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Meet to focus on realities

P. Sharmini

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The changes in the world environment after the Sept 11 attack on the World Trade Center in New York will be among the new realities to be discussed at an international seminar next year.

The upcoming One Asia Assembly themed "Society, Governance and the New Realities" will be an appropriate platform to discuss issues relevant to the region and the world.

The assembly, organised by the Press Foundation of Asia (PFA), will be held from Aug 12 to 14 at the Putra World Trade Centre and inaugurated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

PFA (Malaysian chapter) president Datuk A. Kadir Jasin said the emergence of Asia as a political and economic force was also expected to add to the scope of discussions.

These issues are expected to range from governments' views on conflicts and inconsistencies in governance, politics and economics, to globalisation and terrorism.

Speaking at a Press conference today on the assembly were Kadir, PFA executive chairman Datuk Mazlan Nordin, organising committee co-chairman Tan Sri Razali Ismail and chief operating officer Khairul Bashar.

Among the highlights of the event will be a focus topic on women, especially relevant in the Asian context as there are countries with women leaders in this region.

The organisers hope to have a live satellite broadcast feed featuring Asian women such as opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo of the Philippines, President Megawati Sukarnoputri of Indonesia, President Chandrika Kumaratunga of Sri Lanka and Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan.

Kadir, who is also the chief executive of the organising committee, said the assembly, the fifth since its inception in the 1960s, would bring together speakers and discussion leaders made up of statesmen and members of the diplomatic corps, social scientists, publishers, editors and journalists as well as NGOs.

Some 500 participants from all over the world are expected at the assembly.

Razali added that the organisers were optimistic United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan would also be present at the assembly, as has been the tradition at previous assemblies.

The PFA was founded by Asian editors and publishers to promote professionalism in the Press, besides making journalism a positive influence in the development of society.

Previous assemblies have included luminaries such as past UN Secretary-Generals U Thant, Dr Kurt Waldheim and Javier Perez de Cuellar; Nobel prize-winning economist Gunnar Myrdal; Foreign Ministers such as S. Rajaratnam of Singapore, Carlos P. Romulo of the Philippines and Adam Malik of Indonesia.

sharm@nstp.com

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