

ASEAN Region – Press Review JANUARY 2026

Contact: info@th.boell.org

For our readers in a rush, our editors recommend the following 11 news articles:

- Resilience in a conditional trade order: ASEAN's 2026 challenge ([link here](#))
- Implications of the Venezuela Case for Southeast Asia: Parallels and Limits ([link here](#))
- Vietnam bets big on To Lam's power and growth strategy ([link here](#))
- Timor-Leste's governance dilemma: Fear, accountability, and risk ([link here](#))
- Philippines ramps up protection of undersea cables amid growing 'grey-zone' threats ([link here](#))
- Laos Partners with European Union for New Forest Conservation Project ([link here](#))
- Malaysia eyes bigger role in rare earths, but industry players warn ambitions may outpace reality ([link here](#))
- Why Myanmar election won't change Europe's mind on junta ([link here](#))
- Standards and sustainability will make or break Indonesia–EU trade deal ([link here](#))
- EU set to elevate ties with Vietnam amid trade disruptions, source says ([link here](#))
- Small nation, big vision: Brunei consolidates its way to digital resilience ([link here](#))



ASEAN and Southeast Asia Region

ASEAN

[Resilience in a conditional trade order: ASEAN's 2026 challenge](#) – Apoorba Banerjee | The Interpreter
[Asean energy leaders endorse 7 programs to boost reg'l energy security](#) – Leo Udtohan | Inquirer
[ASEAN chair Philippines hopes to widen talks with anti-junta forces in Myanmar](#) – Karen Lema | Reuters
[What Asean reveals about partnership](#) – Joo-Ok Lee | Inquirer
[Singapore proposes ASEAN-first mechanism to trace scam calls across borders](#) – Lee Li Ying | The Straits Times
[ASEAN will not certify Myanmar election or send observers, Malaysia says](#) | CNA/Reuters
[Decarbonising Food Systems: Opportunities for a Concerned ASEAN](#) – Paul Teng | Fulcrum
[Commentary: Myanmar's flawed election is also a test of ASEAN credibility](#) – Tan See Seng | CNA
[Non-interference in Venezuela crisis the way to go for Asean](#) – Phar Kim Beng | Free Malaysia Today
[ASEAN Power Grid: Gleaning Best Practices From Worst Cases – Analysis](#) – Mirza Sadaqat Huda | Eurasia Review
[NESDC warns Asia and ASEAN may slow in 2026 as trade and geopolitical risks mount](#) | The Nation

Southeast Asia

[US trade with Southeast Asia and Taiwan surging despite Trump tariffs](#) – Erin Hale | Al Jazeera
[From Megatrends to Action: Rethinking Industrial Policy in Southeast Asia](#) – Marco Kamiya | Fulcrum
[RedNote's Success and Beijing's Soft Power in Southeast Asia](#) – Wang Zheng | Fulcrum
[Implications of the Venezuela Case for Southeast Asia: Parallels and Limits](#) – Hoang Thi Ha and Aries A. Arugay | Fulcrum
[Southeast Asian countries call for peaceful resolution of conflict in Venezuela, pledge to ensure citizens' safety](#) | CAN
[Japan's Economic Security Strategy: A View from Southeast Asia](#) – Aaron Jed Rabena | Kyoto Review
[10 questions on what 2026 holds for Asia](#) – Arlina Arshad, Bhagyashree Garekar, Clement Tan, Hariz Baharudin, Kalicharan Veera Singam, Mara Cepeda, Nirmala Ganapathy, Walter Sim, Wendy Teo and Yew Lun Tian | Asia News Network
[Southeast Asian countries brace for elections, test of public trust and economic uncertainties in 2026](#) – Jack Board, Rashvinjeet S Bedi and Nivell Rayda | CNA



