

A ^{NEW} STRAITS TIMES SPECIAL
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 8, 2007

MALAYSIA



THAILAND



SINGAPORE



INDONESIA



PHILIPPINES



ASEAN's



one asean at the heart of dynamic asia

Anniversary

BRUNEI



VIETNAM



CAMBODIA



LAOS



MYANMAR



Asean Day messages

Prime Minister

IT gives me great pleasure to convey my warmest greetings to all Malaysians and citizens of the other Asean member countries on the auspicious occasion of the 40th Anniversary of Asean.

Asean has certainly gained worldwide recognition as a viable and effective regional organisation. Asean's success is attributable to the foresight and wisdom of the founding fathers of Asean and the effective leadership and commitment of the leaders who followed them. Asean has earned good credentials as an effective contributor to the maintenance of peace and stability, and the achievement of development and prosperity in the Southeast Asian region.

The theme, One Asean at the Heart of Dynamic Asia, which has been chosen to commemorate Asean's 40th Anniversary, reflects the great strides Asean has made.

It clearly underscores the important role of Asean as a driving force in the evolving regional architecture.

Looking back, we note the numerous challenges faced by Asean at its birth and over the last four decades. However, we should also take cognizance of Asean's various achievements. Asean has emerged stronger and has become more cohesive and united. Asean member countries have greatly benefited from the organisation, especially in terms of regional cooperation in various fields.

Asean's relations with other countries and organisations have been continuously strengthened through dialogue partnerships as well as other forms of cooperation including the Asean Plus Three process, the Asean Regional Forum and the East Asia Summit. Malaysia was happy to have had the opportunity to host



Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi

the inaugural East Asia Summit in Kuala Lumpur on Dec 14, 2005.

The move and the progress made towards adopting the Asean Charter is an important development for Asean. I believe the Charter, once it comes into being, will accelerate Asean's integration process especially towards realising the Asean Community by 2015.

As we celebrate this 40th Anniversary, it is also important that Asean increasingly be made relevant to the people for whom the benefits of regional cooperation should accrue.

The people of Asean, including Malaysians, must be encouraged to support Asean and its goal to build a dynamic, cohesive, and integrated Asean Community.

In this way, we can all contribute towards a better quality of life and a peaceful

and stable environment in the region. We must ensure greater efforts at capacity building and the development of human capital. We must get the young people of Asean to be more involved. The Government of Malaysia and I remain committed to these objectives.

It is my fervent hope that when Asean becomes a true community, every Asean citizen would have developed a strong sense of belonging to Asean. The inculcation of such Asean consciousness will result in creating a community of caring societies where people live in harmony and in peace. Let us all, on this auspicious day, renew our pledge to work together in advancing this common goal.



Foreign Minister

TODAY, we celebrate the historic occasion of the 40th anniversary of Asean. On this auspicious occasion, I wish to convey my best wishes to all the people of Asean.

The theme "One Asean at the heart of dynamic Asia" aptly describes Asean's role and contributions in ensuring regional peace and stability, which remains fundamental to the region's economic dynamism and continuous development and prosperity for the Asean member countries.

Asean has come of age since its inception in 1967. I recall that at the Second Asean Informal Summit (also known as the 30th Asean anniversary commemorative summit) in Kuala Lumpur in 1997, Asean leaders endorsed the Asean Vision 2020, which envisaged an Asean community by the year 2020.

In January, at the 12th Asean Summit in Cebu, the Asean leaders agreed to bring forward the establishment of the Asean community to 2015.

The establishment of this community is premised on political, economic and socio-cultural co-operation among the member countries.

Towards this end, Asean is intensifying regional co-operation at all levels through the Vientiane Action



Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar

Programme and the Plans of Action to realise the Asean political and security community, the Asean economic community and the Asean socio-cultural community.

Asean has now taken a historic step forward with the decision to establish the Asean Charter. I believe that with a charter, Asean would be able to position itself to face the challenges while taking advantage of the opportunities offered by regional integration.

