

Newspaper	The Star
Date	21 November 2015

PM: Proceed with doable measures

Najib calls on Asean to build thriving community of nations

KUALA LUMPUR: Asean has been urged to implement doable measures to spur integration under the Asean Community which will be launched tomorrow.

Pjime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, who will hand over the Asean chair to Laos on Sunday, also called on the grouping to build a community of nations that would prosper together.

Speaking at the Asean Business and Investment Summit, Najib said he had received a report from the business community recommending measures to improve economic integration under the Asean Economic Community (AEC).

The report was produced by the Asean Business Advisory Council.

The AEC, which seeks to create a single market and production base in the region, is one of the three pillars of the Asean Community which will be formed by the end of next month.

"Some of them (the recommendations) are very doable," said Najib, citing the proposal for an Asean Business Card to facilitate business travellers in the region as an example.

"If Apec (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) can do it, why can't we? When you arrive at an airport and you see a sign saying Asean

lane, you get a feeling that being someone from the region means something."

Najib said cultivating a sense of belonging to Asean was the next step in the regional body's community-building journey.

"It will take generations, but we have to begin the journey now."

Najib said there were many other things that could be done to make it easier for businesses in the region.

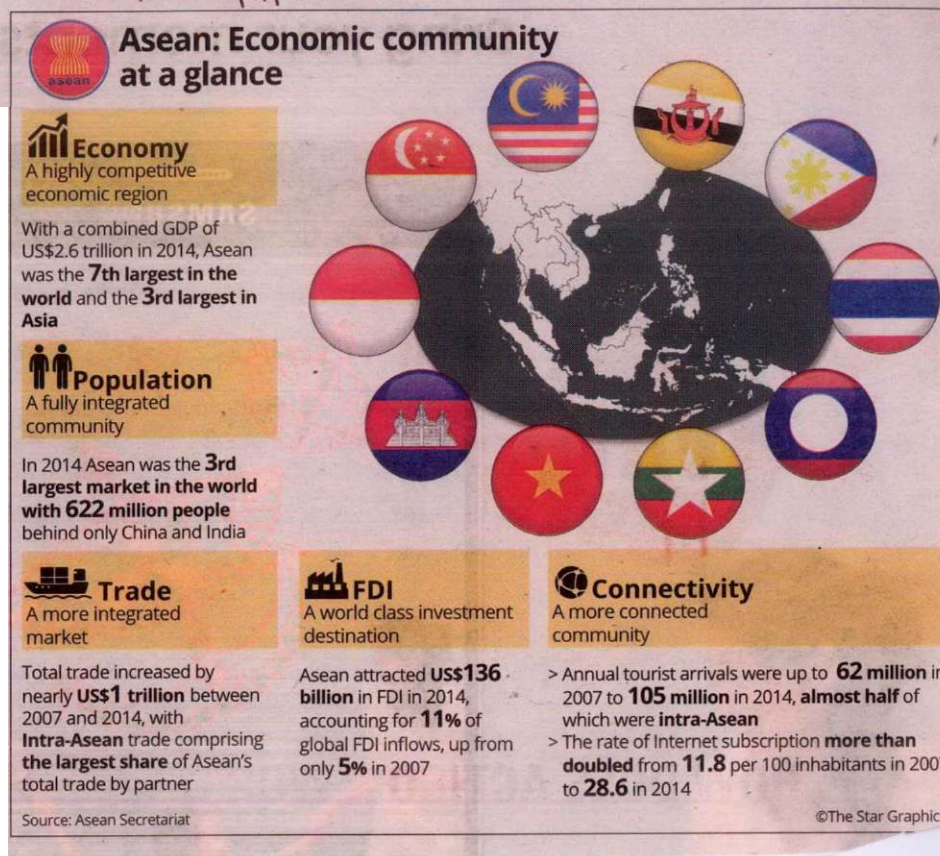
They include removing non-tariff barriers and non-tariff measures, helping small and medium enterprises and micro enterprises to operate beyond national boundaries within Asean, creating freer movement of skilled personnel.

Beyond businesses, Asean, he said, should look at measures to create a greater interaction and understanding, for example by making it easier for youths to study in any member country.

Najib said that as long as Asean stood united with its core values, he was certain the region could deliver continued sustainable and inclusive growth.

"This is the Asean Community that we need to build, and we need to prosper together."

The Star - 21/11/2015



Asean: Economic community at a glance

Economy
A highly competitive economic region

With a combined GDP of US\$2.6 trillion in 2014, Asean was the **7th largest in the world** and the **3rd largest in Asia**

Population
A fully integrated community

In 2014 Asean was the **3rd largest market in the world** with **622 million people** behind only China and India

Trade
A more integrated market

Total trade increased by nearly **US\$1 trillion** between 2007 and 2014, with **Intra-Asean trade** comprising the **largest share** of Asean's total trade by partner

FDI
A world class investment destination

Asean attracted **US\$136 billion** in FDI in 2014, accounting for **11%** of global FDI inflows, up from only **5%** in 2007

Connectivity
A more connected community

- > Annual tourist arrivals were up to **62 million** in 2007 to **105 million** in 2014, **almost half** of which were **intra-Asean**
- > The rate of Internet subscription **more than doubled** from **11.8** per 100 inhabitants in 2007 to **28.6** in 2014

Source: Asean Secretariat ©The Star Graphics