

Tapping strong AEC potential



ENHANCED CONNECTIVITY: TM reviving Asean telco alliance to facilitate cross-border content flow in the region

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TELEKOM Malaysia Bhd (TM) is reviving a 20-year-old alliance of telecommunications companies in Asean to take full advantage of opportunities under the Asean Economic Community (AEC).

TM group chief executive officer Tan Sri Zamzamzairani Mohd Isa said connectivity between Asean countries already existed through partnerships between carriers, mainly to provide voice and data services to customers who travel across borders.

"We are going a step further. There is a joint venture called Acasia among the like-minded carriers. It is very timely for Acasia to be re-ignited. With the AEC and the opening up of Asean, the key is to create an infrastructure which is

cost-effective for our customers within each of these countries to do business," he said in an interview with *the New Straits Times* and *Berita Harian*.

Zamzamzairani was a founding member of Acasia Communications Sdn Bhd back in 1995.

Acasia comprises TM, CAT (Thailand), Indosat (Indonesia), PLDT (The Philippines), SingTel (Singapore), Telbru (Brunei) and VNPT (Vietnam).

The organisation, according to its website, is fully equipped to serve a multitude of verticals in the region — small and medium enterprises, multinational corporations, broadcasters, telcos, financial institutions, the education sector and government agencies — via seamless connectivity services and revolutionary ICT solutions.

Acasia was relaunched in May this year in conjunction with Kuala Lumpur's chair of Asean, where the company pledged five initiatives to facilitate Asean's ICT Masterplan 2015 — the Asean Command Cen-

tre, Asean Internet Exchange, Asean Broadcast Hub, Asean Regional Connectivity and Asean Market Place.

Zamzamzairani said the media industry, for example, could use Acasia to enable content to flow cost-effectively across the region.

"Traditionally, you have to book satellite time, etc, but now we want to use fibre (optics) and make it cost-effective and design a suite of products that would allow live-content to pass through," said the 54-year-old former satellite engineer.

Zamzamzairani said the leading telecommunications company's future plans in terms of improving connectivity — including via submarine cables — will be focused on Asean.

"It doesn't mean we will stop investing in other cables, including consortium cables. Upgrading work still continues, (but) new investments will be focused more on regional because the growth is going to be here in Asean," he added. **Additional reporting by Francis Dass**



TM group chief executive officer **Tan Sri Zamzamzairani Mohd Isa** says with the AEC, the key is to create an infrastructure which is cost-effective for customers. Pic by Nur Adibah Ahmad Izam