The Asean Charter would certainly help to hasten Asean integration but further fuse Asean's values and principles with the national objectives of member countries to fulfil the aspirations of the people of

this region.

For Asean to make greater strides, it is timely and necessary for Asean member countries to endow Asean with not only a legal personality, but a people-centred orientation.

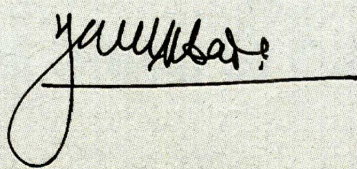
Asean member countries, including Malaysia, must encourage a greater involvement of the people in community-building regional programmes, especially those involving the youth.

The "we feeling" must be inculcated among the people in order to create a sense of belonging to the Asean community.

Malaysia remains committed to Asean and its principles and objectives.

Last but not least, allow me to express my deep appreciation to those who have made this Asean Day supplement possible.

I am confident that with their continuous support and co-operation, the government's efforts at promoting greater awareness will bring Asean closer to the people.



Asean Secretary-General

After four decades of existence, Asean can be proud as it looks back on its track record of successful regional co-operation. But as our association celebrates its 40th anniversary in August 2007, it is what Asean is now looking forward to that is even more exciting, in particular, the goal of becoming one community by 2015.

A closely integrated Asean will benefit all of us in Southeast Asia. In recent years, Asean co-operation has spanned a whole sphere of activities that have affected or will affect our daily lives for the better.

These include initiatives to establish visa-free leisure travel within Asean, convenient transportation links between Asean cities, reduce the cost of business transactions across borders, standardise food quality and safety regulations, and ensure quick emergency response to communicable diseases and natural disasters.

And there are more initiatives to look forward to as we systematically implement the measures of the Vientiane Action Programme.

The Asean leaders believe that a strong Asean community is the way to secure the region's future. The leaders were clear that the deep roots of co-operation and mutual respect would help maintain peace and stability in Southeast Asia. They saw that an Asean that functions as a single market and production base would be globally competitive.

They envisioned an inclusive Asean which would embrace all the diverse

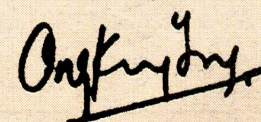


Ong Keng Yong

peoples of Asean as part of a caring and sharing community.

And we will have this strong Asean community when we all think in terms of One Asean and all contribute towards Asean's community-building efforts. As member countries work together to draw upon one another's strengths, the governments and the people work to form constructive partnerships to further the shared goals of peace and prosperity.

It is only when we are One Asean that the region can be economically competitive and relevant in international affairs, and truly embody the aspiration behind the theme of Asean's 40th anniversary — "One Asean at the Heart of Dynamic Asia".



Congratulations

to

ASEAN



one asean at the heart of dynamic asia

on its 40th Anniversary

FROM

 **CIMB GROUP**



Towards a truly united Asean (community)

Asean has changed for the better over the past 40 years, albeit at a pace that may be frustrating to some. Tan Sri Ajit Singh, the first secretary-general of the regional grouping, takes a frank look at its strengths, and weaknesses. Exciting times lie ahead for Asean as it enters its fourth decade of existence, he told **BALAN MOSES.**



Tan Sri Ajit Singh says the 40th anniversary is a landmark. Looking back, there is a lot that Asean can be proud of.



Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar (centre), talking to Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs Dr Alberto G. Romulo (right) at a luncheon for Asean foreign ministers on the sidelines of the 39th Asean Ministerial Meeting at the KLCC. With them is Asean secretary-general Ong Keng Yong.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Philippine President Gloria Arroyo (sitting), Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hisen Loong (right) and Laotian Prime Minister Bouasone Bouphavanh (left) on their arrival for the signing ceremonies of 12th Asean Summit documents in Manila earlier this year.

