

Indo-Pacific Era Strategic Centre

Mapping the Geopolitics of the Next Indo-Pacific Century.

November 2023



Photo Credit: Triumfilms via Freepik.com

Climate Security and Economic Development: Dual Challenges for Southeast Asia

The UNDP defines [climate security](#) as the impacts of the climate crisis on peace and security particularly in fragile and conflict-affected or conflict prone settings. But this definition is not necessarily limited to above settings but can also impact regions with high levels of *potential* human insecurities including food, water and energy insecurities that will be faced by vulnerable populations under changing climate scenarios. Southeast Asia is one of the regions that is most vulnerable to extreme as well as rapidly changing weather patterns. In the region's case, it is less of conflict-related insecurities than human insecurities. Southeast Asia is home to millions of people employed in climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture and the fishery industries. And although southeast Asia shows active economic vitality the [region's growing reliance](#) on coal and oil, along with deforestation, are undermining national pledges to curb emissions and embrace cleaner energy sources. Between 1990 and 2010, southeast Asia had the most [rapid rate of increase in carbon dioxide emissions](#) among major world regions. Between facing the threats of climate change and the growing curbs to economic development necessary to reduce those threats, the region might increasingly find itself between a rock and a hard place.

Climate change presents a major [threat to long-term growth and prosperity](#), and undoubtedly it has a direct impact on the economic wellbeing of people and states. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) estimates that climate change would cost the southeast Asian region about 11 per cent of combined annual [gross domestic product](#) (GDP) by 2100. This is much higher than an earlier estimation by the ADB in 2009, of a 6.7 percent reduction. Meanwhile, the [latest report](#) by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change highlights that the significantly increasing extreme weather events in the region will lead to food insecurity and increased migration flows, which can create economic instability. A large degree of economic activity in southeast Asia is concentrated in sectors that are particularly susceptible to the

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impacts of climate change including agriculture, forestry and fishery industries. Not unlike a huge tanker trying to do a U-turn in narrow straits, energy transition policies to cleaner forms of fuel will take time and sustained will and effort in steering new directions. Although many countries in the region have respective plans to combat climate change, the nationally determined contributions of ASEAN member states to the Paris Agreement are modest. So how are we to push forward economic development so vital to peace and security in the region, not give up our place as a vital node in global economic connectedness, and all the while save our planet?

Here is a threefold solution to this conundrum. For one, development strategies must be altered from earlier economic practices that have worked so well, especially those that demand rampant energy use that contributes to greater CO₂ emissions. That means decoupling, in all ways, shapes and/or forms, greenhouse gas emissions from GDP growth. In other words, 'green growth' – or promoting economic growth while safeguarding natural assets that continue to provide resources on which our well-being relies – is the solution to managing the challenges of climate insecurity and economic development. What this would mean has to be determined within each state's parameters. Rarely is there a *one-size-fits-all* model for what 'green growth' would entail for each country, as should be the case, as nothing defeats 'green growth' faster than uniform policies applied to all regardless of contextual understanding.

A better understanding of economic security, not only of states but also of everyday people is equally important in any attempt to change economic growth models. While we are aware of the benefits to the planet and the sustainability of resources with new modes of production, attempts to make these changes must consider the impacts on labour in resource extraction and connected industries. While most analysts speak of economic security at a macro-scale of nations, the microcosm of economically insecure communities and families should be equally important in policies looking to address these dual challenges in the region. That is why greater consultative processes must be *de rigueur* in future economic planning.

The atmosphere is singular. There are no multiple 'airs' in conventional understanding. But climate models treat all CO₂ emissions the same without regard to how they are being generated. The emissions of a farmer looking to feed his family cannot be equated to those of a tourist taking a holiday flight. We cannot remove political, social and economic disparities underlying patterns of CO₂ emissions. This provides vital information that should feed into climate models. Existing regional multilateral institutions should seek to understand these differences and use them as scaffolding moving forward in both regional climate security architecture and economic cooperation. Merging strategies in these two areas is the way forward to address these dual challenges.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Alan Chong and Tamara Nair. (2023). "Fiery Climate Change Introduces Fresh Environmental Stewards." *RSIS Commentaries* CO23139, 4 October.

Amit Prakash. (2018). "Boiling Point." *IMF Finance & Development*. September.

International Monetary Fund. (2023). "The IMF and Climate Change." *IMF Website*. 27 October, accessed 19 November 2023.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. (2022). *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*.

