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Mahathir-Asean

MAHATHIR'S HOPE: ALL 10 SEA COUNTRIES WILL BE IN ASEAN

By Abdul Rahman Sulaiman

PHNOM PENH, April 14 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight it is his hope that Asean would ultimately comprise all the 10 countries in Southeast Asia. *overseas trips*

He said this was necessary as a more united Southeast Asia would make the region stronger in meeting future challenges.

"Together we can work with the other countries in east Asia to develop a more resilient and progressive crescent of prosperity in this region," he said at a state banquet hosted by Cambodia's co-prime ministers Prince Norodom Ranariddh and Hun Sen here.

The Prime Minister, now on a two-day official visit to Cambodia, said Laos and Vietnam had already taken steps to prepare for their eventual entry into Asean. Both had now become observers of the regional grouping comprising Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore and Brunei.

He hoped that Cambodia would consider participating in Asean like Laos and Vietnam so as to eventually blend into the Asean tapestry of regional cooperation. -- more

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Mahathir-Asean 2 (last) Phnom Penh

On Malaysia-Cambodia relations, the prime minister assured his hosts that Malaysia would take every measure to reinforce existing interaction between the peoples of the two countries, begun centuries ago, now that a new era had begun in the relationship between the two countries.

He said Malaysia admired the commitment of the Cambodian government towards promoting the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country.

He gave an assurance that the Malaysian government would continue to cooperate with Cambodia in its reconstruction and development efforts.

Toward this end, he suggested that both countries set up appropriate frameworks to facilitate the signing of bilateral agreements between them.

-- Bernama.

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