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Malaysia welcomes move by region's ministers

KUALA LIPIS, Sun. - Malaysia today welcomed the stand adopted by the Asean Foreign Ministers to simultaneously admit Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar to the grouping.

Acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said Malaysia had earlier hinted on the need to admit all three countries simultaneously.

"I think the Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad) has made clear Malaysia's stand," he said after presenting souvenirs to the first leg winners of the Cameron Descent 1997 at the Kampung Harung Orang Asli settlement.

"I welcome the consultative spirit prevailing in Asean. The internal problem of a country should not become an issue for its admission to Asean.

"Whatever problem faced by any of the Asean countries, our approach is to deal with it through constructive engagement."

He said such an approach was far better.

"Our experience with Vietnam has shown that the friendly approach produces better results than the confrontational stand."

On the protest from the United States over Myanmar's admission, Anwar said Malaysia had received an official letter from the US.

"While we understand the problem raised by the US, we have enough experience in dealing with our neighbouring countries.

"We make friends with them and it is through this friendship that we manage to solve the problem."

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