

ASEAN at 50

The ASEAN organisation was born in 1967. In 50 years it has achieved peace amongst its members and good economic growth. Last year the ASEAN Economic Community was launched and whilst progress towards trade harmonisation is painfully slow, in its 50 years it has gained member states and unlike another well-known Economic Union not lost one.

ANZBC is holding a major Forum in October to mark the 50th Anniversary.

For Kavi Chongkittavorn's view please [click here](#)

ASEAN keen to keep RCEP moving

Whilst NZ Trade Minister Todd McClay has been busy overseas talking to trade partners about options in the wake of TPP's demise, as reported by the [NZ Herald](#) East Asia Forum puts a strong [case](#) for moving quickly forward with RCEP.

Whilst RCEP has impressive dimensions, we need to ensure that the quick conclusion envisaged does not compromise its quality.

Mexican wall illustrates downside of imposing import tariffs

Using the flawed logic of a border wall being funded by the imposition of an import tax as an example, this [NZIER Insight](#) gives a clear explanation of how protectionism hinders rather than assists an economy.

New Indonesia website signals need for paradigm shift

Is Indonesia beginning to understand this? The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) and [the Centre for Strategic and International Studies \(CSIS\)](#) has just launched the Paradigma Ekonomi [website](#)

Investment Coordinating Board Head, Thomas Trikasih Lembong welcomed it, while

noting that Indonesia was “still trapped in an obsolete paradigm that has been abandoned by many other countries, such as the need to overly protect domestic industries and that 'exports are good, imports are bad'. We should change our way of thinking and shift our paradigm. The reality is not like that. Industries nowadays are not like that.”

Positive business signals from Viet Nam

As ANZBC organises a **Trade Mission to Vietnam in August**, there are some recent positive signs:

HCM City and Hanoi rank second and eight in the latest global City Momentum index – for details [click here](#)

And Vietnam aims to improve its business environment to reach the average level of the regional top four economies Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, together known as ASEAN 4 says [VN Express International](#)

Assisting this is a clear dialogue between VCCI, the Chamber in Viet Nam and the Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development to tackle ineffective regulations albeit the Ministry of Investment and Planning seems to be a bit more equivocal.

Read more in this Viet Nam News [report](#)

Finally, strategic partner [ANZ's Blue Notes](#) reports on the secrets of success for a Viet Nam based SME, lessons appropriate to any state with a preponderance of SMEs

Myanmar imposing restrictions on Foreigner's movements

Ex pats in Myanmar are concerned about new laws which would require foreigners who live and work in Myanmar to obtain a slew of documentation and undergo a medical examination within seven days of arriving in the country, and would also place restrictions on travelling or relocating says the [Myanmar Times](#)

How ASEAN fares in the corruption index

The issue usually has to be faced if you're doing business globally, so here's a comprehensive run down of how ASEAN members rate in the Transparency International Corruption [Index](#) and more detail on what the index, on which New Zealand and Denmark rank first equal, comprises from TI's [website](#)

One belt one road compels our attention

ASEAN not China may be the founding promoters of RCEP, but China is very much in the box seat with its one belt one road concept, being promoted intensively in ASEAN.

It surely has implications for us both logistically and in its potential impact on trade dynamics.

Articles in ANZ's [Bluenotes](#) and the [South China Morning Post](#) help to explain its scope and importance.

NZIER Dairy Economic contribution

The dairy industry doesn't always get a good press particularly when the sensitive but critical lines between economic and environmental benefit get tugged too far. So this NZIER [report](#) to DCANZ is welcome in pointing out the huge economic impact of the industry to our economy.

Of interest in our corner of the paddock if global dairy tariffs increased from their average applied rate to their average bound rate, our dairy exports would fall by \$2.3 billion, leading to a \$1.66 billion fall in our nominal GDP. "This provides an indication of the value of historical dairy tariff reductions due to multilateral, plurilateral and bilateral trade negotiations, or the benefits of preventing any backsliding towards trade protectionism" says NZIER

Cornella sardonic perspective

Readers in Bangkok still have time to take in the Joan Cornella Exhibition featuring this month. Known for his sardonic wit, you can see a couple of Cornella examples in this [Khoa Sod](#) feature

Columbus trumped by Chinese Eunuch?

Not strictly ASEAN, but in these days of increased rivalry between the Governments of USA and China, we need to ask if the USA was discovered not by Columbus but by Zheng He, the Chinese Muslim eunuch?

For an explanation read Rosie Blau of the [Economist](#)

