

NTS-Asia Newsletter

CONSORTIUM OF NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY STUDIES IN ASIA

48th Edition | March 2021



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LATEST NEWS

COVID-19 vaccination programmes have begun in different parts of the world including in Southeast Asia. Countries in the region are rolling out multi-million-dollar budget to secure and take in vaccines from different sources and approaches to get their populations inoculated vary.

Thailand, for example, aims to get half of its population vaccinated by the end of this year, whereas Indonesia hopes to see two-thirds of its population getting the jab by March 2022. In addition to imported vaccines, these two countries are also looking into developing and manufacturing their own vaccines.

In terms of cost, vaccinations are made free in Thailand, Indonesia, and Singapore. There are also slight variations in the order of priority. After frontline workers, the elderly are being prioritised in Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Whereas in the Philippines, workers in critical industries, low-income groups and at-risk population come next on the list after medical front-liners.

Regardless of the different strategies, what is critical is the implementation. Much remains unknown about the eventual outcome of the vaccines. On this front, global solidarity and cooperation from members of the public will be critical in ending the pandemic.

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARIAT

We have started the year 2021 with renewed hope. Vaccines are making their way into communities despite some ongoing questions over their efficacy and logistical arrangements to distribute them effectively. While the world awaits to see whether these efforts will result in an end to the pandemic, restriction measures are unlikely to be eased anytime soon. This

means that our annual meeting will still be held online this year.

As we expect the pandemic to continue for some time, we find ourselves working on various non-traditional issues that reflect different challenges faced by communities. We are also able to learn from this pandemic experience and share it with the rest of the

UPCOMING EVENTS

Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies (NTS Centre), S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)

RSIS Workshop on Humanitarian Futures in Southeast Asia

16 March 2021 & 31 March 2021 | Singapore
Click [here](#) for more details.

RSIS-ICRC Data Governance and Protection in Humanitarian Action Online Workshop 2021

18 March 2021 | Zoom
Click [here](#) for more details.

RSIS Roundtable on "COVID-19 in East Asia: Reflections One Year on"

19 March 2021 | Zoom

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NEWSLETTER TEAM

Mely Caballero-Anthony and Margareth Sembiring

Designed by Joey Liang

societies. This in turn will hopefully help all of us to become more resilient to similar disruptions in the future. It is in looking forward to a better tomorrow that we find our strength in overcoming the difficulties facing humanity today.

Warmest regards,
Mely Caballero-Anthony

Researcher Profile

Kazumi Abe

Kazumi Abe is Assistant Professor at Graduate School of International Resource Sciences, Akita University, Japan. Her research interests include conflict resolution and peace building in Southeast Asia. In particular, her research focuses on the conflict in Papua, Indonesia. She earned

her Ph.D. in social sciences from Waseda University, Japan. Prior to joining academic activity, she worked for the United Nations Mission in Timor-Leste as an electoral adviser and the Japan Ministry of Defense as a project coordinator of the capacity building projects.



REFLECTIONS

Oppressed Community Security in Papua

By Kazumi Abe

School of Science, Waseda University, Japan



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Indonesia is the world's largest producer of palm oil, producing more than **45 million tons** in 2019. Production has more than doubled in the last decade, and the growing palm oil market has caused serious concern about community security in Papua, the new frontier of production. **Community security** is a protection against the breakdown of communities as a result of the loss of traditional relationships and values.

The Indonesian government has promoted palm oil production to export palm oil-based biodiesel as a renewable fuel, although biodiesel's status as renewable is **controversial**. Palm oil plantations have caused large-scale deforestation in Sumatra and Kalimantan, seriously affecting biodiversity. The process of burning land clear releases **high levels** of carbon dioxide. Now, the rich tropical rain forest in Papua has become a new frontier of palm oil plantations in Indonesia.

The Papua region has had a history of conflicts over political rights since the 1960s. Indigenous Papuan people have been struggling against discrimination.

The expansion of palm oil plantations has brought new conflicts over their community security, especially in the southern region. Among the many palm oil expansions in Papua, the Tanah Merah project is the world's largest palm oil plantation project. This project has had several important problems regarding the process of permission according to reports published in **2018** and **2019** by Mongabay. Similar to this project, most palm oil plantation projects have problems with local communities regarding land rights. In many cases, palm oil production companies are guarded by military personnel because the region has a high risk of being attacked by armed separatist groups. This makes it extremely difficult for the Papuan people to approach anyone in the company for negotiations. As Mongabay reported, it is widely seen that Papuan people are coerced into giving up their lands, or agree with fake agreements prepared by the companies that cause the Papuans to lose their land rights.

Local Catholic non-governmental organizations have been working to protect indigenous people's rights

by acting as mediators between local communities and palm oil companies. However, in January 2021, it was **reported** that the Merauke Archdiocese signed the MoU to receive billions of rupiah through a subsidiary of the Korindo group. Korindo, the largest palm oil producer in the region, is famous for its environmentally-controversial operation. According to the MoU, the subsidiary already donated over 800 million rupiah out of 1.6 billion rupiah to the archdiocese. This event brought strong protests from the local communities. Churches have been important actors in the struggle to promote peaceful dialog with the government. However, this MoU is considered to promote a beneficial relationship with the Korindo group, which threatens Papuan's community security.

