



February 2017

In this issue: Sri Lanka, Malaysia, India, China, Governance and Law, Nepal, Mongolia, Afghanistan, Regional Cooperation, Timor-Leste, and Myanmar.

Upcoming Events

March 16 - Dinesha de Silva, The Foundation's Country Representative in Sri Lanka, will comment on recent developments in the country and discuss the present political environment.

March 28 - Herizal Hazri, The Foundation's Country Representative in Malaysia, will discuss current economic and political challenges facing Malaysia.

March 30 - The Foundation's Country Representative in India, Sagar Prasai, will discuss the future of regional cooperation in South Asia and comment on developments in India.

March 31 - The Asia Foundation will launch a publication titled *China's Governance Puzzle: Enabling Transparency and Participation in a Single-Party State* (Cambridge University Press, 2017) at a panel event co-sponsored by the Brookings Institution. This study examines reforms promoting transparency and public participation in China and assesses whether the reforms are resulting in key governance outcomes such as reduced corruption and improved legal compliance. Expert panelists include Jonathan Stromseth (Brookings Institution); Edmund Malesky (Duke University); Dimitar Gueorguiev (Syracuse University); Wang Xixin (Peking University Law School); and Ji Hongbo (Asia Foundation, China). Please click [here](#) for more information on the Foundation's program in China.



Save the Date

April - The Asia Foundation's Country Representative in Nepal, George Varughese, will offer his perspective on the Nepali government's new leadership and discuss opportunities ahead.

In the News

Mongolia's Amended Law Makes Domestic Violence a Criminal Offence

Last December, Mongolia's Parliament passed an amended version of the 2004 Law to Combat Domestic Violence. Recent amendments have made domestic violence a criminal offense for the first time in the country's history and mark a critical step forward for victims of this type of violence.

This is a particularly momentous step for Mongolian women, who, despite the country's relatively high score on gender equity measurements, experience high levels of domestic violence. The change demonstrates the government's commitment to combating domestic violence, protecting domestic violence victims, and holding perpetrators accountable. However, barriers that impede the effective implementation of the law remain. Read more from Ashleigh Griffiths, project officer for The Asia Foundation in Mongolia, [here](#).



Participants at the recent training session on responding to domestic violence.

Notes from the Field

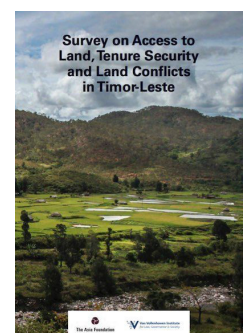
To Advance Afghanistan's Regional Role, Diplomats Need Language of International Relations

In December, delegates from nearly 40 countries attended the sixth annual Heart of Asia Ministerial Conference in Amritsar, India, to discuss peace, cooperation, and economic development in Afghanistan. Five such events have taken place since the first conference was held in Istanbul in 2011, and serve as a platform for regional cooperation by placing Afghanistan at its center. Addressing the key challenges facing Afghanistan, particularly the need for economic growth, job creation, and improving security, will require more effective and nuanced engagement beyond Afghanistan's borders. To tackle these issues, the Asia Foundation began an English-Language Training Program (ELTP) under the European Union-funded Promoting Regional Cooperation Capacity in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (PRCC-MoFA) project which supported strengthening the institutional capacity of the Regional Cooperation Directorate (RCD) within MoFA. Read more from Claire Anderson, communication and program development specialist for The Asia Foundation in Afghanistan, [here](#).

Publication of Interest

Survey on Access to Land, Tenure Security and Land Conflicts in Timor-Leste Houses

This study aimed to pilot an innovative land survey to provide quantitative data regarding land-related issues in Timor-Leste, in order to support the Timorese government and parliament in developing evidence-based land policies and legislation, as well as more informed advocacy of civil society. The results of this pilot in the municipalities of Dili (urban area only), Ainaro, and Ermera provides relevant evidence regarding access to land, land tenure security, and land-related conflict, as well as on the specific policy options taken in the current draft Land Law Package.



State and Region Financing, Planning and Budgeting in Myanmar

Effective subnational public financial management is essential if state and region governments are to achieve their potential in addressing local and national policy development priorities, including the delivery of public services in their areas of jurisdiction. This report provides a foundation for a better understanding of the current subnational public financial management in Myanmar. It presents an overview of the constitutional, institutional, and financing framework that determines subnational public expenditure. The report particularly focuses on assessing both how priorities and investments are determined in sectors that are now under the authority of state and region governments, and those which remain under direction from the Union level.



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.