Lorraine Elliott and Mely Caballero-Anthony (eds). (2012). *Human Security and Climate Change in Southeast Asia: Managing risk and resilience*. (New York: Routledge).

Shannon O'Lear and Simon Dalby (eds). (2016). *Reframing Climate Change: Constructing Ecological Geopolitics*. London and New York: Routledge.



Photo Credit: Freepik.com

CLIMATE CHANGE

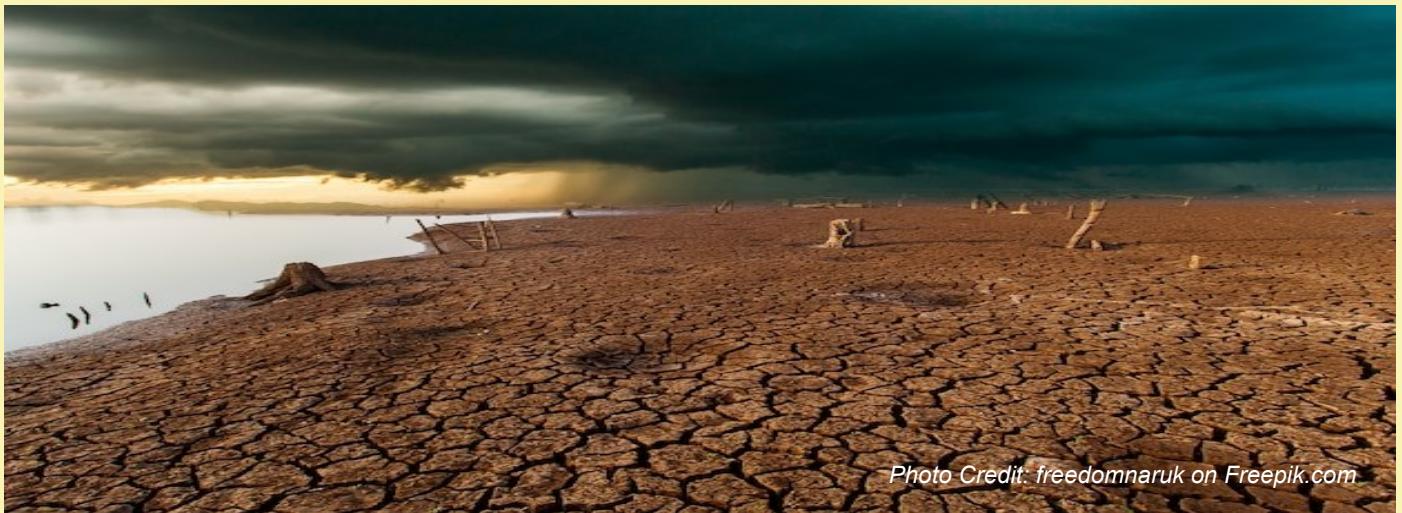


Photo Credit: freedomnaruk on Freepik.com

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

Just 4% of top companies meet UN climate target guidelines, study says

Half of the world's 2,000 biggest listed companies have set a target to get to net-zero emissions by mid-century, but just a fraction meet tough United Nations guidelines for what constitutes a quality pledge.

Simon Jessop

Reuters | 6 November 2023

Top consultancy undermining climate change fight: Whistleblowers

Behind closed doors, McKinsey & Company has proposed future energy scenarios to the agenda setters of the summit that are at odds with the climate goals it publicly espouses. An "energy transition narrative" drafted by the firm only reduces oil use by 50 percent by 2050, and calls for trillions in new oil and gas investment per year from now until then.

Marlowe Hood

The Japan Times | 8 November 2023

Australia offers climate refuge to Tuvalu citizens

Australia is offering residents of the Pacific island nation of Tuvalu a chance to migrate to escape climate change as part of a landmark treaty with one of the countries most affected by global warming.

Tiffany Turnbull

BBC News | 10 November 2023

Kerry says COP28 is critical to keeping climate change hopes alive

"COP28 is absolutely critical to open up the opportunity to keep 1.5°C alive," Mr Kerry said, referring to the limit on temperature increases agreed in Paris in 2015. "We can win. This is actually winnable, but only if we do the things we said we'd do."

