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- ✧ [Khalid A. Al-Falih](#) discussed Saudi Aramco's Accelerated Transformation Program in an interview.
- ✧ 3M's [George Buckley](#) was knighted by the Queen of England for his contributions to business and education.
- ✧ Khazana Nasional's [Azman Mokhtar](#) discussed the role of government-linked companies in the Malaysian economy in an interview with the *Malay Mail*.
- ✧ [Takeshi Niinami](#) of Lawson advocated deregulating Japan's economy at the Reuters Rebuilding Japan Summit.
- ✧ [Penny Pritzker](#) of Pritzker Realty authored an article on America's growing skills gap for *Politico*. She was also appointed by U.S. President Barack Obama to the board of [Skills for America's Future](#), a \$2 billion program designed to train young people for manufacturing jobs.
- ✧ CIMB's [Nazir Razak](#) and Ayala's [Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala](#), along with eight other ASEAN business leaders, have formed the ASEAN Business Club to push for faster regional integration. Nazir Razak was also appointed to the International Advisory Panel of the [World Islamic Economic Forum Foundation](#).
- ✧ CICC's [Levin Zhu](#) said China needs to diversify its investments at a conference for the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

Asia Unbound: Political and Economic Liberty Outside the West

Razeen Sally, founder of the European Center for International Political Economy, delivered a sweeping lecture on liberalism (both political and economic) and Asia on the occasion of receiving the Hayek medal. Sally looks especially at the unfinished agenda of economic (trade) liberalism in Asia, drawing parallels between today and previous eras of free trade in Asia, before the arrival of Western colonizers. This is an edited version of [Sally's speech](#), from a forthcoming issue of the *Asian Review of Books*.

China's Human Capital Quest

China's quest to become a knowledge-driven economy is the right one, given a gradual shift in the country's industry structure, rising wages, and rapid population aging. But while China's leadership has invested considerable effort into developing and retaining its talent pool, [Denis Fred Simon and Cong Cao](#) point out in a *China Economic Quarterly* article that introducing intellectual freedom and a meritocratic environment, which are essential but missing ingredients, will require broader reforms.

A Bigger Role for ASEAN?

ASEAN could exert greater influence in the region as it becomes a more developed organization for promoting trade and economic growth. However, a clearer and more specific development plan is needed for further regional economic integration, says [Alexander Lobov](#) of *Asia Money*. [Ernest Bower](#) of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) says that if ASEAN is to play a leadership role in resolving regional security challenges, including the current territorial disputes in the South China Sea, it will need a clear strategy and a great deal more political will than it has shown to date.

Can Investment Sustain China's Economic Growth?

Concerned about China's investment-led growth, [Martin Wolf](#) of the *Financial Times* compares China to Japan in the 1990s, saying that it is not easy for China to manage its planned transition to slower and consumption-led growth. However, [Jian Chang](#) at Barclays Capital argues that China still has much room to invest further in both physical and soft infrastructure. The real challenge is to ensure the quality of the investment by letting factor prices reflect scarcity of resources.

India's Growing Partnership with Africa

Trade between India and Africa has quadrupled in the last six years and India has set a bilateral trade goal of \$70 billion by 2015, up from \$45 billion currently, said Commerce Minister Anand Sharma. India hopes to gain access to Africa's oil and mineral resources, as well as essential African support for a permanent seat for India on the UN Security Council, writes [Sudha Ramachandran](#). A Gateway House report notes that over 80 Indian companies have already invested up to \$2.3 billion in African commercial farms. Read [more](#).