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- ✧ Dominic Barton of McKinsey & Co. discussed the future of robots and automation in the workplace on the [Wall Street Journal](#) website.
- ✧ AirAsia's Tony Fernandes wrote a column in the [Economic Times](#) about Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2014 budget. He was also [interviewed by the newspaper](#) about the direction of AirAsia.
- ✧ Kris Gopalakrishnan of Infosys was interviewed by the [Times of India](#) about the future of online courses in education.
- ✧ Quantum Leaps Corp.'s Nobuyuki Idei and Kikkoman's Yuzaburo Mogi were featured in the launch issue of [Forbes Japan](#). Mr. Idei was also appointed to the advisory board of [ZL Technologies](#).
- ✧ Henry Kravis of KKR was among the founders of the [American Heart Association CEO Roundtable](#), which will work for greater health awareness in the workplace.
- ✧ Takeshi Niinami of Lawson, Inc. spoke at the [Japan Society in New York](#) about the structural changes needed for Abenomics to succeed: increased labor mobility and companies spinning off noncore businesses.
- ✧ CIMB Group's Nazir Razak will [become the group's chairman](#). He was quoted this month in the [Malay Mail](#) about impediments to ASEAN trade.
- ✧ Chartsiri Sophonpanich of Bangkok Bank was quoted in the [Bangkok Post](#) on the investment potential in Myanmar.

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The Results Are In For Jokowi

Joko Widodo's victory in Indonesia's presidential election should ensure a smooth transition for the world's third-largest democracy. The [Jakarta Post](#) reports that the rupiah gained in value in anticipation of Jokowi's win and cites a survey conducted in June indicating that 74% of foreign investors favored this outcome. However, [Financial Times](#) correspondent Ben Bland tempers the post-election optimism with an assessment of the major challenges Jokowi must reckon with in order to govern effectively. As his PDI-P party only received 53% of votes, Jokowi and his governing coalition must come to a consensus on cabinet appointments and ways to reduce the deficit. [The Economist](#) argues that the first step lies in tackling corruption and finding capable cabinet members before moving on to other issues.

How the World Sees China

The results of the [Pew Research Center's](#) new "Balance of Power" survey show that while Asian nations are convinced of China's rise as an economic power, the majority of respondents still retain a positive view of the U.S. Despite last year's revelations of the scope of U.S. surveillance programs, 65% of respondents expressed a favorable rating of the U.S. compared to the 49% who held a favorable opinion of China. An [Economist](#) article notes that the notion of China's rise as a great power has taken root among all countries surveyed, with half of all respondents expressing the belief that China already is or will be the next superpower. Recent news suggests that these perceptions of a power transition in Asia are negatively impacting efforts for international cooperation on trade. Stephen Roach argues in [Project Syndicate](#) that the failure of bilateral investment treaty negotiations in July's U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue is indicative of a serious trust deficit that neither side is willing to address.

Reactions to Modi's 2014 Budget

In July, Narendra Modi's government released its first budget, promising seven to eight percent growth within three years. Cornell economist and former Modi consultant Eswar Prasad told the [New York Times](#) that it is still too early to tell whether the budget's emphasis on relying on growth to provide jobs and keep the deficit under control will be enough to jumpstart India's manufacturing sector and restore investor confidence. On [Bloomberg](#), Unni Krishnan and Andrew MacAskill write that, given Modi's electoral mandate, analysts view the budget as a missed opportunity for the administration to take the tough measures necessary to achieve growth. Lee Jong-Wha, writing in [Project Syndicate](#), advises Modi look to China and undertake the infrastructural and labor skill upgrades necessary to shift India's agricultural workers to the manufacturing sector.

Mercantilism's Effects on Growth

Despite the promise of recent free-trade agreements, developments in East Asia suggest that economic "reform" is taking the path of nationalism and protectionism. Robert Kelley, writing in [The Diplomat](#), cites Seoul's blocking of ride-share startup Uber as an example of classic mercantilist policy in Asia, suggesting that the move reneges on President Park Geun-hye's promises to move away from a state-led growth model and encourage small-scale entrepreneurship. In the [Financial Times](#), Henry Sender notes that Japanese direct investment in China is down 50% compared with last year, a clear signal that China has become increasingly unwilling to separate commerce from politics due to border disputes and historical grievances. [Bloomberg View](#) columnist Mohammed El-Erian writes that Asian nations are eschewing the Japan-led Asia Development Bank (ADB) in favor of China's proposed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). The AIIB, which would exclude the U.S. and Japan, can be seen as a direct challenge to the financial role the U.S. and Japan play in the region and as a further indication that China seeks to become the dominant economic power in Asia.

Upcoming Forum Dates

2014 Autumn Forum: Bali, September 11-13
 2015 Spring Forum: Beijing, March 26-28
 2015 Autumn Forum: Ulaanbaatar, September 17-19

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