Bloomberg

The Straits Times | 11 November 2023

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

The hottest 12-month stretch in recorded history

The analysis using the Climate Shift Index indicates that human-caused climate change significantly elevated temperatures from Nov 2022 to Oct 2023. With an average warming of more than 1.3°C, the past 12 months were the hottest on record.

Climate Central

2023

The production gap: Phasing down or phasing up? Top fossil fuel producers plan even more extraction despite climate promises

The report finds that governments plan to produce around 110 percent more fossil fuels in 2030 than would be consistent with limiting warming to 1.5°C, and 69 percent more than would be consistent with 2°C.

Stockholm Environment Institute, Climate Analytics, E3G, International Institute for Sustainable Development and United Nations Environment Programme

2023

EVENT & ANNOUNCEMENT

2023 UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 28)

The COP28 Presidency has announced its two-week thematic program, geared towards real world solutions that close the gaps to 2030 and respond to the Global Stocktake. The thematic days programming incorporates four cross-cutting themes that underpin effective, interconnected delivery: Technology & Innovation, Inclusion, Frontline Communities and Finance.

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

30 November – 12 December 2023

ENERGY SECURITY



Photo Credit: frimufilms on freepik.com

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

DOE paves way for nuclear energy adoption

The Philippines' energy agency had started crafting the National Policy and Strategy for Safety on Nuclear Energy, outlining the long-term commitment to achieving the fundamental safety objectives and applying the essential safety principles set forth by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Jordeene B. Lagare

Inquirer.net | 27 October 2023

Hydropower dams threaten crucial Mekong supply chains, WWF says

A new report from WWF highlights the possible indirect negative impacts on five industries: energy production, fisheries and aquaculture, rice production, sand mining, and textiles and electronics.

Sebastian Strangio

The Diplomat | 31 October 2023

China is winning in solar power, but its coal use is raising alarm

Chinese officials have defended the coal-fired plants as needed for national energy security. The country imports most of its oil and natural gas but has the largest coal reserves.

New York Times

The Straits Times | 5 November 2023

Singapore to import low-carbon electricity from Vietnam to help meet renewable imports target

The imports from Vietnam could potentially constitute 10% of Singapore's annual needs, and will be transmitted through new subsea cables that will span a distance of around one thousand kilometres.

Cheryl Tan

The Straits Times | 6 November 2023

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

World energy outlook report 2023

The phenomenal rise of clean energy technologies such as solar, wind, electric cars and heat pumps is reshaping how we power everything from factories and vehicles to home appliances and heating systems.

International Energy Agency
2023

Computer security in the nuclear world

Advanced nuclear reactor designs, such as small modular reactors (SMRs) and microreactors, already include plans to use AI and machine learning (ML) to enable innovative features such as automation, remote supervisory control and maintenance, and shared control rooms.

IAEA Bulletin, Vol. 64, No. 2
2023

EVENT & ANNOUNCEMENT

6th Vienna Energy Security Dialogue: Looking Ahead: Shaping the Post-Crises Global Energy Markets

The conference was dedicated to discussing the shifts in the global supply chains of energy, technologies, and critical minerals in light of the energy transition and the continued war against Ukraine.

Recorded Conference
25 October 2023



Photo Credit: user6702303 on Freepik.com

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

India's rice export restrictions need multilateral solutions

While much criticism has been levelled against India's rice export restrictions, a more constructive approach to engaging India — and food exporting states more broadly — should begin by acknowledging the complex balancing act they undertake within the global food order. There is a need for multilateral approaches to curb the escalation of an international food price crisis.

Jose Ma. Luis Montesclaros

East Asia Forum | 18 October 2023

A revolution in rice production?

To meet the increasing demand for rice worldwide, there is a need to revolutionise the way the crop is produced, which would also reduce the requirement for labour, improve water-use efficiency, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. As presented at the International Rice Congress held in Manila on 16-19 October 2023, the prospect of achieving this is promising.

Paul S. Teng and Jose Ma. Luis Montesclaros

RSIS Commentary | 24 October 2023

Food security in India: Centre's PMGKAY and its extension explained

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the extension to 2028 of the COVID-19 food aid program known as Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY). This was initially set to end in January 2023 and to be reintegrated with the National Food Security Act (NFSA) policy established in 2013. In Jan-Dec 2023, PMGKAY was replaced with an enhanced NFSA that included free rations.