Brunei

[Partnership to bolster Brunei's digital government, talent ecosystem](#) | Borneo Bulletin
[Small nation, big vision: Brunei consolidates its way to digital resilience](#) – Malavika Bharath Vasudevan | DCD
[Brunei launches national digital identity system](#) | New Straits Times/Bernama
[Brunei Ruler reaffirms commitment to economic resilience, national well-being](#) | The Star/ANN/ Borneo Bulletin



Cambodia

[Over 800 Forest Fires Recorded in A Week, Strict Call to Stop Open Burning to Protect Air Quality](#) – Khuon Narim | CamboJa News
[Environment minister signs waste management MoU with China's Mizuda Group](#) – Post Staff | The Phnom Penh Post
[Continued scam crackdowns sweep Cambodia](#) | The Star/ The Phnom Penh Post/ANN
[National power grid capacity to rise by 450MW by end of 2026](#) – Hin Pisei | The Phnom Penh Post
[Environment Ministry launches 2026 'Year of Action with Tangible Results' to boost natural resource management](#) | Khmer Times



Indonesia

[Indonesia sues 6 companies over alleged links to deadly floods & landslides](#) – Hans Nicholas Jong | Mongabay
[Indonesia President Prabowo nominates nephew as central bank deputy governor](#) | CNA/Reuters
[Seats Without Sway: Women in Indonesia's Parliament](#) – Kamilatul Farikhah | Fulcrum
[Indonesia to Launch Waste-to-Energy Projects in 34 Cities](#) – Ahmad Baihaqi, Calvin Moniaga Sipahutar | Jakarta Globe.ID
[Indonesia may seize another 5 million hectares of palm oil plantations in 2026](#) | Reuters
[Freedom of expression under threat as more Indonesian activists face intimidation](#) | The Star/The Jakarta Post/ANN
[Indonesian media censorship on Sumatra floods raises press freedom alarms](#) – Ismi Damayanti and Rezha Hadyan | Nikkei Asia
[Indonesia, China Sign \\$2 Billion Deal Spanning Metals, Batteries, Drones, and AI](#) – Addin Anugrah Siwi | Jakarta Globe.ID
[New Indonesian FTA Opens Path to \\$2.56 Trillion Eurasian Trade Bloc](#) – Jayanty Nada Shofa | Jakarta Globe.ID
[Indonesia Officially Becomes UN Human Rights Council President](#) – Jayanty Nada Shofa | Jakarta Globe.ID
[Indonesia's new penal code takes effect, marking historic break with colonial law](#) – Niniek Karmini | AP



Laos

[Laos, Vietnam Agree to Deepen Cooperation Across Seven Key Sectors](#) – Phoudasack Vongsay | The Laotian Times
[Laos Eyes Hydrogen-Roasted Coffee to Lift Exports, Cut Emissions by 2027](#) – Phoudasack Vongsay | The Laotian Times
[Asian Development Bank Approves Funds for Forestry Restoration Project in Laos](#) – Phoudasack Vongsay | The Laotian Times
[Laos, Myanmar, Thailand join forces to battle transboundary air pollution](#) | Vientiane Times
[Laos Advances Preparations to Open Embassy in Timor-Leste, Deputy Minister Says](#) – Thongsavanh Souvannasane | The Laotian Times
[Laos to Export Electricity to Singapore Under Regional Power Agreement](#) – Phoudasack Vongsay | The Laotian Times
[Laos maps development path to 2030](#) | The Star/ Vientiane Times/ANN
[Eleven major policies to revive democracy, advance towards socialism](#) | Vientiane Times
[Security tightened in run up to 12th National Party Congress](#) | Vientiane Times
[Laos Prepares for February Vote Amid Regional Election Year](#) – Namfon Chanthavong | The Laotian Times



