

ASEAN-INDIA CAR RALLY 2012 FLAGGED OFF AT YOGYAKARTA

Commemorative event to celebrate 20 years of ASEAN-India dialogue partnership

The ASEAN-India Car Rally was flagged off at 0900 hrs on 26th November 2012 in a grand ceremony held at Royal Ambarukmo Hotel. From the Indian side, Mr. P.S. Raghavan, Special Representative of the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Gurjit Singh Ambassador of India to Indonesia and ASEAN and Mr. Adi Godrej, President of Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) flagged off the rally cars while the Indonesian side was represented by Mr. Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja, Director General of ASEAN, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Representative of the Governor of Yogyakarta and other dignitaries.

Hundreds of people had gathered at the venue, including school children waving flags of India, Indonesia and other ASEAN countries, to witness the event and cheer the rally participants.

The ASEAN national anthem was sung on the occasion followed by cultural performances from India and Indonesia. A Manipuri dance troupe from Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), India, performed on the occasion.

In his remarks at the Flag off, Mr. P.S. Raghavan, Special Representative of the External Affairs Minister, said that the ASEAN-India Car Rally, during its journey through ASEAN countries and India, would highlight the richness of culture and heritage in each of the countries, the complementarity of our engines of growth, the increasing bilateral trade across our border and the people-to-people bridges that have existed in these regions for several millennia. He thanked the Indonesian Government and the Governor of Yogyakarta for the decision to begin this historic Car Rally to Yogyakarta. He also congratulated the participants of ASEAN-India Car Rally 2012 for the unique role that they will have over the next 21 days in strengthening our connectivity at the people-to-people, institution and geographic levels. The business and cultural programmes along the route of Rally will help our efforts to enhance the synergy for growth and prosperity across the canvas of the ASEAN-India Dialogue Partnership, Mr. Raghavan added.

The rally thereafter proceeded to the iconic Borobudur temple, the largest Buddhist temple in the world, where the rally participants were welcomed warmly by representative of Governor of Central Java. The rally participants planted saplings at the venue to mark the occasion. The rally participants also witnessed

the unveiling of bronze bust of Rabindranath Tagore at Borubudur Temple by Mr. Gurjit Singh, Ambassador of India to Indonesia and ASEAN and Mrs. Listyowati Director of South and Central Asia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia. The bronze bust of Rabindranath Tagore has been sculpted by Mr. ,Janak Jhankar Nazary, Professor of Art History in Viswa Bharti and gifted by the Indian Ministry of Culture especially to commemorate the visit of Rabindranath Tagore to Indonesia in 1927 where he had also visited Borobudur temple and planted a sapling.

The rally thereafter proceeded to its final leg of journey to Surakarta (Solo) and arrived at the Municipal Building at Solo to cheering crowds. Later, the Mayor, Mr. Rudy Hadiyatmo, hosted a grand reception for the rally participants and congratulated the participants. Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador of India to Indonesia thanked the Government of Indonesia for all the support in holding the two highly successful flagship events - the ASEAN-India car rally and the visit of Indian Naval Sailing expedition to Indonesia which has contributed to strengthening the people to people links and establishing an emotional bond between the people of two countries. He said that the Embassy of India would continue its efforts in encouraging people to people contacts by holding cultural shows, business and academic seminars in various regions of Indonesia. In this regard, he said that Embassy would be showcasing a cultural show titled “Slice of India’ at Atma jaya University on 28th November 2012 with a view to connect with the youth of Indonesia.

After a night halt at Surakarta, the rally participants fly to Singapore for the second leg of the ASEAN India car rally.

The ASEAN-India Car Rally was jointly organized by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and all ASEAN nations, the ASEAN India car rally commemorates 20 years of ASEAN-India relationship in the run up to the India-ASEAN commemorative Summit to be held in New Delhi on 20-21 December 2012. The car rally will traverse a total of 8000 kms across nine countries over 22 days with 124 participants from 11 countries before culminating its journey in Guhawati, India, on 17th December 2012. Later, on 20th December 2012, a ceremonial flag down will be held in New Delhi by the Indian Prime Minister and other Head of States of all ASEAN countries.

26th November 2012

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