Vasudha Mukherjee

Business Standard | 6 November 2023

Russian government hammers out poultry export ban

The Russian Agricultural Ministry has published a draft decree under which poultry and egg exports from the country will be banned for the next 6 months in order to bring price relief to the domestic market. The Russian Union of Poultry Farmers' director-general though, denied any shortage in the domestic poultry market.

Fabian Brockotter (Ed.)

Poultry World | 9 November 2023

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

A risk governance approach to mitigating food system risks in a crisis: Insights from the COVID-19 pandemic in five low- and middle-income countries

This article seeks to connect literature on food system responses to COVID-19, to the broader risk governance scholarship. It adopts a risk governance lens to study how governments have dealt with COVID-19 induced food system risks across different phases of the crisis. Studying Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Mexico, Nigeria and Vietnam, it suggests developing future arrangements that involve actors with knowledge on food system risks to allow for more adequate responses.

D.F. Polman et al.

Global Food Security | 2023

Viewpoint: Finance needs of the agricultural mid-stream

This paper discusses the relatively understudied "midstream" of the food value chain, which begins after production and prior to final sale, and the financial needs of this segment. It observes ways by which value chain characteristics can influence both financial needs and potential remedies, and points to the potential for digital financial services to meet needs of midstream actors that are either unmet by existing policies and the formal financial sector, or costly when provided through the informal sector.

Kate Ambler et al.

Food Policy | 2023

EVENT & ANNOUNCEMENT

'Agtech and Foodtech': The Importance of International Standard Integration of Critical and Emerging Technology in South East Asia

Critical and Emerging Technologies will transform economic competitiveness, national and international security as well as democratic governance and social cohesion. These new technologies are often enabled by, and reliant on, information that is created, stored, and transmitted through digital networks. This event will seek to reinforce the importance of the adoption and development of standards with the advancement of Critical and Emerging Technologies (CET) across South-East Asia, considering the importance of digital agriculture in food security.

Virtual Event

22 and 29 November 2023



Photo Credit: DC Studio on Freepik.com

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

Health impact of air pollution missing from two-thirds of national climate plans

The UN COP28 climate summit in Dubai this December will dedicate a day to climate-associated health risks. However, some people warn that the health impacts of air pollution deserve equal attention as currently the national climate plans of most countries do not give sufficient consideration to this issue

Thomson Reuters Foundation

Eco-Business | 19 October 2023

UN: Asia bears brunt as climate change threatens health gains

Asian countries will be affected more than other regions by the climate-induced health impact. Access to resources should be improved for vulnerable countries to predict health risks.

Subel Rai Bhandari

Radio Free Asia | 3 November 2023

The No 1 lesson from Covid-19, Ebola and Spanish flu? Countries must learn to work together, pandemic and emergency expert says

As the world is emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, health expert alerted that countries should learn to work together in combatting disease outbreaks in the future and avoid the mentality of “everyone for themselves” which was seen at the peak of the pandemic.

Richard James Havis

South China Morning Post | 7 November 2023

WHO unveils framework for climate resilient and low carbon health systems

The World Health Organization (WHO) announced a new Operational framework for building climate resilient and low carbon health systems. The Framework presents different pathways for health systems to enhance their resilience while simultaneously reducing their carbon footprint.

World Health Organization

9 November 2023

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Tracking the impacts of climate change on human health via indicators: Lessons from the Lancet Countdown

This study examined how climate change impacts, exposures, and vulnerability indicators (CCIEVIs) have been developed as a discrete set of quantifiable indicators to measure the health impacts of climate change. It showed that CCIEVIs are effective, while pointing out that efforts should be made to make the description of the climate-health nexus more comprehensive.

Claudia Di Napoli et al.

BMC Public Health 22, no.663 | 2022

Fixing air pollution could dramatically improve health disparities

This article points out that the most marginalised people suffer disproportionately from the negative health impacts of air pollution. Efforts to improve health equity should seek to address this challenge.

Jyoti Madhusoodanan

Nature | 2023

EVENT & ANNOUNCEMENT

3rd Edition of International Public Health Conference

The conference intends to investigate and assess the capabilities of Public Health Interventions in limiting the pandemic. The theme will be “Restraining Pandemics Through Exploration of Trends and Public Health Challenges.”

Singapore, Hybrid Conference

21-23 March 2024

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER RELIEF



Photo Credit: EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid on Flickr.com

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

Navigating the climate emergency: The crucial role of adaptive decision support systems in ASEAN's disaster management

While decision support systems are instrumental in facilitating strategic HADR operations and planning, global foresight reports and the synergistic approach towards climate change risk management have set tough standards for regional-scale systems.

