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- ✧ Khalid Al-Falih of Saudi Aramco [spoke](#) on his company's support of the iThra Knowledge Program, a festival that celebrates the knowledge, creativity, and culture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- ✧ Dominic Barton of McKinsey was quoted by the [Financial Times](#) on the history and significance of the McKinsey Quarterly as its 50th anniversary edition is released.
- ✧ Ronnie C. Chan of Hang Lung Properties, together with his brother Gerald L. Chan, [donated](#) \$350 million from the Chan family trust to the Harvard University School of Public Health. He and his wife Barbara Chan also gave a [\\$20 million donation](#) to University of Southern California's occupational science and therapy program. He [spoke](#) with the BBC on the development of philanthropy in China.
- ✧ Morris Chang of Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing spoke with [Taiwan Today](#) on the potential for development of the consumer market for smart home technology and wearables in Taiwan.
- ✧ Tony Fernandes was quoted by the [Wall Street Journal](#) regarding rising air fares in Malaysia and the implications for the Malaysian airline industry.
- ✧ Kris Gopalakrishnan of Infosys has [joined](#) the Indian Angel Network (IAN), a network of angel investors that has invested \$24 million in Indian start-ups over the last 2 years.
- ✧ Anand Mahindra of the Mahindra Group [offered \\$5 million in scholarship funding](#) for United World College students in India and abroad.
- ✧ CIMB's Nazir Razak was profiled by the [Straits Times](#). He discussed his tenure at CIMB along with the strong prospects of regional prosperity with closer ASEAN integration.
- ✧ Mike Smith of ANZ was profiled by the [Financial Times](#) and talked about his personal history with ANZ along with his regional growth strategy for the bank.
- ✧ George S. Tahija of PT Austindo Nusantara Jaya was featured in [Forbes](#) along with his brother for their efforts to eradicate dengue fever in Indonesia through their Eliminate Dengue Project.

To send us member news, or for member news questions, please click [here](#).

Alibaba's record-setting IPO and future growth potential

Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba made history by raising \$25 billion in a NYSE IPO. [Bloomberg View](#) columnists Lulu Yilun Chen and Aaron Clark write that an investment in Alibaba is a vote of confidence in the spending potential of China's expanding consuming class, given that e-commerce transactions in China are projected to reach \$2.9 trillion next year. [Caixin](#) reports that some investors remain to be convinced of Alibaba's growth strategy given the thinning profit margins for e-commerce in China. To stay competitive, Alibaba will need to generate more revenue from advertisements and branch into international markets. Henry Sender, writing in the [Financial Times](#), sees the Alibaba IPO as an encouraging sign of private entrepreneurs surpassing the state sector as the new drivers of growth in the Chinese economy.

Prime Minister Modi's pitch to foreign investors

Less than a week after India's first [interplanetary probe](#) successfully entered Mars' orbit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has embarked on his first state visit to the United States on a mission to prove India can become an economic as well as a space power. In a [Wall Street Journal](#) op-ed, he personally extended an invitation for foreign businesses to invest in India, declaring that India will pave the way by eliminating excessive legislation and ensuring transparency and accountability in governance. [The Economist](#) writes that Modi's personal leadership is not enough to jumpstart Indian manufacturing, and that India needs to remove barriers on foreign investment and join in on free trade agreements. The [Economic Times](#) wrote that the purpose of the visit was essentially to repair damaged relations, and that India must overcome governance issues and a stifling bureaucracy in order to attract investors.

Indonesian fuel subsidy a test for Jokowi

In the weeks before his inauguration on October 20, pressure is mounting for President-elect Joko Widodo (Jokowi) to take decisive action on the fuel subsidy and its impact on the national budget. Minister of Finance and ABC Bali Forum speaker Chatib Basri was quoted in the [Financial Times](#) urging the President-elect to move quickly to reduce the \$29 billion fuel subsidy while he has the necessary political capital. The [Wall Street Journal](#) reports that the subsidy, which stands at 18% of the national budget, has led to widespread corruption in Indonesia's energy sector. Efforts to reduce the subsidy will cause pushback from energy companies and consumers. In the meantime, the [Jakarta Globe](#) reports that proposed legislation to block the direct election of local officials is indicative of the mounting opposition Jokowi will face in Parliament.

Positive Outlook on Fed Tapering's Effects on Asia

While the exact timeline for U.S. Federal Reserve tapering remains unclear, Asia appears to be well-equipped to handle a normalization of dollar interest rates. According to the Asia Development Bank's [Asia Development Outlook 2014 Update](#), policymakers in Asia are now prepared to manage the onset of higher interest rates. ADB Chief Economist Shang Jin-wei noted that the Asian economies most vulnerable to rising rates had already factored in the effects of monetary tightening. The [Wall Street Journal](#) also has a positive outlook on Asia's prospects in the event of higher interest rates, noting that markets affected by initial reports of a Fed taper last year have moved to insulate themselves from further currency shocks.

2014 Autumn Forum in Review

The Asia Business Council's 2014 Autumn Forum was held September 11-13 in Bali. The campaign manager for President-elect Joko Widodo, General Luhut Pandjaitan, gave an address to our members at the Forum's Welcome Dinner at the Grand Hyatt Bali. Forum sessions commenced the following day and were conducted in the Karangasem Ballroom. That evening, our Indonesian members hosted the Forum Dinner at the Four Seasons Resort and Indonesian Minister of Trade Muhammad Lutfi addressed our group. Following the Forum, a group of participants traveled to Borobudur Temple in Indonesia's ancient capital of Yogyakarta.

At the Round-Robin discussion, members voiced mounting concerns over tensions between China and its neighbors, and over pockets of political instability in the Middle East. Many agreed greater efforts were needed to ease geo-political tensions and curb the rise of protectionism and nationalism. Members were positive about the growth potential of countries in the ASEAN region, especially the opportunities resulting from increased demand for infrastructure in Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos, countries that will soon grow to make major contributions to Asia's overall growth. There was also a discussion of the tremendous opportunity for businesses to use "big data" but simultaneous challenges of how to protect privacy and data security.

The next session featured Indonesian entrepreneurs who spoke about the need for small enterprises to grow and the challenges of developing an ecosystem of entrepreneurship in Indonesia in a session moderated by George Tahija of PT Austindo Nusantara Jaya. Mark Kramer of FSG then spoke on holistic measures of growth and ways in which companies operating in Asia could create social value while generating profits, in a session moderated by Azman Mokhtar of Khazanah Nasional Bhd.

The following day, Arif Rachmat of PT Triputra Agro Persada and Jeremy Wilson of Barclays Bank PLC spoke on methods to achieve sustainability in the global palm oil industry, in a session moderated by Nigel Sizer of the World Resources Institute. The Indonesian Minister of Finance, Muhamad Chatib Basri, addressed our members on the economic challenges facing Jokowi's incoming administration. The final session featured former Director-General of the World Trade Organization, Pascal Lamy, on the topic of the tensions between geo-politics and geo-economics and the barriers facing the international trade system. This session was moderated by Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala of Ayala Corp.

All presentations and summary notes from the Forum are available on our secured participants-only Web site. The user name and password are included in a separate e-mail.

Upcoming Forum Dates

2015 Spring Forum: Beijing, March 26-28
2015 Autumn Forum: Ulaanbaatar, September 17-19

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