November 2015

In this issue: Survey of the Afghan People, Afghanistan, Technology, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, and Myanmar.

Upcoming Events

November 19 – The Asia Foundation will release findings from Afghanistan in 2015: A Survey of the Afghan People - the broadest, most comprehensive public opinion poll in the country, covering all 34 provinces, with candid data gleaned from face-to-face interviews with more than 9,500 Afghan citizens. This marks the 11th in the Foundation’s series of surveys in Afghanistan; taken together they provide a barometer of Afghan public opinion over time.

Recent Events

October 21 – John Karr, the Asia Foundation's Senior Director of Digital Media and Technology Programs, and developers from Indonesia and Myanmar discussed how to bridge the divide between tech gurus and civic participation—creating innovative solutions to some of development's biggest challenges.

October 23 – To lend insight and nuance to the current situation in Malaysia, Herizal Hazri, the Asia Foundation’s Malaysia Country Representative, and Zakaria Ahmad, the Vice Chancellor of HELP University, spoke on the economic and political challenges Malaysia faces including slow economic growth, a turbulent political scene, and calls for government reform.

October 28 – George Varughese, the Asia Foundation's Country Representative in Nepal, provided his perspective on the recent historic steps to adopt a new Constitution in Nepal and some of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

In the News

In Photos: Elections Make History, Generate Hope for a New Myanmar

On Sunday, November 8, more than 30 million voters in Myanmar went to the polls to cast their votes for members of the Union Parliament as well as for the 14 state and region parliaments. These were the first elections in many decades in which an astounding 91 diverse political parties participated. Given that many were voting for
the first time, the Union Election Commission, political parties, and hundreds of civil society organizations provided much-needed voter education. At more than 40,000 polling stations across the country on Election Day, people lined up early and waited patiently for their turn to vote. Some 10,000 international and local election observers were deployed to monitor the election. Read more about this issue from Kim N. B. Ninh, The Asia Foundation’s country representative in Myanmar and Susan Lee, the Foundation’s Program Manager in Myanmar, on our blog and read a recent Asia Foundation survey on civic knowledge and values in Myanmar on our website.

Tens of thousands of NLD supporters turned out to hear Aung San Suu Kyi speak at her final public campaign rally near Thuwanna Pagoda in Thingangyun Township on Nov. 1. Photo: Thet Htoo

Notes from the Field

Aid and Recovery in Post-Earthquake Nepal

On Monday, October 28, a 7.5-magnitude earthquake hit South Asia, its epicenter in northeastern Afghanistan, devastating many areas, killing hundreds and injuring thousands. Just six months ago, on April 25, in similarly difficult and remote terrain, a 7.8-magnitude quake struck Nepal. Thousands were killed, tens of thousands were injured, and hundreds of thousands of homes were damaged or destroyed. A second major earthquake struck shortly after. Today, The Asia Foundation released a new report, “Independent Impacts and Recovery Monitoring Nepal,” that combines findings from in-depth fieldwork and face-to-face interviews with 2,980 randomly selected respondents across 14 of 26 earthquake-affected districts, along with 298 ward leaders conducted around two months after the first quake. Together the finding in the report, the first part in a series, offer an assessment of the impacts of the earthquake and the response on local communities and their ability to recover. Download the full report on our website.

The Asia Foundation improves lives, expands opportunities, and helps societies flourish across a dynamic and developing Asia. We work with innovative leaders and communities to build effective institutions and advance pathbreaking reforms. Together with our partners, we are committed to Asia’s continued development as a peaceful, just, and thriving region of the world.