictions and extra screening of arrivals for Omicron | The Star Vietnam COVID cases hit record as omicron fears weigh – Tomoya Onishi | Nikkei Asia COVID-19 Country Tracker: Vietnam | WHO