

14 DEC 1998

Asean-Hun Sen

HUN SEN STILL HOPEFUL OF JOINING ASEAN IN HANOI

By: E Sivabalan

HANOI, Dec 14 (Bernama) -- Visiting Cambodian prime minister Hun Sen, who held talks with his Malaysian counterpart Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad here today, said he is still hopeful that Cambodia would be accepted into Asean at the grouping's sixth summit here.

"I am still hopeful," he told reporters after talks with Dr Mahathir who arrived here today for the summit which begins tomorrow.

Hun Sen, who is on a two-day visit to Vietnam, was busy holding bilateral talks with Asean leaders seen as a last-minute attempt to woo them into accepting his country.

Upon arrival here earlier today, Dr Mahathir told reporters that Asean hoped to admit Cambodia into the regional grouping at the Hanoi summit.

Meanwhile, Singapore has reiterated its stand that Phnom Penh's admission into Asean be deferred.

"We will discuss further but there is no change in our position," Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong told reporters on arrival here for the summit.

Goh said there was "no change" in the Singapore stand over the issue as expressed earlier by foreign minister S.Jayakumar at last Saturday's Asean foreign ministers meeting here.

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

Vietnam is hosting the summit for the first time since joining Asean in 1995.

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