ISEAS @ 50

Introduction
Special Issue Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

The Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) was established in 1968 by an Act of Parliament in Singapore. The Institute is dedicated to the study of socio-political, security, and economic trends and developments in Southeast Asia and its wider geostrategic and economic environment. In 2015, the organization was renamed as the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute in honour of Singapore’s first president.

As part of its initiative to facilitate the search for viable solutions to the varied problems confronting Southeast Asia, the Institute launched the ASEAN Economic Bulletin (AEB) in July 1984. Its primary purpose was to circulate research carried out by scholars on key economic issues of the day. Attempting to reach out to policymakers and academics alike, the Bulletin sought to reconcile the ideals of relevance, methodological rigour, and accessibility of scholarly writing.

In 2013, the AEB underwent an important reorientation. First, in recognition of Southeast Asia’s increasingly complex regionalism, it was renamed as the Journal of Southeast Asian Economies (JSEAE). Second, in order to more closely match the initial remit of the publication, additional emphasis was placed on country-specific and policy-relevant research. Third, in order to increase the Journal’s rigour and appeal, the Editorial Committee applied for inclusion into leading databases such as SCOPUS and the Emerging Sources Citation Index.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, and the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Journal’s founding. Consequently, the JSEAE Editorial Committee decided to commemorate these milestones by publishing this Special Issue with contributions by four leading economists on topics of regional significance.

In the opening essay, Iwan J. Azis reflects on the indispensability of economic integration in ASEAN and the challenges that lie ahead. In the next essay, Fukunari Kimura delves into the concept of production unbundling and argues for the framework to be incorporated in the development strategies of Southeast Asian nations. In the third essay, Shujiro Urata analyses the implications of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP-11) for Southeast Asian countries, as well as Asian regionalism more widely. In the fourth and final essay, Michael T. Rock distils the key components underlying the successful performance of Southeast Asia’s three largest economies.