In May, a Papuan farmer who complained about his farm being cleared by the Korindo group was **assaulted**. Behind the large-scale development projects in the region, the Papuan people have been **marginalized economically** and in terms of numbers. In competition with migrants with more skills and higher educational backgrounds there is little hope for Papuan people to be

employed on the development projects. The May incident shows that far from economical marginalization the lives of the Papuan people are directly threatened by the expansion of palm oil plantations. In contrast to this urgent situation, the

government of Indonesia passed the Omnibus law in October 2020, which loosened regulations for environmental protection and respect for the rights of local communities, to speed up plantation operations. The government policy to

prioritize plantation projects has put increasing pressure on all institutions that take a side to protect Papuan's community security, depriving the Papuan people of the opportunity and ability to raise their voices for community security.

Researcher Profile

Dr Maruyama Hayato

Dr Maruyama Hayato obtained his PhD from Waseda University, Tokyo, in 2021. He is currently a research associate at the School of Science in the same university and a part-time lecturer at Kawamura Gakuen Woman's University. His research interest is in international cooperation and peace building by Japanese private sector in Southeast Asia. His latest publications include "Contribution of Japanese Private

Sector in Asian Development: Economic Cooperation by Large Enterprises and International Cooperation by SMEs"; "Contribution of Japanese Private Sector in Asia: The role of Japanese Small-Medium-Enterprises for Development in Southeast Asia"; and "Contributions by Japanese SMEs' Overseas Expansion Emphasizing International Cooperation."



REFLECTIONS

Response to Myanmar Military Coup by Japanese Private Sector: Rise of Millennials

By Dr Maruyama Hayato

School of Science, Waseda University, Japan



Photo: AFP/Stringer

On 1 February 2021, the Myanmar military declared a coup. On the same day, the Japanese Foreign Minister issued a statement gravely concerned about this coup. On the other hand, however, JICA and many Japanese companies, which have been implementing an 800-billion-yen economic cooperation package for Myanmar since 2016 under public and private partnership, remain silent. The exception is Kirin Holdings Company, Limited.

Kirin has been manufacturing and selling beer products in Myanmar since 2015 as a joint-venture with Myanmar Economic Holdings Public Company Limited (MEHL), which is owned and operated by the

Myanmar military. On 5 February 2021, Kirin issued a press release deeply concerned about the coup and taking steps for termination of the joint-venture with MEHL. On the other hand, Kirin responded as follows in the email interview by the author in early February 2021:

Kirin is the first Japanese company to commit to the Creating Shared Value (CSV) as an institution, which is a concept aiming to create both economic and social value through business. Therefore, we are committed to continue our business in Myanmar at the highest standard with respect to the human rights and the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Such an action taken by only one company might make little effect on the Myanmar military. If many Japanese companies take some form of peace action like Kirin, however, it could have some impacts on reconsideration of the coup. This is because the coup is related to the economic interests of the Myanmar military. In the report released on 5 August 2019 by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission set up by the United Nation Human Rights Council, the economic activities by the Myanmar military were heavily criticized as a cause of conflicts in Myanmar.

Currently, more than 400 Japanese companies are operating in Myanmar. The number of Japanese companies which are

related to Myanmar in any form of business would exceed 1,000 if companies dealing in the supply chain, companies preparing for business, and companies accepting technical intern trainees are included. Fortunately, some of these companies have started to take peace action like Kirin. To be more specific, they are trying to convey a peace message to the Myanmar military below the surface. The essence of the peace message is to give peace fruits to Myanmar if the Myanmar military withdraws the coup. The variety of peace fruits can be found, from short-term CSR activities such as distributing mask products to long-term CSV activities such as expanding agribusiness for contributing to the ethnic minority issue, which is seen as one of the root causes of this coup. Could these activities give peace pressure to the

Myanmar military for reconsidering their unwise decision in some degree?

In fact, it is millennials both in Myanmar and Japan that are driving peace action by Japanese companies. They are encouraging Japanese companies to take peace action with the cooperation of some influential seniors. One example is the activity of millennials creating a peace fruits menu in consultation with these seniors and sharing the menu with companies that are likely to take peace action. This is in contrast to Japanese companies operating in Myanmar, which are mostly led by seniors who keep silent about the coup so far. One of the reasons millennials are targeting Japanese companies instead of the Japanese government may be that they don't have high expectations for the

government, which has been making poor decisions and actions on the issues of COVID-19 and Tokyo Olympics.

Looking at ASEAN, on the other hand, some companies openly blamed the coup. For example, Amata Corporation made the decision to stop its 140-million-baht investment in Myanmar immediately after the coup. Such a decision made by an ASEAN company could not be replicated by ASEAN member states as the Association is based on the principle of non-intervention in domestic affairs. Given the widespread presence of ASEAN companies in Myanmar, the active participation of ASEAN millennials in encouraging ASEAN companies to take peace action is highly expected.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Bangladesh Institute of Peace & Security Studies (BIPSS)

Jubaida Auhana Faruque, Biden Administration: re-engaging with South Asia, Commentary

Click [here](#) to read more.

Simen Agnalt Nilsen, Strategic Shock: A Threat to National and Global Stability, Commentary

Click [here](#) to read more.

Mrugank Bhusari, Glocal Approaches To Glocal Challenges: How And Why South Asian Cities Must Step Up, Commentary

Click [here](#) to read more.

Marjuka Binte Afzal, Effects of Covid-19 On Sustainable Development Goals and How to Salvage Our Global SDG Attempts, Commentary

Click [here](#) to read more.

Mrugank Bhusari, An Idea Still in Infancy: Why the Work-From-Home Revolution is Not Coming Just Yet, Commentary

Click [here](#) to read more.

Firoza Ashrafee, Energy Security in the COVID-19 Era, Commentary

Click [here](#) to read more.

Firoza Ashrafee, Maritime Security in the Bay of Bengal, Commentary

Click [here](#) to read more.