Keith Paolo Catibog Landicho

IDSS Paper | 18 October 2023

Decolonise how? Hang on, 'humanitarian' might not mean what you think it does

Employing the language of humanitarianism is meant to evoke ideas of solidarity with suffering peoples, of the moral imperative to act urgently, ease suffering, and save lives. However, one must be careful when using such terms considering its sometimes expansive use.

Patrick Gathara

The New Humanitarian | 20 October 2023

How Red Cross disaster relief efforts are evolving amid climate crisis

As climate change crisis causes more frequent and more intense extreme weather events across the country, the Red Cross needs to adapt its services and grow its disaster response capacity to help people affected by unrelenting disasters

American Red Cross

The New Humanitarian | 6 November 2023

A decade after powerful Typhoon Haiyan, reflections on how power affects recovery

Research can be used to highlight power asymmetries as part of the root causes of inequities and vulnerability that are often reinforced through decision-making in the recovery process – as seen in the case of the response to the 2013 super Typhoon Haiyan, which left a trail of destruction in the Philippines.

Heidi Tuhkanen

Stockholm Environment Institute | 9 November 2023

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Gender dynamics in internal displacement

Drawing from primary data collected by organisations working with displaced peoples, this report explores the gendered risks and impacts of displacement. It promotes understanding of gender inequalities linked with internal displacement and highlight ways forward to promote more inclusive and effective data collection, planning and responses

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
2023

Unequal access: Gendered barriers to humanitarian assistance

This study looks to overcome the challenges that have been raised in terms of systematically operationalising gender analyses, participatory approaches and the tailoring of assistance to the needs of women and girls. It therefore identifies barriers and constraints that women face when accessing aid.

World Food Programme
2023

EVENT & ANNOUNCEMENT

Reality Check: Do the UN's False Climate Neutrality Claims Matter in the Fight against Climate Change?

This year's COP is due for a heavy dose of reality checks. This webinar looks at the prospect of disagreement over phasing out fossil fuels, and on the various "scattershot" climate finance pledges by states, especially for adaptation and loss and damage.

Webinar

21 November 2023

MIGRATION



Photo Credit: UN Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid on Flickr.com

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

Is the EU doubling down on a deadly, failed migration strategy?

In an effort to reduce the number of migrants reaching Europe, the EU has been signing migration cooperation agreements with at least 14 countries as part of its strategy of “border externalization” – a strategy that has been failing since its inception in 2015.

Riley Sparks

The New Humanitarian | 19 October 2023

Myanmar's military reaches into migrant pockets

Two recent orders issued by Myanmar's junta State Administration Council in September will result in higher costs of moving, living and working abroad for migrant workers from Myanmar.

Nyi Nyi Kaw

East Asia Forum | 26 October 2023

Stay or leave? Israel's migrant workers face tough choices

Southeast Asian migrants in Israel – particularly Thai and Filipino nationals who make up the biggest share of foreign migrant workers – are also being affected by the war with some injured and others facing little support.

Lin Taylor et al

Thomson Reuters Foundation | 31 October 2023

Conflict in DRC forces 6.9 million to flee – UN migration agency

The number of internally displaced people in the Democratic Republic has climbed to 6.9 million – the highest yet. The ongoing conflict has led to the DRC experiencing one of the largest ongoing humanitarian crises in the world.

ANSA

Info Migrants | 1 November 2023

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Return, reintegration and recovery: IOM's Strategy for supporting return to Ukraine

Considering the unknown numbers and profiles of those who might wish to return along with the ongoing conflict as well as future recovery and reconstruction contexts, IOM's strategy includes assisted voluntary return and reintegration models.

International Organization for Migration
2023

Under pressure: An analysis of remittance trends and the barriers preventing migrants from sending money home

This study looks at some of the opportunities and challenges related to migrants and their remittances. This includes the trends and patterns of earning, sending and using remittances as well as the barriers migrants face in sending money home.

International Organization for Migration
2023

EVENT & ANNOUNCEMENT

Migration, Integration, and Development in Secondary Cities

This webinar will examine the challenges that refugees and other migrants face in cities, and their capacity to respond to these needs. This includes possible strategies that stakeholders can take to address socioeconomic and inclusion challenges while being sensitive to gender dynamics.

Recorded Webinar
13 November 2023