As Asean enters the proverbial middle age, there is abundant joy over the fact that it has withstood the test of time and has moved forward at a great pace.

The organisation that has held 10 Southeast Asian countries together through thick and thin is reaching a critical point — a watershed of sorts — where it needs to evaluate its record.

Several questions need to be asked in this respect.

Has the concept of Asean permeated through all levels of society in member states or is it only a buzzword among heads of state and foreign ministers? Are member states satisfied with its advancement, both in quality of co-operation and and tangible quantity of togetherness?

Where is Asean heading to as a regional grouping responsible for the wellbeing of 500 million people? There may be many more questions that may be asked around the 4.5 million square metres of land that represent the people who comprise the grassroots of the organisation, but these seem most urgent at this point.

Former Asean secretary-general Tan Sri Ajit Singh, its administrative head for five years from 1993, agrees that there is great happiness all round over the fact that 40 years have elapsed since the founding fathers inked the document that created the entity.

"The 40th anniversary is a landmark. Looking back, there is a lot that Asean can be proud of. Things are generally going in the right direction," says the former

Malaysian diplomat who is still very much an Asean man, despite having left the organisation 10 years ago.

But he is also a little concerned over whether the Asean message has filtered down to the masses, the people who should matter in actualising the concept of an Asean community.

While he feels that the organisation that grew out of the Bangkok Declaration of 1967 has entered new ground with the proposed Asean Charter, he is also of the opinion that much needs to be done to bring the concept of Asean down to the grassroots.

"Asean has grown in strength

and effectiveness over the years. It now needs to go to the grassroots, reach out to the common man," says the man responsible for building the Asean secretariat from scratch.

He is of the opinion that Asean will only truly represent the people of Asean if the concept seeps down to the people that member nations represent.

"We have to remember that one of the pillars besides political and economic unity is the social and cultural element."

Ajit tried to help in his time with proposals that could have brought a diversity of people together, like suggesting a common

time zone so that the citizens of 10 nations will be on the same time schedule (he proposed that the time zone shared by Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei be used).

He also proposed an Asean flag and stamps to commemorate Asean anniversaries.

It all boils down to who is prepared to make the sacrifices, and have the commitment to realise these proposals.

For Ajit, as it is for many, this is one of the core issues behind Asean's growth as a true representative of the people of the region, or the lack of it.

"The commitment levels vary. Malaysia's commitment to the

organisation has been consistent over the years. Asean has been the cornerstone of Malaysia's foreign policy but you cannot say the same about all members," he says.

This is perhaps one area which Asean members need to seriously look at as they ponder the future.

"One thing is sure: Progress has been slow in coming. As we celebrate the 40th year of Asean's existence, we need to be not just reactive to outside stimuli but also work out a future based on our needs and requirements."

The record books will bear him out.

Asean itself came about as a result of "Konfrontasi", the undeclared war in which Indonesia waged on Malaysia after Sabah and Sarawak decided to come into a federation with Malaya and Singapore.

There was more external stimuli along the way, in

FROM PAGE 4

the baptism of fire when Vietnam invaded Kampuchea in the late 1970s, the end of the Cold War, the demolition of the Berlin Wall and the financial crisis of 1997.

Today, it is the China and India factors that are largely pushing Asean's trade agenda.

"We are reacting as we don't want to be left out. We want to create a niche. We want to play a bridging role between China and India."

Why is Asean's progress sometimes described by some as being glacial?

"One has to understand that things may not be moving at a pace that satisfies everyone. We have been slowly moving towards a position where the minority will not hold back the majority."

Ajit says one has to understand the Asean culture of cautiousness "where solutions will be found in Asean's own way and time".

"In Manila, Asean foreign ministers have finessed this process. They have managed to make great strides for Asean," he says, adding that this was a feather in the cap which showed that the Asean leadership had seized the moment to go forward at a pace never quite seen before.

