

POLITICS India's top factory hub hopeful, wary as film star Vijay set to take reins

Advertisement

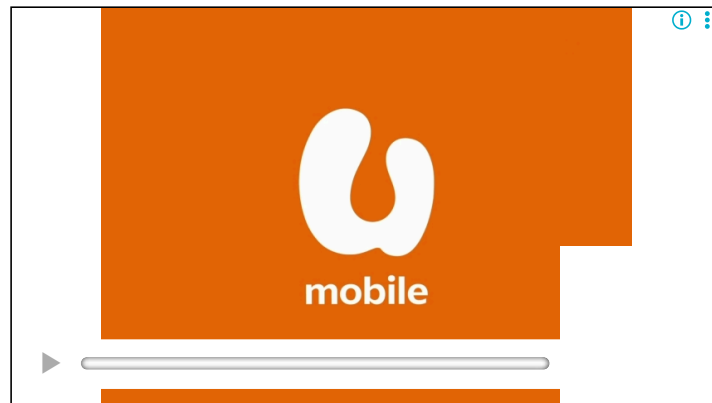
GLOBAL NEWS

ASEAN Chairmanship and Related Summits do not end when they end - they carry forward through continuity and consensus



Phar Kim Beng

28/10/2025 | 17:25 MYT



WHEN the gavel finally drops on [Malaysia's ASEAN Chairmanship](#) at the close of the 47th ASEAN and Related Summits on October 28th, 2025, many will assume the cycle has ended. They would be wrong. Why?

AI Brief

- ASEAN Chairmanships are continuous, with each country building on the previous one's priorities and unfinished plans.
- Malaysia's 2025 leadership emphasised key sectors, like rare earths, semiconductors, and diplomacy, which will carry into future agendas.
- ASEAN's strength lies in strategic continuity, ensuring long-term goals like Vision 2045 evolve through cooperation and shared responsibility.

In truth, ASEAN does not operate on the logic of endings. Its Chairmanships are not terminal events; they are chapters in a long continuum of collective leadership — where each host carries forward the unfulfilled mandates, shared aspirations, and policy linkages of the last.

When Laos ended its [Chairmanship of ASEAN on October 11, 2024](#), last year, issues and points of actions agreed in that year and the year before were carried into 2025; the same logic holds. In fact, Malaysia declared that it has satisfied [all 18 Priority Economic Sectors \(PED\) on October 28th, 2025](#). It has outlined 18 economic sectors as necessary for ASEAN 2025.

When [Manila takes over](#), the PEDs can be 18 or fewer. Potentially more. It's up to consensus that the Philippines can build with all 10 other ASEAN partners.

Lacking financing to do all or some of them, the Philippines would have to seek financial assistance from other [Dialogue Partners](#), and indeed from Sectoral and Development Partners as well.

Thus, ASEAN's very design ensures this continuity. Let's take the US, for example.

Every Plan of Action—from the [ASEAN–U.S. Strategic Partnership \(2021–2025\)](#), to the ASEAN–EU and [ASEAN–China frameworks](#)—is constructed as a bridge, not a finish line.

When one plan concludes, its next iteration is already being prepared by senior officials and working groups who understand that ASEAN's commitments cannot be left dangling in diplomatic limbo. The handover between Chairs is therefore more than ceremonial; it is an act of stewardship, preserving momentum and ensuring institutional memory remains intact.

In Malaysia's case, 2025 is not a sunset year but a hinge moment. The Plan of Action (2021–2025) with the United States, for instance, will formally expire in December 2025.

Yet its successor is already being drafted — updated to reflect the [new realities of artificial intelligence, digital supply chains, and the green industrial transition](#).

The priorities Malaysia emphasized during its Chairmanship — [rare-earth cooperation, semiconductor security, and peace diplomacy](#)— will not disappear once the Philippines assumes the Chair in 2026.

They will persist as ASEAN-wide commitments embedded in communiqués, roadmaps, and ministerial follow-ups.

Indeed, the ASEAN system thrives on what might be called strategic carryover. Each summit's declaration, whether on the [Digital Economy Framework Agreement](#), the [ASEAN Power Grid](#), or the [KL Accord](#) on conflict prevention, becomes the scaffolding for the next phase of work.

