

27/02/1997

Drinking from the same well

QUESTION: Relations between Thailand and Malaysia have always been very close and constructive. What is your Government's priority and policy in fostering stronger relations with Malaysia and Asean?

Answer: When I delivered my Government's policy statement before Parliament last December, Thailand's relations with her neighbours was one of our top priorities.

I fully agree with you that the relations between Thailand and Malaysia have always been very close and constructive. I recall, as a former soldier, that Thai and Malaysian security forces risked their lives to successfully overcome the Communists insurgency problem in the 60s and 70s.

Because cooperation since then has expanded and deepened to cover many areas of mutual interests, the Thai-Malaysian Joint Commission was established in 1987, the first such body that Thailand has with neighbouring countries.

If one takes a broader view, one can see that from the Government's side there exists quite a number of mechanisms which foster closer cooperation between Thailand and Malaysia.

Some of them were created to specifically deal with border issues while others were set up to facilitate closer contact between our private sectors and enhance trade and economic cooperation.

I intend to encourage more cooperation between the private sector in both countries and I look forward to discussing this matter with Prime Minister Mahathir.