Malaysia

[Malaysia moves to curb underage social media use with July target](#) | Borneo Bulletin
[Malaysia eyes bigger role in rare earths, but industry players warn ambitions may outpace reality](#) – Melissa Goh and Calvin Yang | CNA
[Explained: Seven key questions about Malaysia's proposed two-term PM limit](#) – Ida Lim | Malay Mail
[Is Malaysia heading towards an uninsurability crisis?](#) – Wan Saefullah | Eco-Business
[10-year, two-term limit for Malaysia PMs: Anwar announces reforms to win back votes ahead of next GE](#) – Lu Wei Hoong | The Straits Times
[Malaysia government's anti-corruption maze amid 1MDB scandal](#) – David Hutt | DW
[UMNO at a crossroads amid calls to leave Anwar government, anger at Najib rulings](#) – Rashvinjeet S Bedi | CNA



Myanmar

[Myanmar's war headed for a tipping point in 2026](#) – Anthony Davis | Asia Times
[The real winner behind Myanmar's junta-held elections could be China](#) – Philip Wen | The Straits Times
[Myanmar Rohingya genocide case begins hearings at ICJ](#) | The Nation/Reuters
[Costs of copper: Residents near mines suffer under junta's heavy hand](#) – Esther | Frontier Myanmar
[Myanmar to free thousands of prisoners in annual amnesty](#) – Midhat Fatimah | DW/AFP/Reuters/AP
[Why Military Parties Win Elections in Myanmar](#) | The Irrawaddy



Philippines

[Philippines tells Beijing it is alarmed over escalating verbal tussle in South China Sea dispute](#) – Jim Gomez | AP
[PH-UAE free trade deal hailed as 1st in Manila's Middle East ties](#) | Inquirer
[Philippines ramps up protection of undersea cables amid growing 'grey-zone' threats](#) – Jeoffrey Maitem | South China Morning Post
[Inside the Philippines' stacked agenda to steer Asean's trillion-dollar economy](#) – Goh Ruoxue | The Business Times
[Japan, Philippines refine security pact with eye on China](#) – Jason Gutierrez | Asia Times
[Philippines arrests ex-general who called for president's ouster](#) | CNA/AFP
[Group hits retention of questionable programmed funds in 2026 budget](#) – Zacarian Sarao | Inquirer
[Philippine trails Southeast Asian neighbors in decarbonization investments](#) – Marco Luis Beech | Philstar



Singapore

[Singapore studies hydrogen adoption as power firms prepare for cleaner fuel](#) – Nasyrah Abdul Rohim and Marcel Pereira | CNA
[Paya Lebar redevelopment: Nature Society proposes keeping a third of space as green areas](#) – Chin Hui Shan | The Straits Times
[Commentary: Pritam Singh's removal as Leader of the Opposition reflects importance of higher standards in Singapore politics](#) – Eugene K B Tan | CNA
[Commentary: Independent Nominated Member of Parliament voices will only become more important for Singapore](#) – Nicholas Fang | CNA
[WP rejects PM Wong's invitation to nominate another elected MP as Leader of the Opposition](#) – Ng Wei Kai | The Straits Times
[Singapore SM Lee says US intervention on Venezuela not justified; move concerns small countries: reports](#) | Global Times
[Singapore GDP expands by 'stunning' 4.8% in 2025 after robust Q4, helped by AI boom](#) – Xinghui Kok | Reuters
[Why diverse trade networks are becoming more important for Singapore](#) – Annabelle Liang | The Straits Times

[PM Wong, Trump reaffirm Singapore-US partnership in phone call in 60th year of diplomatic ties](#) – Rhea Yasmine | The Straits Times



