

15 DEC 1997

Asean-Book

30 YEARS OF ASEAN IN BERNAMA'S FIRST BOOK

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 15 (Bernama) -- The historic moments and colourful faces of Asean and its 500 million people are captured in pictures in the first-ever book produced by Bernama which was launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad here today.

The glossy 200-page pictorial book "Asean: One Region One Vision", produced to commemorate Asean's 30th anniversary, was launched on the sidelines of the second Asean Informal Summit at Palace of The Golden Horses hotel here.

The launch by Dr Mahathir was witnessed by the leaders of the eight other Asean member countries -- Brunei, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar and Laos -- who are gathered here for their two-day summit.

The ceremony took place after the nine Foreign Ministers signed the memorandum of understanding for the setting up of the Asean Foundation and the Economic Ministers inked the Protocol to Implement the Initial Package of Commitments under the Asean Framework Agreement on Services.

Dr Mahathir, accompanied by Bernama chairman Datuk Abu Bakar Hamid unveiled and signed on the mock-up of the book.

The Malaysian prime minister and all the other Asean leaders will be presented with a copy of the book whose 300 pictures put Asean under one roof, looking at its past, present and future.

Organised into four chapters, the book presents the grouping in its historical perspective, landscape, developments and progress, peoples, cultures and ways of life.

The book also contains a candid interview with former Thai Foreign Minister Tun Dr Thanat Khoman, one of the signatories of the Bangkok Declaration of August 1967 that established Asean.

In the interview, the Thai elder statesman recounted how Asean was actually set up, his perceptions and hopes for the organisation which he helped found.

It also contains interviews with leaders like Dr Mahathir, President Fidel Ramos of the Philippines and Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong of Singapore on their assessment on the strength and weaknesses of Asean and its future direction.

Compiled by the head of Bernama Photo Service Rosli Hurmin and edited by Bernama Features and Foreign News Service Editor Kuah Guan Oo, the book is printed in limited copies, and will be supplied to libraries, government departments, the Asean Secretariat and selected bookstores as a collector's item.

Dr Mahathir, in his message in the book, says after 30 years of cooperative endeavours, Asean is now more than a household word in the region that embodies a common vision of stability, security and progress shared by the leaders and people of Southeast Asia.

He says Asean leaders face an endless challenge to lift the organisation to greater heights.--BERNAMA

TM AU AAM