According to him, the basic Asean premise was that anything embarked upon should withstand the test of time and be based on a strong and sure foundation.

In other words, a "building bricks" sort of attitude, where time is not seen as the primary factor to the successful implementation of a proposal.

The difficulty surrounding the consensus pillar of Asean — often seen as a stumbling block to progress — has been

partly circumvented with the proposal that decision that cannot be reached by consensus should be referred to the heads of government.

He also points to the proposed "Asean minus X" formula as an example of members being given wider latitude in terms of bilateral arrangements.

With this, two or more countries will be able to proceed with a treaty without extending concessions to non-participating members.

What of the fine print in the Asean Charter that needs to be worked out by November when the head of government meet in Singapore to ratify the document?

"Between now and November, there are going to be quiet discussions to get everyone to come on board. There may be some issues which may see differing views but every attempt, I believe, will be made to couch them in acceptable terms."

No discussion of Asean will be complete without mention of Myanmar, a thorn in the regional's side, however one looks at it.

Ajit has strong views on the matter, which he is aware may not be shared by some.

He feels that the practice of sending United Nations special envoys to talk separately to either the Myanmar government or Aung San Suu Kyi will not work.

For him, the ideal situation will be for both sides to engage directly in discussions.

"I feel that they can get somewhere if they sit down and talk. Asean can play a role by being the third party in discussions."

He feels Asean is uniquely suited for such a role as it understands where both sides are

coming from and can, therefore, identify middle ground for negotiations.

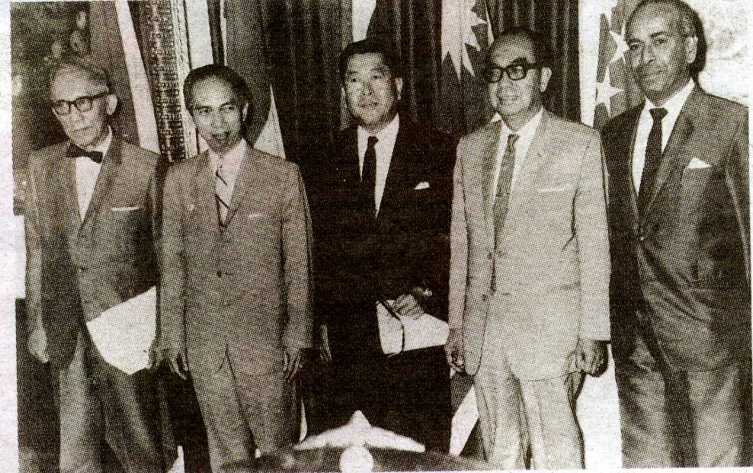
"You need a compromise in politics. Asean's policy of constructive engagement is vital for a solution to the problem."

What does the future hold for Asean?

By 2032, the world may be seeing an Asean community that could be warming to preliminary talks on a common currency, common foreign policy and some form of defence co-operation.

Ajit believes that the Asean concept will be fine-tuned further in years to come in ways that may be beyond the imagination of today's generation.

After all, Asean has proved its resilience, tenacity and ability to go forward time and again over the past 40 years — and will continue to do so in years to come.



The meeting in Bangkok in 1967 marked the signing of the Asean Declaration. From left are foreign ministers Narciso Ramos (Philippines), Adam Malik (Indonesia), Thanat Khoman (Thailand), Tun Abdul Razak (Malaysia) and S. Rajaratnam (Singapore).



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi trying out a special chair on the sidelines of the 11th Asean Summit in Kuala Lumpur in 2005. Looking on is Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar.



Asean leaders including Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (third from right) listening to Philippine President Gloria Arroyo's keynote address at the Asean Heads of Government meeting with the Eminent Persons Group in Cebu. Present were (from left) Indonesian President Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Laotian Prime Minister Bouasone Boupavanh and Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

Best in ASEAN,

soon in Australia and some say China!



With over 3,000 weekly flights and 80 routes across Asia,
no one connects ASEAN the way we do.