Marjuka Binte Afzal, Fighting a New Battle: Weaponising Social Media, Commentary

Click [here](#) to read more.

Nuzhat Tasnim Rahman Raisa, A Theoretical Perspective of COVID-19: States and Globalization, Commentary

Click [here](#) to read more.

S. M. Azharul Islam, Implications of COVID-19 on Youth Radicalisation in Bangladesh, Commentary

Click [here](#) to read more.

Nafiz Farhan, The New Dynamic of Health Security in Global Politics, Commentary

Click [here](#) to read more.

A. N. M. Muniruzzaman, Defence Diplomacy: A Powerful Tool of Statecraft, Claws Journal



Click [here](#) to read more.

Jyoti M. Pathania, Conflict Resolution Methodologies and Approaches: United Nations Context, BIPSS – CLAWS Collaboration

Click [here](#) to read more.

An Ocean of Opportunities: Enhances Peace, Security and Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region, External Publication



Click [here](#) to read more.

Shafqat Munir, Security and Economic Challenges in The Indo-Pacific, External Publication



Click [here](#) to read more.

Marjuka Binte Afzal, Understanding Fourth Generation Peacekeeping: Striving for Peace in A New Millennium, BIPSS – CLAWS Collaboration

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Click [here](#) to read more.

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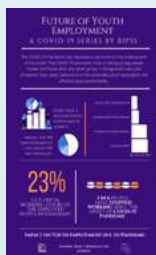
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Fifth Issue, BIPSS Infographics



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Sixth Issue, BIPSS Infographics



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Seventh Issue, BIPSS Infographics



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Eighth Issue, BIPSS Infographics



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Center of Excellence Asian Research Center for Migration, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

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Supang Chantavanich, Thailand–Myanmar international migration corridor: from battlefield to marketplace, *Routledge Handbook of Migration and Development*, Tanja Bastia and Ron Skeldon (eds.) Routledge: London. p.441-449.

Click [here](#) to read more.

Arts and Social Sciences, University Brunei Darussalam

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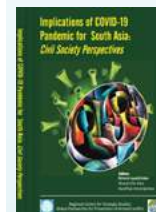
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Social Media, Risk Perception, and Risk Communication of COVID-19 in Brunei Darussalam

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Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS)

Implications of COVID-19 Pandemic for South Asia: Civil Society Perspectives, Book, 19 February 2021



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Ayodhya Krishani Amarajeewa, *Climate Change, Environment And People: The Link Between Climate Change And The Spread Of Pandemics*, Commentaries, 16 February 2021

Click [here](#) to read more.

RCSS December Webinar 2020, Policy Brief, 16 December 2020

Click [here](#) to read more.

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Click [here](#) to read more.

Portia B. Conrad, How Do CBMs Perform in South Asia? Mapping the Relative Performance of India-Pakistan CBMs, 63rd issue of its Policy Studies series, 06 October 2020



Click [here](#) to read more.

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Click [here](#) to read more.

Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies (NTS), S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)

Julius Cesar Imperial Trajano, US-Philippines: Resetting the Security Alliance?, Commentaries, 24 February 2021

Click [here](#) to read more.

Jose Ma. Luis P. Montesclaros, Global Health Security: COVID-19 and Its Impacts – Lockdowns in ASEAN: Winning the Pandemic War, Commentaries, 22 February 2021

Click [here](#) to read more.

Alistair D. B. Cook, Myanmar: Time for New Regional Diplomacy, Commentaries, 18 February 2021

Click [here](#) to read more.

NTS Bulletin February 2021, Newsletter, 18 February 2021



Click [here](#) to read more.

Beyond Relief! Issue 2, Newsletter, 04 February 2021



Click [here](#) to read more.

Julius Cesar Imperial Trajano, Global Health Security COVID-19 and Its Impacts – Battling Marine Plastic Waste: Nuclear Technology's Role, Commentaries, 03 February 2021

Click [here](#) to read more.

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Click [here](#) to read more.

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Click [here](#) to read more.

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Noleen Heyzer, Women, Peace and Security in ASEAN: New Issues, Commentaries, 27 November 2020

Click [here](#) to read more.

Margareth Sembiring, Decarbonisation on a Finite Planet, Commentaries, 25 November 2020

Click [here](#) to read more.

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Click [here](#) to read more.

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Click [here](#) to read more.

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Click [here](#) to read more.

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Click [here](#) to read more.

Lina Gong, Southeast Asia-China Cooperation in Disaster Management in Post-COVID Era, Policy Report, 29 September 2020

Click [here](#) to read more.

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Click [here](#) to read more.

Margareth Sembiring, Global Health Security: COVID-19 and Its Impacts – Urgently Needed: Ecological View in Decision-making, Commentaries, 08 September 2020

Click [here](#) to read more.

Christopher Chen, Alistair D. B. Cook, Humanitarian Assistance in the Asia-Pacific during COVID-19, NTS Insight, 31 August 2020



Click [here](#) to read more.

NTS Bulletin August 2020, Newsletter, 21 August 2020



Click [here](#) to read more.

Beyond Relief, Newsletter, 03 August 2020



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PAST EVENT SUMMARIES

Bangladesh Institute of Peace & Security Studies (BIPSS)

Workshop on Disinformation and Fake News:



As part of our endeavor to gain a deeper understanding about the importance of proper interpretation of news, BIPSS has organized workshops on “Disinformation and Fake News” targeted at youth participants drawn from various universities. The presentations were delivered by Ms. Ayesha Kabir, Consulting Editor of Prothom Alo English and Mr. Masud Chowdhury, Senior Lecturer, Department of Media and Communications at Independent University of Bangladesh.

