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Summit-Myanmar

MYANMAR LEADER TO MEET UN CHIEF IN KUALA LUMPUR

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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 14 (Bernama) -- Myanmar's military leader Than Shwe will be meeting United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan at the second Asean informal summit here, according to a statement from the Myanmar delegation.

The one-page statement said the Myanmar State Peace and Development Council chairman will be meeting Annan and several leaders while here.

Annan is scheduled to arrive tonight for a four-day visit to Malaysia and would be attending a gala dinner hosted by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for the leaders of Asean countries, China, Japan and South Korea tomorrow.

Than Shwe arrived yesterday to attend the three-day Asean informal summit beginning tonight and also the first ever Asean informal gathering with China, Japan and South Korea taking place tomorrow.

Myanmar joined the Southeast Asian grouping earlier this year. Asean now groups Brunei, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Myanmar has been ostracised by the West which is critical of its human rights record. Among them is the United States which had imposed economic sanctions on Yangon and the European Union which opposes Myanmar's inclusion, as an Asean member and in the second Asia-Europe Meeting in London next April .

The one-page statement said while here, Than Shwe will "renew personal contacts and exchange views with other heads of state or government of the Southeast Asian countries and China, Japan and South Korea."

He will hold separate meetings with China's President Jiang Zemin, Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai, Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai and Laotian Prime Minister Khamtay Sipandone to discuss bilateral, regional and other matters of mutual interest.

The statement said that Than Shwe's participation in the second Asean informal summit reaffirmed "the sincere desire of the Government and people of Myanmar to work together with fellow Asean members in all activities" of the regional grouping.

"It also demonstrates Myanmar's commitment to the common pledge to live together in peace and harmony in the family of nations in Southeast Asia and in Asia in which the countries in the region commit themselves to work together in the interest of the whole region," the statement added. --

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