AirAsia celebrates the 40th anniversary of ASEAN
and shares the vision of freedom, peace and
equality for South East Asia.

AirAsia
Now Everyone Can Fly

airasia.com

Voted Best Low Cost Airline In Asia by Skytrax World Airline Awards 2007



Foreign Ministers gathering for a group photograph before the start of the 13th Asean Regional Forum at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre last year.

■ By M.C. Abad, Jr.

ARF Unit Director,
The Asean Secretariat

INTERNATIONAL relations scholar Alexander Wendt once wrote that "anarchy is what states make of it". In other words, if states consider the international system basically as a strategic domain where they compete for power, influence and material gain, then war and arms race would be permanent features in global politics.

The end of the Cold War and the resolution of proxy or regional wars created a historic opportunity to challenge the so-called "realism" in international relations. This was what the Association of Southeast Asian Nations did in 1994 when it initiated the establishment of the Asean Regional Forum, or ARF.

Almost one-and-a-half decade later, ARF today serves as the premier regional security mechanism involving 27 members dedicated to the promotion of peace and security through dialogue and co-operation in the Asia Pacific region.

All major powers and permanent members of the United Nations Security Council are represented in ARF. Asean remains in the driver's seat of this major institution without precedence in the history of the region.

The members of ARF are Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, China, North Korea, European Union, India, Indonesia, Japan,

ARF: Towards co-operative security

The existence of the Asean Regional Forum proves that a security community is possible at the international level, and that violence can be avoided through preventive diplomacy.

Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, South Korea, Russia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste, Vietnam and the United States.

ARF exists on the assumption that a security community is possible at the international level; that international institutions and processes could redefine if not transform national interests; that peer pressure could influence if not constrain state behaviour; and that dialogue and confidence building could induce co-operation and enduring agreements.

It is an assumption that is supported by several mechanisms involving diplomats, defence officials, experts and eminent persons, as well as security specialists outside the governments. These mechanisms include the annual ARF ministerial meeting, defence officials meeting, security policy conference, the meeting of heads of defence colleges,

expert-level workshops and seminars on various traditional and non-traditional security issues and transnational crimes, and the network of leading strategic think tanks in the Asia Pacific.

It is also an assumption based on the shared notion that sustained economic and social development needs a stable and secure environment; that new forms of transnational and non-traditional security issues require international collaboration; and that promoting security involves political, economic, social, humanitarian and other factors that need to be addressed at the same time, and usually, through a whole of government approach.

Over the years, this regional security building process has produced co-operation agreements in the fields of nuclear non-proliferation, export control of weapons of mass destruction, precursors and technology, peacekeeping, demining, civil-military co-ordination in disaster relief, counter terrorism, including

maritime security, cyber security, document security and energy security. It has also served as a platform for discussion on issues like the situation in the Korean Peninsula, the South China Sea, certain states in the South Pacific, the Middle East, Timor Leste, and Myanmar.

While continuing to undertake confidence building measures, ARF has now agreed to assume a role in preventive diplomacy. One of the steps taken towards this direction is the establishment of the Friends of the Chair. It is an ad hoc mechanism to be constituted for specific tasks by the ARF Chair "as and when the situation warrants, including in times of emergency, crisis, and situations likely to disturb regional peace and security".

ARF will also be commissioning a study and compilation of best practices and lessons learned in preventive diplomacy experiences by other international and regional organisations.

Based on the Asean way,

and relatively peaceful and stable situation in the Asia Pacific region today.

Since there is no natural harmony of interests between states, but only asymmetrical power, it is important for this peace and stability to be nurtured persistently and patiently.

But ARF is only one of the important institutions in the region that promote co-operative norms. Its work is being complemented by other mechanisms like the Asean+3 and the East Asia Summit processes and the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec).