The Chairmanship changes, but the institutional architecture remains constant: senior officials' meetings, working groups, and Track 2 dialogues continue to refine the agenda, keeping ASEAN's wheels turning smoothly across leadership transitions.

This is what gives ASEAN its paradoxical strength — it can appear slow, even ["toothless," but it never loses coherence](#). Its diplomacy is built on the understanding that every Chair inherits not only prestige but responsibility.

Malaysia's 2025 Chairmanship, therefore, will live on in ASEAN's plans: in the continuation of the [ASEAN–U.S. Comprehensive Strategic Partnership](#), in the bridging of ASEAN–GCC dialogues, and in the formation of new frameworks linking ASEAN to BRICS and [MERCOSUR](#).

The same principle applies internally. ASEAN's Vision 2025 will seamlessly evolve into [ASEAN Vision 2045](#), a long-term vision that Malaysia helped shape to emphasize sustainability, innovation, and inter-regional partnerships.

These are not episodic agendas; they are strategic constants woven through successive Chairmanships. Thus, when Malaysia passes the gavel to Manila, it will not be surrendering leadership — it will be extending legacy. The Philippines, inheriting Malaysia's dialogue frameworks, will benefit from continuity, not disruption.

And when that term concludes, another member will take its place, ensuring that ASEAN remains an unbroken chain of collective diplomacy.

So, while the headlines will declare the end of Malaysia's Chairmanship and the closing of the ASEAN-U.S. Plan of Action, the more profound truth is this: ASEAN never truly ends. It renews. Its progress is cumulative, its diplomacy iterative, and its unity rooted in the belief that what one Chair starts, another perfects.

In this sense, ASEAN embodies a unique rhythm of governance — not the stop-start tempo of electoral cycles, but the quiet continuity of consensus. The Chairmanship may change, but the cause — a stable, integrated, and forward-looking Southeast Asia — continues without pause.

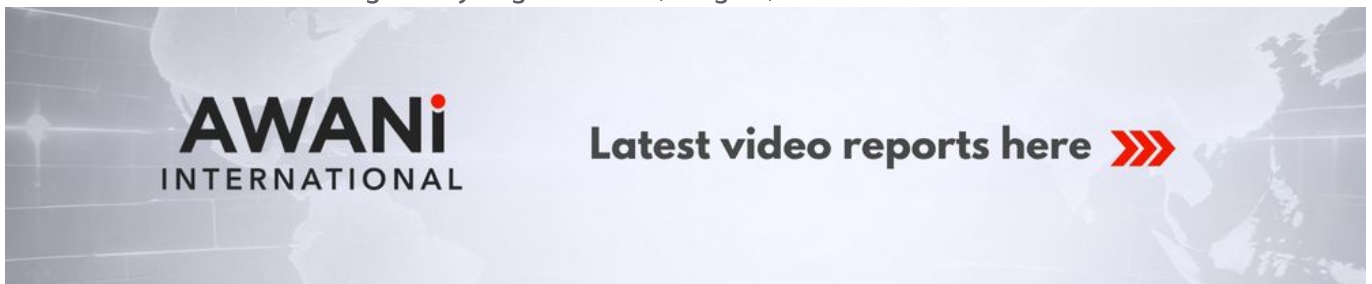
Because in ASEAN, the end of one term is not a complete stop. It is the beginning of another sentence in a story that is still being written, together.

Phar Kim Beng, PhD, is Professor of ASEAN Studies and Director of the Institute of Internationalization and ASEAN Studies (IINTAS) at the International Islamic University Malaysia.

Luthfy Hamzah is Senior Research Fellow at IINTAS and a specialist in trade, political economy, and strategic diplomacy in Northeast Asia.

*** The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the position of Astro AWANI.*

Your gateway to global news, insights, and stories that matter.



Cara lain mengikuti berita kami

- [Telegram](#)
- [Facebook](#)

Advertisement

Recommended For You

- [Iran, US 'stuck' over Hormuz as ceasefire expected to hold, says analyst](#)
- [India's top factory hub hopeful, wary as film star Vijay set to take reins](#)