The speakers highlighted the challenge emanating from disinformation and fake news in today's context. They also talked about the need to be discerning while using social media. The speakers also touched upon the growing threat of influence operations using social media and the need for policy formulation to tackle the challenge. BIPSS will continue to study this subject and organize more events in future.

Click [here](#) to read more.

Policy Café on “Global Trends: 2021”

Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) recently organized an event titled “Global Trends 2021” which analyses the key trends likely to shape the

world in the coming days, major geopolitical shifts and implications for Bangladesh. The keynote speaker was Mr. Parvez Karim Abbasi, Assistant Professor, East West University. Mr. Shafqat Munir, Research Fellow, BIPSS and Head of Bangladesh Centre moderated the session for Terrorism Research (BCTR). The event was attended by an array of participants from academia, media, diplomatic community, analysts and student representatives. Facebook Post on the Policy Café.

Click [here](#) to read more.



Joint Webinar on South Asia in the era of Geo-Strategic Competition?



Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) and Elcano Royal Institute, Spain has been working together for many years and recently they have come up with their first joint webinar as a part of the ongoing webinar series with them on the theme, titled “South Asia in the era of Geo-Strategic Competition?”, with a diverse group of distinguished participants

and eminent experts of the topic.

The event was graced by the presence of His Excellency Ambassador Francisco Benitez, Spanish Ambassador to Bangladesh. Dr. Charles Powell, Director of The Elcano Royal Institute, moderated the session and the Keynote presentation was presented by the Speaker, Mr. Shafqat Munir, Head of Bangladesh Centre for Terrorism Research (BCTR) and Research Fellow, BIPSS.

In the session, the plethora of new challenges that are brought upon with the post-COVID scenario, the emerging global geostrategic trends that have taken place in South Asia and how it will navigate the geo-strategic scenario in the post-COVID time among the countries of South Asia were highlighted. Our Keynote Speaker also stressed on the need for regional cooperation, conflict resolution mechanism, addressing climate change and other plausible recommendations concerning the options the region faces in the unfolding circumstances.

President's lecture on Geo Politics of South Asia and it's Emerging Security Landscape:



President BIPSS, Major General A N M Muniruzzaman, ndc, psc (Retd) was invited to deliver a talk at the Rabdan

Academy in Abu Dhabi, UAE. This was part of the Distinguished Lecture Series of the academy and the President's lecture was titled 'Geo Politics of South Asia and its Emerging Security Landscape'. The lecture was attended by the faculty, staff and students of the academy. Rabdan academy is a government establishment, a world-class institution devoted to training and education of leaders in the security and crisis management sectors. It has a multinational faculty and student body providing education at different levels up to doctoral studies. BIPSS and Rabdan will work on a number of academic research issues of mutual interest in the future.

President attended the National Climate Emergency (NCE) Summit in Melbourne



On the 11th of February, BIPSS President, Major General ANM Muniruzzaman (Retd) attended virtually the National Climate Emergency (NCE) Summit in Melbourne and delivered a case study on 'Bangladesh: Ground Zero for Security Impacts of Climate Change'. He was a part of Forum 4 titled 'Hot, Wet & Violent: Climate and Global Security Consequences' and delivered his presentation along with other distinguished speakers. It may be mentioned that General Muniruzzaman is the Chairman of Global Military Advisory Council on Climate Change (GMACCC). He has published extensively on climate security and has spoken at all major platforms on this issue.

Click [here](#) to read more.

Research Fellow Mr. Shafqat Munir participated in the special virtual session of the Munich Security Conference.



Mr. Shafqat Munir, Head of Bangladesh Centre for Terrorism Research (BCTR) and

Research Fellow at Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS), participated in the special virtual session of the Munich Security Conference. The special virtual session included speeches by US President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Secretary General of United Nations and NATO, Director General of WHO, President of the European Commission and Mr. Bill Gates among others.

Mr. Munir had the privilege to engage Special Presidential Envoy for Climate Change and former Secretary of State John Kerry. In his question, Mr. Munir elaborated on the risk of Sea Level Rise (SLR) and the challenges faced by Bangladesh. He urged the international community to step up its efforts to help Bangladesh. A video of the Q&A session of the Special Presidential Envoy John Kerry is given below.

Mr. Munir attended the #MSC2021 special event in his capacity as a Munich Young Leader. The Munich Young Leaders are part of a unique fraternity of emerging thought leaders from across the world. Mr. Munir has the honor of being the first Munich Young Leader from Bangladesh.

Since its inception in 2007, BIPSS has been steadfastly committed to analysing, understanding and projecting the security implications of climate change. For over a decade, BIPSS has emerged as a leading international think tank working on this subject. Throughout the year, BIPSS will continue to focus extensively on climate security through its publications, analyses and events. [Link of the speaker's video.](#)

British High Commissioner to Bangladesh visited BIPSS



The British High Commissioner in Bangladesh, H. E. Robert Chatterton Dickson recently visited BIPSS. During the visit, he met President, BIPSS and members of the BIPSS Research Team. The visiting High Commissioner was briefed on BIPSS' current and future research agenda and discussed issues of mutual interest.

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Singapore Consul to Bangladesh visited BIPSS



The Singapore Consul in Bangladesh, H. E. Sheela Pillai recently visited BIPSS. During the visit, she met President, BIPSS and members of the BIPSS Research Team. The Visiting Consul was briefed on BIPSS' current and future research agenda and discussed issues of mutual interest.

