

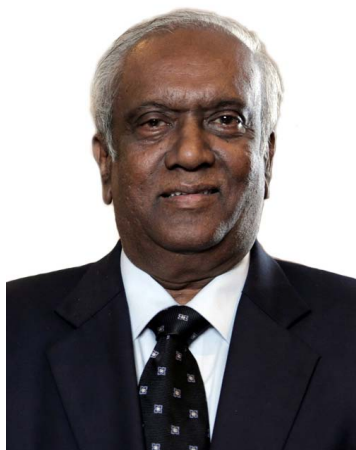
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CPPS Newsletter

July 2015

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



As we approach the halfway mark of the year it's a good time to reflect on the major developments thus far. The ASLI Centre for Public Policy Studies has been a key voice in the advocacy of socio-economic issues within the Malaysian context. As we move forward we intend to continue closely monitoring and constructively analysing the critical issues that will no doubt unfold in the second half of 2015.

In light of the recent Fitch Report revising upward, Malaysia's economic outlook to "stable", as well as the debate between Datuk Seri Idris Jala and William Pesek of Bloomberg, over Malaysia's economic fundamentals and prospects, it is clear that we are at a watershed

The government will have to make more bold decisions in order to move forward or risk being caught in the Middle Income Trap.

Additionally, in the regional context, thorough preparation is needed to bring about the more meaningful establishment of the new ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). As Malaysia is also 2015 Chair of ASEAN, this will be launched later this year by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

These and many other issues facing our country are sure to provide many challenges to keep the CPPS team on the ball, and we shall strive to serve steadfastly to build a better Malaysia!

Best wishes.

Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam

July 8th , 2015

FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Upgraded Fitch rating is a relief, but for how long?

By Tan Sri Dr. Ramon Navaratnam, CPPS Chairman

The Fitch's rating that upgraded our outlook on the long term issuer default rating from negative to stable is indeed a relief and quite gratifying. The government, treasury, EPU and Bank Negara must feel considerable joy and some sense of achievement as they managed to persuade Fitch to give a positive grading. This rating is especially significant as Fitch has threatened to downgrade Malaysia in their earlier assessment. However, we should be cautiously optimistic and not be overjoyed as Fitch has actually warned that although our economic management has improved, we still have some weaknesses to address. We should therefore continue to manage these weaknesses more effectively, as we are just above water in our macro indicators. Fitch showed that we are marginally better off, but definitely not completely out of the woods.

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SENIOR DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Greetings from the Centre for Public Policy Studies!

The first half of the year has given us much to chew on. It has brought forward many opportunities but also laid bare many challenges facing us. The end of 2014 saw Malaysia take its seat as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. This important position will not only give Malaysia a voice on the world stage but also allow us to play a part in tackling some of the most complex issues facing global security today. These include the ongoing conflicts in the Ukraine, Syria and Iraq, as well as the threat of Isis, among many others.

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NEWS & UPDATES



Let's Get Real: ASEAN Young Leaders for Mutual Regional Development

The ASEAN young leaders gathered on the 26 of April for the 12th ASLI ASEAN Leadership Forum with the support of the British High Commission in KL. It was a productive discussion under the theme “Let’s Get Real: ASEAN Young Leaders for Mutual Regional Development with an emphasis on the significant role of youth in establishing a collective identity formation of an ASEAN identity.

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PERSPECTIVES

Great debate between Idris Jala, William Pesek

Published on The Malaysian Insider and The Star



Datuk Seri Idris Jala must be lauded for taking on William Pesek of Bloomberg for what Idris describes as his recent "disgracefully biased and ill-informed article "on Malaysia. Idris is one of the few ministers who boldly defends and also promotes government policies. He thus enables us to be better understand and appreciate or otherwise, the thinking behind government policies and practices. So let's have more open, frank and healthy public discussions please, despite the Sedition Act and the Official Secrets Act. What are these acrimonious issues between Idris and Pesek?

Read On ▶

By Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam



Is the declining Ringgit temporary?