More focused concerns from the Six-Party Talks on the Korean Peninsula to the Regional Arrangement on Co-operation in Anti-Piracy in Asia and the sub-regional Malacca Straits Sea Patrols and the "Eyes in the Sky" Maritime Air Patrols also contribute to the patterns of co-operative relations forming the fabric of an emerging security community.

If anarchy is what states make of it, then a system of state relations could be constructed where the promotion of co-operative security could be its primary preoccupation, instead of the formation of strategic alliances in a competitive security system.

The Asean Regional Forum represents the former not only because the current strategic milieu makes it possible, but also because it is the moral thing to do.

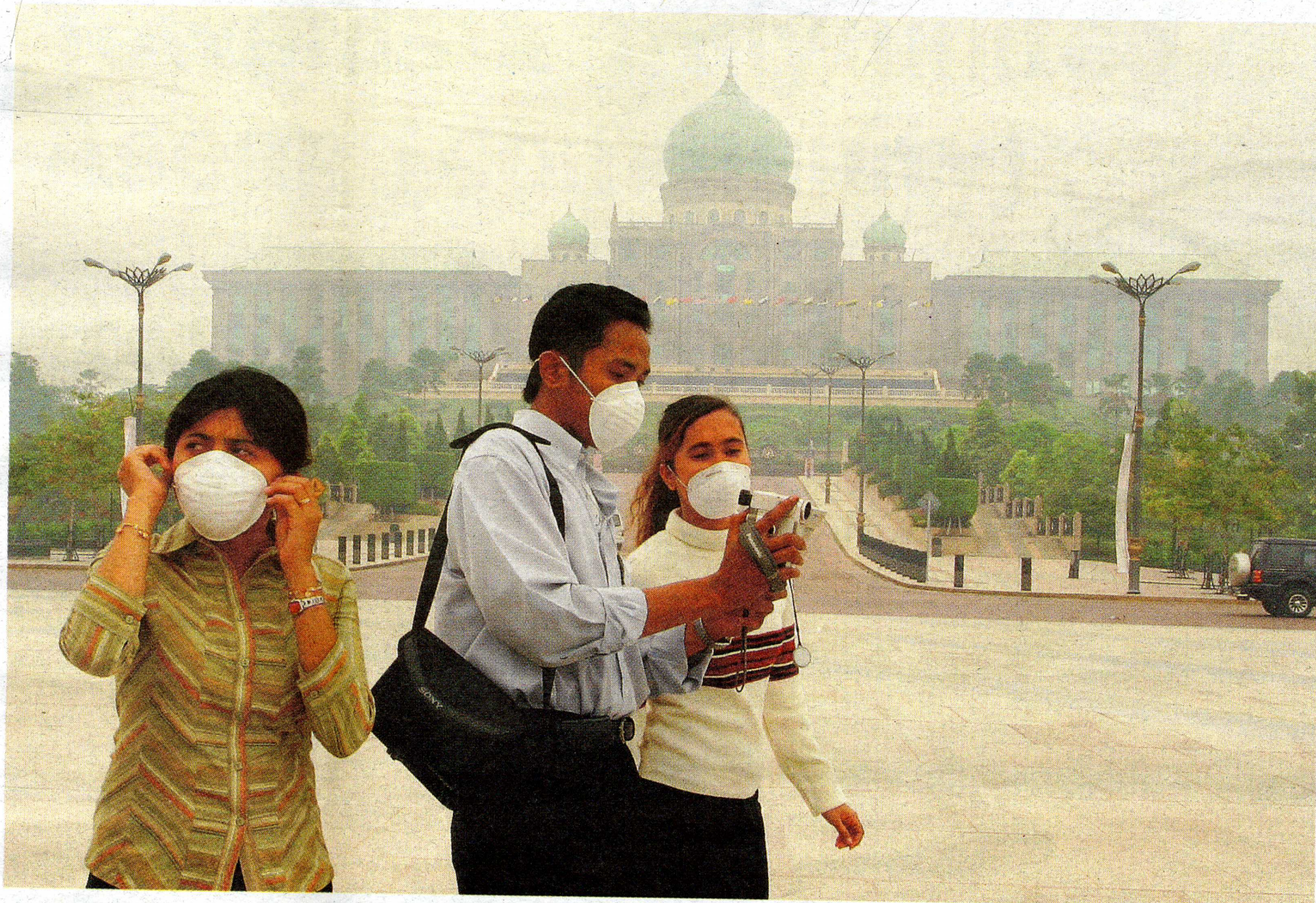
It is an achievement that Asean could be proud of as it celebrates 40th Anniversary this year.