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1st Asia-Pacific Security Sector Governance (SSG) Forum

DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance recently organised the 1st Asia-Pacific Security Sector Governance (SSG) Forum with the associate members across the region. The Forum has membership of all the countries in the region and BIPSS is a member of this important network. President, BIPSS, Major General Muniruzzaman (Retd) represented Bangladesh in the forum as the head of the network member in Bangladesh. A section in the forum was also devoted to discussion on the emerging threat of COVID-19 and the role that the security sector can play to manage this pandemic. Participants engaged in lively discussion sessions as they discussed on different aspects of security sector governance and security sector reform.

COVID-19 Pandemic through Gender Lens

BIPSS recently organised a webinar titled "COVID-19 Pandemic through Gender Lens". The Keynote paper was presented by Ms. Anamika Barua from BIPSS. In her presentation Ms. Barua highlighted the challenges borne out of the pandemic and stressed on the need for a more gender sensitive approach. The participants were drawn from various sectors to present their views and experiences on the subject. Ms. Silja Paasillina, Country Director, Bangladesh for International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) was present as the Special Guest. This is part of a series of webinars that will be held over the coming months delving into various policy issues.

President BIPSS, Becomes a Distinguished Fellow of the Yunnan Academy of Social Science (YASS)



President BIPSS, Major General A N M Muniruzzaman, ndc, psc (Retd) has been appointed a Distinguished Fellow of the Yunnan Academy of Social Science (YASS). This prestigious academy works under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). YASS has built a reputation for policy research excellence on various socio-economic issues of the region.

Understanding the Threat of Radicalization from a Gender Based Perspective: A Case of Bangladesh



Radicalization is a constantly evolving challenge. In order to effectively counter radicalization, it is also important to understand the gender aspect. In the post COVID-19 world, violent extremism could emerge with renewed ferocity. It has been a constant endeavor of BIPSS and BCTR to study, understand & analyze the evolving nature of violent extremism.

Click [here](#) to read more.

The Stormy Sea of Geo-Politics & Geo-Economics: How will Bangladesh Navigate?



The world has entered a phase of geopolitical uncertainty and era of upheaval due to the deadly Coronavirus pandemic. A country like Bangladesh must navigate with dexterity and steadfastness during these troubled times. In order to understand the most pressing geopolitical and economic issues, BIPSS recently organised a webinar

titled 'The Stormy Sea of Geopolitics and Geo-economics: How will Bangladesh Navigate?' President, BIPSS, Major General Muniruzzaman (Retd) in his remarks, stressed on the importance of maintaining Bangladesh's strategic autonomy and also acting as a voice for stability in the region. The keynote paper was presented by Mr. Parvez Karim Abbasi, Assistant Professor, East West University, Dhaka. Ms. Silja Paasilina, Country Director IFES Bangladesh, delivered the welcome remarks. The session was moderated by Mr. Shafqat Munir, Research Fellow and Head of Bangladesh Centre for Terrorism Research (BCTR).

Video link: <https://buff.ly/2GXTetC>

Bangladesh and the Region: Facing the challenges in post COVID world

In order to explore the emerging regional complexities of South Asia and Bangladesh, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and BIPSS have jointly organised a webinar on "Bangladesh and the Region: Facing the challenges in post COVID world." The webinar was attended by senior ICRC officials from across the world. The keynote presentation was given by the President, BIPSS, Major General Muniruzzaman (Retd).

In his presentation, General Muniruzzaman focused on the emerging national and regional challenges faced by Bangladesh and South Asia in the Post-COVID world. General Muniruzzaman also dwelt on the politics of vaccine diplomacy and regional power dynamics in South Asia. It may be mentioned that the ICRC is one of its earliest partners and the two organisations have held numerous joint events through the years.

Border Management and Intelligence

President, BIPSS, Major General Muniruzzaman (Retd) recently delivered a keynote presentation at a Faculty and Professional Development Programme on Border Management and Intelligence organised by Rashtriya Raksha University (formerly known as Raksha Shakti University). The presentation was organised under the auspices of Centre for Border Management and Intelligence at the School of Internal Security and Police Administration.

Rashtriya Raksha University located in Ahmedabad, India, is a central

university and a premier institute of excellence for national security studies. General Muniruzzaman delivered the presentation on the topic: "Smart Border Management" where he focused on new ways of managing the border between Bangladesh and India and the need to include new technological platforms for border management. The presentation was attended by students, faculty members, members of the law enforcement agencies, administrative services, armed forces, and other professionals.

Bangladesh-China Development Cooperation: Experience and Outlook



Recently, The Centre for Policy Dialogue, a renowned Bangladeshi think tank organised a virtual dialogue titled "Bangladesh-China Development Cooperation: Experience and Outlook". The virtual conference brought together senior academics, heads of think tanks, diplomats, captains of industry among others. The event was graced by the presence of Mr. Md. Shahriar Alam, MP, honourable State Minister of Foreign Affairs as the chief guest. The Bangladesh Ambassador to China and the Chinese Ambassador in Dhaka also spoke on the occasion. President, BIPSS, Major General ANM Muniruzzaman, ndc, psc, (Retd.) was one of the keynote speakers in the conference.

In his remarks, President, BIPSS stressed on the need for Bangladesh to remain careful in a time of strategic change. He especially stressed on the importance of preserving our strategic autonomy and taking maximum advantage of all the strategic initiatives such as the Indo-Pacific strategy and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). He also highlighted Bangladesh's growing geo-strategic significance in the Bay of Bengal region.

Click [here](#) to read more.

Mapping the Non Traditional Threat Landscape in Bangladesh and South Asia

Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) and The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

jointly organised a webinar to explore the emerging non-traditional security challenges of Bangladesh and South Asia. President, BIPSS, Major General Muniruzzaman delivered a keynote presentation on the topic: "Mapping the Non Traditional Threat Landscape in Bangladesh and South Asia." The webinar was attended by senior ICRC officials from across the world.

