

The major ^(P) hurdle: PM ^{Dr. Mahathir}

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — The biggest political challenge confronting the six-member Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) today is the Kampuchean question, the Prime Minister said this morning.

Unfortunately, he added, of late there had been a lack of response to the initiatives from Asean and he called for patience.

(Asean has proposed indirect discussions or "proximity talks" among the parties involved in the Kampuchean conflict but Hanoi has reportedly rejected the plan).

"We must continue to exercise patience. At the same time, we must continue to be pro-active, to consider every possibility, and to work with determination and creativity in our tireless search for a just, productive and viable political solution — a solu-

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tion that will be just, productive and viable in the long term as well as in the short run," Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister was opening the 18th Asean Foreign Ministers

meeting at the new Shangri-La Hotel.

The two-day meeting, which is held under tight security unprecedented in the history of the 17-year-old organisation, is attended by the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore, new member Brunei and host-nation Malaysia. Also attending the meeting as an observer is Papua New Guinea's Foreign Minister John Giheno.

The Deputy Prime Minister of Fiji, Mr Ratu David Toganivake, is a special guest at the invitation of the Ma-

laysian Government.

The Prime Minister said it was Malaysia's view that for a just, productive and viable solution to the Kampuchean problem certain imperatives would have to be met.

"First, the sufferings of the Kampuchean people must be ended while Thailand's security must be ensured. This is basic," he said.

"Then, there must be a Government of national reconciliation and the Kampuchean people must be provided with the opportunity to exercise their right of self-determination and to ensure a State of Kampuchea that is sovereign and independent. This obviously means that finally foreign troops cannot be on Kampuchean soil."

However, he said, the only guarantee of a viable solution lay in the rea-

sonable accommodation of the interest of all the parties to the dispute.

"Those who neglect the lessons of history may be condemned to repeat them.

"Let us not forget Geneva. Let us not forget that true peace, true stability, true security are dynamic processes which have to be sustained over time.

"As much as the other States in the Indochinese peninsular and, indeed, everywhere else desire to live free and independent in their own homeland, so do the Kampuchean people."

Dr Mahathir said that for a settlement to be productive in terms of long-term peace, security and stability in South-East Asia "it is essential we understand that our concern must not only be with the short-run but also the longer term future of the region".

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Stormy days threaten

Asean: Mahathir

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"We should aspire to a solution that is provocative of no power. We should aspire to a political solution which establishes the ground rules for the game of peace in South-East Asia, which establishes the principle that there must be respect for each other's independence and territorial integrity, which establishes the principle of non-interference in each other's internal affairs and which establishes the principle of peaceful settlement — the living rule that all disputes be resolved by peaceful means."

Dr Mahathir said a solution to the Kampuchean problem should also enhance the prospects for the realisation of Zopfan (Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality).

"Such a just, productive and viable solution is, unfortunately, not at hand," he said, adding that while Asean must strive to bring about a settlement, Vietnam must be made to realise the need to engage in a meaningful dialogue

with the six-member grouping and with the parties concerned.

"It is time for Vietnam to respond constructively to the Asean approaches."

He also dwelt at length on trade — a topic that ranks high on the agenda for the Ministerial meeting which will be followed by talks with Asean's six dialogue partners: the European Economic Community, the United States, Japan, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

On the economic front, Dr Mahathir said that for a long time Asean "never had it so good".

He said that although the 70s was a period of international economic turmoil, it was also one of economic opportunity.

While many countries did badly, Asean member nations performed "exceedingly well" emerging as the fastest growing region in the world.

"...the days ahead are by no means dark. But the skies in the rest of the 80s threaten much rain and many storms."

Dr Mahathir warned of the growing tide of protectionism and more bla-

tant commodity market manipulation which demanded that Asean act with resolve "and where necessary, in concert to keep the open doors from being closed".

He urged Asean to break the stranglehold of institutions created by market manipulators for themselves.

"In a fast-changing international environment we must continue to be quick of foot, able to respond at the Governmental level and in the private sector to market changes and product demands."

He also reminded Asean to ensure that the solution of the economic tensions between the United States and Japan was not at the expense of its member nations.

"Then, of course, we must continue to find the means by which economic co-operation within Asean can be taken in new directions and to new levels.

"Malaysia, together with the other States of Asean must continue to ensure that Asean remains the focus of our attention and the cornerstone of our foreign policy," the Prime Minister added.