Thailand

[Thailand Unveils Landmark for 2026 IMF-World Bank Meetings as Nation Prepares for 'Financial Olympics'](#) | The Nation
[Think-tank expects new Thai government by May](#) – Somruedi Banchongduang | Bangkok Post
[Big-spenders abound as poll race tightens](#) – Jutamas Tadthiemrom and Mongkol Bangprapa | Bangkok Post
[Why Thailand's deadly construction accidents are sparking outrage and scrutiny](#) | CNA
[The Elephant Not in the Room: Thailand's 2026 Election Campaigns Sidestep Structural Reforms](#) – Wannaphong Durongkaveroj | Fulcrum
[Opinion: Thailand in the New World Order](#) – Serichon | Thai Inquirer
[Thailand's election turns into a cash splash contest to win votes](#) – Aidan Jones | South China Morning Post
[Long-term structural issues hobble Thailand's growth](#) – Wichit Chantanusornsiri | Bangkok Post
[Election Commission urged to streamline votes](#) | Bangkok Post
[Charter referendum registration period 'final'](#) | Bangkok Post
[Thailand's 2026 election heats up in high-stakes power fight](#) | The Nation



Timor-Leste

[Timor-Leste, Philippines explore labour migration cooperation](#) | The Star
[Timor-Leste's governance dilemma: Fear, accountability, and risk](#) – João Boavida and Milena Pires | The Interpreter
[Timor-Leste and Indonesia deepen cooperation in higher education](#) | Asean All
[ABCID's journalism training program reaches rural Timor-Leste](#) – Mary-Louise Vince | ABC
[Timor-Leste's Maubere Front condemns aggression against Venezuela](#) | Plenglish



Vietnam

[UNESCO provides USD740K to protect Vietnam's cultural heritage](#) | Borneo Bulletin/Bernama/VNA
[Vietnam bets big on To Lam's power and growth strategy](#) – David Hutt | DW
[To Lam wins second term to rule Vietnam through 2030](#) | Free Malaysia Today/Reuters
[Vietnam's Khanh Hoa to invest over \\$22mn in Nha Trang flood control lake](#) | Tuoi Tre
[Vietnam's To Lam vows to fight corruption, pledges 10% economic growth](#) | Al Jazeera
[Yes, Vietnam really is winning the trade wars](#) – Roland Rajah | The Interpreter
[Vietnam warns of nuclear power delays, seeks Russia deal by January after Japan pullout](#) – The Star/Reuters
[The 'four' behind Vietnam: Can 2026 political reset deliver the growth it promises?](#) – Jamille Tran | The Business Times



ASEAN/ Southeast Asia Region and Germany/ EU

[Picking On The Present: European Union and Asean: Vital roles await regionalism in a multipolar world](#) – Ooi Kee Beng | The Edge Malaysia
[EU Signals Trade Pact Talks with ASEAN to Begin After 2027](#) – Jayanty Nada Shofa | Jakarta Globe.ID
[Commission announces €1.9 billion humanitarian aid budget for 2026](#) | European Commission
[Laos Partners with European Union for New Forest Conservation Project](#) – Phoudasack Vongsay | The Laotian Times
[New Laos-Germany Agreement Boosts Support for Forest, Biodiversity Protection](#) | Laotian Times
[EU set to elevate ties with Vietnam amid trade disruptions, source says](#) – Francesco Guarascio | Reuters
[Why Myanmar election won't change Europe's mind on junta](#) – Davit Hutt | DW
[Standards and sustainability will make or break Indonesia-EU trade deal](#) – Ichfan Ramadhan | East Asia Forum
[After years of progress, Indonesia risks 'tragedy' of a deforestation spike](#) – Jeff Hutton | Mongabay

[German economic cooperation ministry praises Vietnam's development](#) | Vietnam Plus
[Chinese exports to EU and S-E Asia will keep growing, and not just as transshipments](#) – Evan See | The Business Times
[Much for Asean to learn from Europe's push for rare earths](#) – Phar Kim Beng | Free Malaysia Today
[Thai Industry Defies Odds with 54% Surge in 'Green' Exports to the EU](#) | The Nation
[EU CBAM carbon levy may hit Thai steel exports by 28bn baht in 2026](#) | The Nation
[AI divide: China, SE Asia ahead of US, Europe in adoption](#) | The Economic Times
[The EU AI Act is reshaping global trade: Here's how ASEAN can lead, not lag](#) – Shawn Balakrishnan | e27