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Asean-EU

ASEAN MAY FACE DIFFICULTIES WITH EU OVER MYANMAR, SAYS SIAZON

KUALA LUMPUR, July 24 (Bernama) -- Asean may face difficulties in dealing with the European Union (EU) with the inclusion of Myanmar as one of its members, Philippine Foreign Secretary Domingo Siazon said today.

He said Asean, however, was against discrimination against any of its members.

"There may be some difficulties when dealing with specific (EU) countries or specific factions. We will deal with those one by one," he told reporters after attending the opening of the 30th Asean Ministerial Meeting here.

He said it was up to the EU to bring up matters regarding Myanmar with Asean.

Myanmar and Laos joined Brunei, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam yesterday.

He also said Asean's expansion increased its leverage in international fora.

"We are a larger market with almost 500 million people...our weight in the world has increased just by the sheer number," he said.

On a suggestion by a reporter that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement on manipulators out to undermine Asean economies was combatant, he said: "Dr Mahathir has been saying these things for years...I wouldn't say combatant, but he is very decisive."

Dr Mahathir, in his keynote address, told his Asean partners that there was a well-planned effort to undermine their economies by destabilising their currencies. -- BERNAMA

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