ARF advances co-operation by fostering the habits of dialogue, consultations and consensus building. It builds on progress incrementally at a pace comfortable to all participants. It observes the principles of respect for national sovereignty and the right of every state to lead its national existence free from external interference.

It advocates the renunciation of the threat or use of force in settling disputes. It encourages transparency and exchange of information. It supports the practice of defence diplomacy. It acknowledges interdependence not only in the economic sense, but also in the realm of security.

Over time, ARF hopes to consolidate these norms and values as factors which are just as important as the strategic realities, like anarchy and the distribution of power, in shaping the disposition of states towards becoming more friendly, co-operative and pacific.

Promoting this cultural dimension of managing international security could be the key towards sustaining the generally



The Asean Peatland Management Strategy was endorsed last year to combat the annual haze problem caused by the burning of peatland.

■ **By Adelina Kamal**
Co-ordinator, Environment and
Disaster Management Unit,
The Asean Secretariat

Shedding light onto the haze problem

The annual haze problem is not one that can be 'fixed', but rather to be managed. Asean members each has a role to play to curb transboundary haze pollution.

Asean for solutions and call on Asean to "fix" the problem with Indonesia. The haze problem, however, is a regional problem that requires local actions. The haze is also a consequence of much wider problems. It's not only an environmental problem; it has social and economic dimensions. It is also a livelihood issue.

Peatland degradation has been identified as one of the many underlying problems. The underlying causes have to be addressed at the core of the problems, i.e. at the grassroots level. There should be continuous fight against bad tradition and poverty, and against the people that do things their own way and use the easiest way to clear the land.

Haze problem is not a problem that can be "fixed". It is a problem that must be managed. Asean's efforts therefore have focused on managing the region's transboundary haze pollution problem. We do it within the capacity of an association and the constraints within which Asean must operate.

There have been collective commitments since the early 1980s to control the haze problems. The Regional Haze Action

■ TURN TO NEXT PAGE

TRANSBOUNDARY haze pollution problem remains to be one of the most prominent environmental challenges that Asean has to deal with when it turns 40 this month.

Haze is a recurring problem, and in the southern part of the region, we can expect that haze events, either in large or small scale, will occur during the period of February to March and July to September. Fire and transboundary haze pollution problem is of such high profile that during this part of the year we will always find articles and commentaries featuring haze issues on the front pages of local newspapers particularly in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore.

The public's interest on haze issues can also be seen from the significant number of hits recorded by the Asean Secretariat-managed "Asean Haze Action Online" website (www.haze-online.or.id). In 2005, the server recorded over 37,000 hits from over 8,000 different locations during the period of July to September. In 2006, our server recorded over

33,000 hits from over 5,500 different locations in three months.

Haze in our region is a man-made disaster. Natural causes accounted for less than one per cent of fires that produced these haze events, the remaining 99 per cent being deliberately set for purposes of land conversion. This means that the control of these fire and haze events is within our grasp. But why does this problem keep recurring? What can be done, what has been done, and has Asean been doing something about it?

