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Mahathir-Australia (rptn inserting dropped word Mohamad in intro)

KUALA LUMPUR, July 19, (Bernama) -- Malaysia will not seek an apology from Australia over their strained relations when Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans calls on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad here for talks.

+I'm not looking for an apology or anything like that. We want to talk, I-hat's all,+ Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir told reporters after opening the 24th Asean Ministerial Meeting at the Putra World Trade Centre here today.

He said Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke had written to him explaining that Encik Evans would be meeting him as his personal envoy.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said he was not setting pre-conditions for the meeting but would be keeping an open mind.

Relations between the two countries were strained following criticisms made by the Australian media against Malaysia. -- more

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The date for the meeting has not been revealed but Encik Evans will arrive here tomorrow to attend the three-day Post Ministerial Conference' (PMC) with Asean Foreign Minsters who began their. two-day meeting today.

Asked if he was hoping for a positive outcome from the meeting, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said: +Well, when you talk,: you will always hope that you can achieve something+.

The Prime Minister declined to describe the latest state of relations between Australia and Malaysia beyond saying: +We are members of the Commonwealth+.

On his scheduled talks with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said, among other things, they'wduld discuss bilateral relations and Malaysia's stand on the proposed East Asia Economic Group (EAEG).

He described the ties between the two countries as good but said +as usual there are differences between friends+.

Commenting on the outcome of the Group of Seven Industrialised Nations' (G-7) Summit in London, the Prime Minister said the G-7 should not only tell others not to use arms but they themselves should also stop selling military weapons all over the world. -- Bernama

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