Gender Based Violence During COVID-19



BIPSS recently launched a new initiative as a series of policy cafes titled "Coffee@BIPSS" where an eminent expert discussed a topic of national and global importance. The theme of our first policy café, "Coffee@BIPSS" was "Gender Based Violence During COVID-19." "Coffee@BIPSS" was divided into two segments in order to incorporate the guest speakers from various sectors of

specialisation.

On the first day of the event, Ms. Ayesha Kabir, Consulting Editor, Prothom Alo English was the eminent guest speaker. On the second day of the event, Dr. Nadia Binte Amin, Chairman, TARA Foundation and Managing Director, (RCS) was the eminent guest speaker. President, BIPSS, Major General A N M Muniruzzaman, ndc, psc (Retd) moderated the sessions.

The distinguished guest speakers enlightened the audience with key insights on Gender Based Violence. President, BIPSS focused on the necessity of adopting countermeasures to combat Gender Based Violence. The moderator and the speaker were engaged in a dialogue through a vibrant conversation.

BIPSS Policy Café, "Coffee@BIPSS" was attended by diplomats, retired security personnel, distinguished members of academics, NGO professionals, entrepreneurs and students.

Click [here](#) to read more.

Biosecurity Threats: Understanding & Meeting The New Challenge



President BIPSS Major General A N M Muniruzzaman, ndc, psc (Retd) was invited to speak at the Jinjiang Eastern Forum 2020. The yearly forum arranged by Sichuan University in China was held virtually this year. Besides Chinese participants, the Forum was also attended by participants from all South Asian countries. A number of key issues were covered in the Forum and deliberated by the participants. Major General Muniruzzaman gave a presentation at the Forum on the global threat of bio security titled "Biosecurity Threats: Understanding & Meeting The New Challenge" He covered different threat angels of biosecurity specially current crisis of COVID 19 and it's serious global security implications.

Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies (NTS Centre), S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), NTU

RSIS Webinar by Dr Khor Swee Kheng on "The Science, Politics and Geopolitics of the Covid-19 Vaccine" 15 December 2020



Multiple recent announcements of successful Covid-19 vaccine trials have raised expectations of a rapid end to the pandemic. However, the world must pass through several scientific, political and geopolitical checkpoints before successful deployment of any vaccine(s).

Click [here](#) to watch the webinar.

Virtual ASEAN Symposium on ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025 10 December 2020

Professor Mely Caballero-Anthony, Head of Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies, and Dr Alistair D. B. Cook presented their

policy paper on Collaborative Governance at the virtual ASEAN Symposium on ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025 on 10 December 2020. The Symposium discussed challenges to the implementation of the ASCC Blueprint 2025 and identified ways to address gaps and challenges. The inaugural symposium sought to strengthen the ASEAN network with the research community and widen outreach of the ASCC Blueprint 2025 implementation to the wider public. The symposium was hosted by the Chair of Senior Officials' Committee for the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (SOCA), Nguyen Manh Cuong, Director-General of the International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, Vietnam and attended by SOCA members and invited officials from across ASEAN.



NTS Centre Panel Webinar on "Humanitarian Futures in the Post-COVID-19 World" 17 November 2020



On 17th November, Dr Kilian Spandler, Researcher, School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg, Sweden, gave a presentation titled "Saving People or Saving Face? Narratives and the Humanitarian Order in Southeast Asia". The presentation was based on his recently published journal article. Dr Alistair D.B. Cook, Senior Fellow, HADR Programme Coordinator, Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies, was the Chairperson of the webinar.

Dr Spandler's research aimed to answer the following key question: Why is there so much uncertainty in the regional governance of HADR in the Southeast Asian region? Using narrative analysis as a theoretical framework, he investigated how

different agents construct the role of the AHA Centre through different narratives. In doing so, he argued that competing narratives serve to hamper the formation of a more coherent regional architecture for humanitarian governance, and that a regional humanitarian community does not yet exist in the region. Rather, various humanitarian networks exist, which require a more unifying, overarching narrative for them to coalesce into a community. His findings question traditional hegemonic liberal ideas about the regional humanitarian system, which have implications on authority relations and roles and responsibilities of humanitarian actors. [webinar](#).

Click [here](#) to watch the webinar.

CSCAP Nuclear Energy Experts Group Virtual Meeting 10-11 November 2020



The NTS Centre, representing CSCAP Singapore, and Pacific Forum (US CSCAP) co-organised the virtual meeting of the CSCAP Nuclear Energy Experts Group via Zoom from 10 to 11 November 2020. Prof Mely Caballero-Anthony, Head of NTS Centre, co-chaired the meeting while Mr Julius Cesar Trajano, Research Fellow, delivered a presentation on the role of nuclear technology in detecting infectious diseases such as COVID-19. Around 45 nuclear experts from Asia-Pacific countries discussed the role of nuclear energy in Asia's energy mix; the future of peaceful use of nuclear technology in the region; the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty and potential impact on non-proliferation and nuclear security treaties; the nexus between strategic trade control and nuclear governance; and how regional networks advance non-proliferation and nuclear security.

Jeju Peace Forum 2020 on "Reinventing Multilateral Cooperation: Pandemic and Humane Security" 5 November 2020

Head of NTS Centre, Prof Mely Caballero-Anthony speaking at the Asia Pacific Leadership Network on Non-Proliferation (APLN) Panel, entitled "Reinventing

Multilateral Cooperation: Pandemic and Humane Security", organised by the Jeju Peace Forum on 5 November 2020.