Recurrent episodes of land and forest fires have in fact been a feature of the region's ecology since the Pleistocene Age. During the Ice Age, extended periods of minimal rainfall occurred

in Southeast Asia, making large areas of the region vulnerable to fire. More recently, the recurring climatological disturbances known as the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) have repeatedly set the stage for fires in the region. We counted that there have been seven major fire outbreaks in Southeast Asia, with small fires occurring almost annually. Serious haze events took place in 1982-83, 1987, 1991, 1994, 1997-98, and more recently in August 2005 and during the extended dry period of 2006.

Fires in peat soil have been identified as a major contributor to transboundary haze pollution in the region. Once the peat soil is drained, it is very vulnerable to fire. In the past ten years,

approximately 2.5 million hectares of peatlands in the region have burnt in major fires, releasing an estimated two to three billion tonnes of stored carbon to the atmosphere and blanketing the region in dense clouds of smoke.

Peat fires are the most difficult to suppress, as the fires occur underneath the surface. The vastness of the peatlands, the inaccessible terrain and limited water resources are among the logistic challenges in extinguishing peat fires.

Peat fires have not only regional but also global environmental and social implications. If the stored carbon within the peatlands in the region is released, it will have a significant impact on global climate as it is equivalent to 20

years of current global fossil fuel emissions. The loss of biodiversity is also significant. Peatlands are the last refuge of such flagship species as the orang utan as well as being repositories of over 2,500 plant species (including over 500 medicinal plants) and over 300 fish species.

The smoke resulting from the fires could stretch over one million square kilometres for up to six months, adversely affecting the health of millions of people. For the whole 1997-98 haze episode, the loss has been estimated at more than US\$9 billion (RM31 billion) in economic and large-scale environmental losses.

Asean's solidarity and co-operation has been tested during these haze episodes. People turn to



■ FROM PAGE 10

Plan, which was produced in 1997, has an operational focus with a three-pronged approach: Preventive measures, monitoring of fire and haze, and strengthening regional fire fighting capabilities.

The Asean Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution, which was signed in June 2002, gives effect to the 1997 Action Plan and further strengthens member countries' commitment to control the haze.

There have been important measures to implement both the Action Plan and the Agreement, and monitor the implementation. Efforts have also been geared towards doing concrete actions on the ground, involving the local communities where the problems originate, and bringing other stakeholders to play some roles. A regional strategy on sustainable use of peatlands has been drawn up, and activities are being implemented to prevent further degradation of peatlands and support on-the-ground actions.

Indonesia has set a target to reduce the number of hotspots by 50 per cent in forested areas this year through the implementation of its own action plan. Indonesia recently stated that operationalisation of its action plan for the first half of the year has successfully reduced the number

of hotspot compared to the same period in 2005 (by 53 per cent) and 2006 (by 58 per cent).

However, pressure on Indonesia to ratify the Haze Agreement will increase if the haze is more severe this year.

The Asean Peatland Management Strategy that has been endorsed last year should be vigorously implemented, and corresponding national and local plans be enacted to implement the strategy at all levels. The stakeholders who actually use these peatlands have to be involved as well.

Second, we should take strong action against those responsible for burning the peatlands for commercial purposes. However, we should help provide incentives and alternative livelihoods to the poor so that they will protect and use the peatlands in a sustainable manner.

Third, we should deal with the haze problem as serious as we do with other disasters such as earthquakes and tsunamis. The costs have been tremendous, and the losses are not only for our region and present generation to endure. It has a global and long-term impact. We can't go through another decade to get choked by the haze. By that time, there may no longer be pristine peatlands in this region.



Workers trying to put out fires on a field in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan province in September 2002. The island of Kalimantan was one of the Indonesian provinces hardest hit by the thick haze from forest and ground fires. The Indonesian Government blamed the fires on land clearing by burning, a practice long banned by the government but which has been difficult to prevent with a lack of enforcement capabilities.

Congratulations

To **ASEAN** on Its *40th Anniversary*

*We are proud to be part of the occasion,
towards cooperative peace and prosperity.*



IOI GROUP

Congratulations *to* *asean*



on its
40th Anniversary

From



IJM Group of Companies