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CAMBODIA'S ENTRY INTO ASEAN TO BE DECIDED AT HANOI SUMMIT

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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 17 (Bernama) -- Cambodia's entry into Asean will be decided at the Sixth Asean Summit in Hanoi next month, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

He said its admission into the nine-member regional grouping would depend on the developments in the country between now and the formation of a legitimate government.

"After the government has been formed, Asean member nations will make an objective assessment of the situation and a report will be submitted to the heads of government," he told reporters after the Asean Consultation Council meeting here chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said the Asean leaders agreed unanimously at the meeting that they should "wait and see" whether a government could be formed or otherwise in Cambodia before deciding on its entry.

"It is crucial that a legitimate government is formed first," he said, adding that Asean had not set a deadline for Cambodia to join the grouping.

Abdullah said the leaders also expressed their appreciation to the Cambodian King Prince Norodom Sihanouk for his mediation efforts between Prime Minister Hun Sen and Prince Norodom Ranariddh to form a coalition government.

Cambodia was excluded from entering Asean along with Myanmar and Laos at the annual informal Asean Summit here last year due to political uncertainties in that country.

Asean comprises Brunei, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar and Laos.

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