This pre-recorded event brought together members of the APLN: Chair of APLN Gareth Evans, Kevin Rudd, former PM of Australia, Des Browne, Vice Chairman of NTI, and Amb Shin Dong-ik of Korea.



SEPDM Webinar 2020 on "Enhancing Disaster Preparedness and Partnerships" 28 - 30 October 2020



The Senior Executive Programme in Disaster Management (SEPDM) has been held annually in Singapore's Civil Defence Academy (CDA) since 2015. Currently in its sixth run, the SEPDM has established itself as the flagship Senior Leadership Programme of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM). Since its inception, the programme has built an alumni network comprising more than 90 members from over 10 international organisations in the region. In view of the COVID-19 pandemic and the travel restrictions imposed internationally, the 2020 edition of the SEPDM is conducted as a webinar, serving as an outreach platform to new participants from Emergency Response and Disaster Management Organisations in the region and members of the SEPDM alumni network.

The theme for SEPDM Webinar 2020 is "Enhancing Disaster Preparedness and Partnerships". SEPDM Webinar 2020 comprises three webinar sessions: (1) Effective Leadership for Disaster Preparedness; (2) COVID-19 and its impact on operations and partnerships; and (3) Adopting INSARAG Guidelines 2020 to strengthen disaster resilience. Dr Alistair D. B. Cook, Coordinator of the HADR Programme and Senior Fellow at the NTS Centre moderated the first webinar panel session on "Effective Leadership for Disaster

Preparedness" with panelists Ms. Victoria Saiz-Omenaca, Head, UNOCHA Indonesia Office; Dr Pedro Besabe, Senior Regional Disaster Risk Reduction & Rapid Response Advisor, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation; Dr Riyanti, Head Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance Division, ASEAN Secretariat; Ms Adelina Kamal, Executive Director, The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre); and Mr Goh Boon Han Director, Crisis Preparedness Directorate, Ministry of Home Affairs, Singapore.

35th ASEAN Roundtable webinar on "The COVID-19 Crisis: Impact on ASEAN and the Way Forward" 21 October 2020



Prof Mely Caballero-Anthony, speaking at the 35th ASEAN Roundtable webinar on "The COVID-19 Crisis: Impact on ASEAN and the Way Forward", held on 21 October 2020.

ASEAN Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination Webinar 2020 29 September 2020



On 29th September, Mr Christopher Chen, Associate Research Fellow, was invited to participate in the ASEAN Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination Webinar 2020. Hosted by the Office of Policy and Planning (OPP), Ministry of Defence (MOD), in collaboration with CFE-DM, USINDOPACOM, UN OCHA, Thai MOPH, the webinar sought to share experiences on civil-military coordination in response to the Coronavirus Infectious Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

He gave a presentation titled 'Humanitarian Assistance in the Asia-Pacific during COVID-19', which covered 3 main areas: 1) Challenges that governments and humanitarian personnel in the region face when trying to provide humanitarian assistance during a pandemic, 2) Ways that stakeholders can adapt to this 'new normal', 3) Key questions for the future.

RSIS-AHA Centre World Humanitarian Day Webinar on "Humanitarian Assistance in Southeast Asia during COVID-19" 19 August 2020



On 19th August, the Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Programme of the Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies (NTS Centre) at RSIS co-hosted a webinar with colleagues from the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) in Indonesia to commemorate World Humanitarian Day. Professor Mely Caballero-Anthony, Head of NTS Centre, RSIS delivered the welcome remarks and Ms Adelina Kamal, Executive Director, AHA Centre moderated the session titled "Humanitarian Assistance in Southeast Asia during COVID-19". The panel included Tan Sri Dr Jemilah Mahmood, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister of Malaysia on Public Health; Ms Carol Lee, Executive Director, Mercy Relief; Mr Masahiro Ishizeki, Head, International Programmes, Mercy Relief; and Dr Alistair D. B. Cook, Coordinator of the HADR Programme, NTS Centre, RSIS. The speakers examined how the region is coping with the dual challenges of a pandemic and the threat of natural hazards, while also preparing for simultaneous disasters in the future. Some of the insights from the webinar included the prospects for national One Stop Shops to facilitate the government's relations with local and national partners, including the private sector, all of whom have strong networks within communities; the need to have a clear vision and goal when trying to effect change in the humanitarian sector; and the need for humanitarian practitioners to actively engage with other groups such as the private sector and academia.

Click [here](#) to watch the webinar.

The NTS-Asia Consortium organised a webinar on COVID-19 and Economic Crisis: Mitigating Impact and Sustaining Development in Asia 05 August 2020

The NTS-Asia Consortium organised a webinar on COVID-19 and Economic

Crisis: Mitigating Impact and Sustaining Development in Asia on 5 August 2020. The online event, hosted by the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) Indonesia in partnership with the Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS Centre) of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, successfully garnered more than 3,200 viewers on Youtube. The webinar featured senior scholars from Asia's three sub-regions: East Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia.



Dr Julia Puspawati Tjaja, Director of ASEAN Integration Monitoring Directorate of the ASEAN Secretariat, graced the webinar with an insightful keynote speech on ASEAN's responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Acknowledging the importance of this webinar in facilitating a sharing of information across regions, Dr Tjaja underscored that the unprecedented challenges triggered by the pandemic are not unique only to Southeast Asia but also a reality in other places. Her presentation on the ASEAN experience therefore can provide some useful points for reflection for other regions.

