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Asean-Cambodia

NO INDICATION ON CAMBODIA'S ATTENDANCE AT AMM

KUALA LUMPUR, July 16 (Bernama) -- Cambodia has not given any word on whether it will be sending representatives for the Asean Ministerial Meeting (AMM) here next week, Foreign Ministry secretary-general Datuk Abdul Kadir Mohamad said today.

"Till today, we have no confirmation on whether they are coming or who is coming,

"We hope to get a clearer picture by the time the Asean foreign ministers gather here," he told a press briefing on the preparations for the 30th AMM.

He said the foreign ministers may address the issue on Cambodia, which had been accorded observer status two years ago and was scheduled to be ushered into the regional grouping along with Laos and Myanmar in that meeting.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will open the AMM on July 24 here.

At a special meeting on July 10, the Asean foreign ministers decided to defer indefinitely Cambodia's entry into Asean following the July 6 ouster of First Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh by Second Prime Minister Hun Sen.

Asked if Ranariddh might attend the AMM, Kadir said Wisma Putra had no information on his programme or whereabouts.

Kadir said Myanmar and Laos would be inducted as Asean members at a ceremony on the eve of the AMM.

The AMM will be followed by the Asean Regional Forum (ARF) -- a day-long affair which will discuss regional security issues.

However, there is no specific agenda between Asean member countries and its dialogue partners, he said.

For the first time, the ministers would be allowed to have two accompanying officials at the forum instead of one as in previous years.

The regular Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC) would be held on July 28 and 29. The PMC is held annually between Asean and its 10 dialogue partners.

The dialogue partners are Australia, the United States, Canada, European Union, New Zealand, China, South Korea, Japan, Russia and India.

Kadir said the countries had indicated that they would be represented by their foreign ministers including US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

Papua New Guinea, which had been accorded observer status, would be represented by a special envoy.

He said the Prime Minister of India Inder Kumar Gujral, who is also the Foreign Minister, had indicated his interest to attend the meeting.

Gujral attended last year's ARF and Asean post-ministerial meetings in his capacity as Foreign Minister in the previous Deve Gowda government.

Taking advantage of the "computer age", Kadir said all information on the meetings would be accessible through the Internet

-- <http://aseansec.org>.

About 300 foreign and 200 local media representatives were expected to cover the meetings. -- Bernama

ZAB/AZZ TS