Published on The Malaysian Insider, Malaysiakini and The Star

The Bank Negara governor Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz publicly stated on June 8 that "the current weaknesses of the currency will be temporary". We all hope that her judgment is right. But we cannot, in fairness, hold her to her current assessment, given the growing uncertainties at home and abroad. Nevertheless, it is difficult at this stage, to accept that the declining Ringgit is temporary feature, for the following reasons..

Read On ▶

By Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam





Making a stand on the world stage

Published on [The Malaysian Insider](#) and [The New Straits Times](#)

Representatives from Australia's United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Taskforce have recently been in Malaysia for a series of meetings and courtesy calls with government officials and local think tanks to share their experience of sitting as a non-permanent member of the UNSC and offer advice for how Malaysia can maximise on their recently started term. With Malaysia taking its seat from October 2014, what can it hope to achieve over the next two-years?

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By [Jordan Heng-Contaxis](#)



Politicians, too, should have the right to agree and disagree with their own parties

Published on [The Malay Mail](#)

The spat between PAS president Datuk Seri Hadi Awang and PAS central committee member Dr Hatta Ramli was given much focus recently. Allegations that Hatta and other PAS leaders attempting to unseat Hadi's presidency surfaced and were met with scorn from other party members calling it a betrayal and demanded their resignations. This case is not unique to PAS as similar reactions are observable by most Malaysian parties on both sides of the political divide — that dissent will not be tolerated. This practice is a stark contrast to practices elsewhere in the world.

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By Voon Zhen Yi



Deciding on a Third Vote

Published on BFM 89.9

Local council elections, also known as the "third vote", were part of Malaysian political system before its abolishment in 1976 under the Local Government Act. DAP recently called for it to be restored, but was contested by PAS, leading to a rift within the Pakatan Rakyat coalition. In a recent interview by BFM, Ms. Ng Yeen Seen, Senior Director of Centre for Public Policy Studies lists the roles of a local council and explains what local council elections will mean to Malaysians.

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Featured on BFM 89.9 

PUBLICATIONS

Inconsistent Pricing

All Malaysian consumers have experienced the sickening feeling of paying for a meal or hotel stay, only to discover upon payment that final price differs from what they have initially signed up for due to the various surcharges and taxes. This paper examines the flaws with the (pre-GST) price system, compares existing systems, examines its impacts, and recommends a single price policy.

[Policy Paper ▶](#)

By Jarren Tam



IN THE MEDIA

CHINESE PRESS:

黃穎欣 及時救災提供援助 預算案應預



留特別撥款 / Ng Yeen Seen: special budget allocations should be set aside for immediate disaster relief assistance

Published on 星洲网 (Sin Chew Daily)

(馬六甲21日訊 亞洲政策與領導研究所首席營運員黃穎欣指出 我國有必要為預算案規劃預留特別撥款 作為大規模的災難管理和緊急支出 確保救災和重建援助處理及分配不受妨礙。“我國過去一年遭逢各項突發狀況造成廣泛的破壞與損失 包括金馬崙土崩、東海岸大水災、沙巴州地震等 同時花費龐大資金搜尋2架航班客機。”

Ms Ng Yeen Seen, COO of the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute, pointed out that our country's national budget should set aside an appropriation for emergency expenditure and large-scale disaster management to ensure disaster relief and reconstruction efforts where financial aid allocations can proceed uninterrupted during crucial times.

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Translation ▶

星洲日報
SIN CHEW DAILY



Centre urges Single Pricing Policy for fairer playing field

Published on the Sun Daily

The Centre for Public Policy Studies (CPPS) Malaysia has recommended a Single Pricing Policy in order to establish a fair playing field for all businesses and eliminate hidden costs. "In Malaysia, we need to enforce Single Pricing Policy where businesses must display standard nett prices. Businesses must sell products at face value with no additional surcharges, by displaying prices which are all inclusive of the service charge and prevailing government tax,"

said CPPS research and programme executive Jarren Tam.

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theSundaily

FEATURES



Guide to Malaysia' in its Eighth Edition

Featured in The Star

KUALA LUMPUR: The Guide to Malaysia, eighth edition. A glance at this book and you might think it is one of the common guides found in hotel rooms, but it is actually the most comprehensive guide book in the market.

The book features 12 sections about Malaysia, ranging from food, resorts, business, sports to culture, arts and heritage.

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