Dr Tjaja began by highlighting the need to remain vigilant. Although at present ASEAN's confirmed cases and confirmed deaths only make up of 1.6 percent and 1.1 percent of global numbers respectively, the figures are on the rise. She also pointed out a wide variation in virus containment progress across countries in the region. Some managed to meaningfully slow down the spread of the virus whereas some others still see more and more confirmed cases each day.

On the economic front, the current pandemic is estimated to result in a contraction that ranges between 5.2 percent and 8 percent. She stressed that even if the regional annual economic growth is expected to rebound to 5.2 percent by 2022, it will nowhere reach the pre-COVID-19 growth track. Economic slowdown has affected all sectors and 41 percent of ASEAN workforce. Travel, tourism, accommodation, and hospitality sectors where women are overrepresented

are among the hardest hit. In view of these multi-faceted challenges, ASEAN member states have asserted their commitments to keep the regional market open. The regional body has also established ASEAN Coordinating Council Working Group on Public Health Emergencies and ASEAN COVID-19 Response Fund.

Dr Tjaja closed her speech with the following three optimistic points. First, the pandemic compels us to do things better moving forward. There is a need to look at how we can better address climate concerns, ensure inclusive growth, strengthen social protection, and give health and education the long overdue attention they need. Second, virus knows no boundaries and no country and region can fight against it alone. Cooperation and collective efforts will become more important now and ever. Third, while we do not know when this crisis will end, we know it will end. It is important for ASEAN and for any region not to lose sight of this long-term vision. For ASEAN, this means focusing on community building and regional integration agenda. Existing inequality that has become even more evident, thanks to the pandemic, necessitates inclusive digitalisation efforts, and inclusive, participatory growth and development that leave no one behind.

Prof. Miki Honda from Hosei University, Japan, gave a general overview of COVID-19 situation in Japan. Prof. Honda lamented the government's late response that has led to business bankruptcies and closures, and insufficient PCR testing among high-risk population. She identified Japan's vulnerable segments to include single-parent families in lower living standards, service sector workers, temporary workers, migrant workers, sick and injured people, medical experts and service workers and their families, and COVID-19 survivors. Although local and national governments have provided some form of assistance to the vulnerable groups, Prof. Honda opined that these are not sufficient. She highlighted some weaknesses in Japan's COVID-19 response that included slow bureaucratic system, strained health care and fiscal capacity, and overreliance on people's voluntary restraint. She closed her presentation by recommending the World Health Organization to provide unified direction and coordinate vaccine development worldwide, and the Japanese government to conduct data-based analysis for accurate information, strengthen policy cooperation with local governments, and enhance medical facility capacity.

injected stimulus packages to cushion the economic impacts among its population and has laid out Korean New Deal 1 and 2 that iterate its recovery plans. Dr Lee identified temporary workers and migrants as part of the vulnerable groups. Although there were issues with access to information and government's assistance, migrants in South Korea were given free testing and treatment. In closing, Dr Lee shared his reflections on the need to review regional posture against pandemic, region-wide standard coordination procedures and protection measures, and mutual economic assistance.

Dr Le Hong Hiep from ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore reported a similar victorious story in Vietnam. Dr Le attributed Vietnam's early virus containment as a key success factor. Although Vietnam was also hit by economic downturn, income loss among population was not particularly serious. He warned, however, that the second wave of infections brought uncertainties that may lead to widening inequality, worsening poverty, and other social problems like increasing unemployment and crime rates.

Prof. Prijono Tjiptoherijanto from University of Indonesia acknowledged the gloom and doom repercussions of the pandemic but chose to focus on the brighter side instead. He pointed out to new jobs being created such as teleconferencing support specialists, online market start-ups, temperature screeners, and protective equipment manufacturers and installers. The pandemic has also resulted in many companies suggesting and even requiring employees to work from home. This has enabled flexible work arrangements that

have allowed more time for employees to look after their wellbeing, support the learning and development of their children, and have quality interactions with other family members. Social capital can thus be strengthened during this pandemic period.

Maj. Gen. (ret'd) Dipankar Banerjee from India showed the struggle that the Indian society is currently facing in containing virus spread as daily infection rate exceeds 50,000. He stressed the need for inclusive and sustainable relief and economic stimulus, strengthening of public health infrastructure, and enhancing social protection for livelihood security. He further highlighted the urgency for regional cooperation that will assist countries to build back better.



The five presentations have shown that although countries were generally similar in their containment and support responses, there has been a wide range of variations in terms of progress. Constraints at the national level, as seen in the case of Japan, can hamper effective measures. On the other hand, early re-opening of the economy, presumably on the condition of a successful virus containment as seen in Vietnam and South Korea, seems to be an important factor that averts a country from plunging into deep economic recession. Against this backdrop, Indonesia's policy to re-open its economy despite continuing

COVID-19 cases thus presents an interesting strategy that merits an assessment as to whether this will indeed work. Above all, amidst the tendency for countries to look inward, cooperation among nations cannot be relinquished as it remains critical in this globalised world.

Click [here](#) to watch the webinar.

Fireside Chats of Asian Pathfinders: Re-Imagining the Humanitarian Landscape in a Post-COVID World 01 August 2020



On 1st August, members of the RSIS HADR Team participated in a Fireside Chat organised by Asian Pathfinders. Dr Alistair Cook, Senior Fellow and Coordinator of the HADR Programme, and Mr Christopher Chen, Associate Research Fellow, were invited to share insights on how COVID-19 is exposing gaps and frailties in the humanitarian system, and the changing modalities needed to adapt to this new normal. They spoke about some of the trends emerging in the Indo-Pacific region, which included the cutting of aid funding by donor countries and an increased push towards localisation of aid, as well as recommendations on how the humanitarian sector should move forward amidst this pandemic.