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Ceremony to admit Laos, Myanmar

LAOS and Myanmar will be admitted as members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (Asean) at a ceremony a day before the start of the two-day 30th Asean Ministerial Meeting (AMM) in Kuala Lumpur beginning July 24.

At the ceremony, the foreign ministers of Laos and Myanmar will sign a declaration paving the way for its accession, Foreign Ministry Secretary-General Datuk Abdul Kadir Mohamed said yesterday.

The declaration will be countersigned by the foreign ministers of the seven Asean countries, namely Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The foreign ministers of Laos and Myanmar will also sign the protocols for the accession into Asean, Abdul Kadir said in Kuala Lumpur at a briefing for journalists covering the AMM, the 4th Asean Regional Forum (ARF) on July 27 July and the two-day Post-Ministerial Meeting (PMC) beginning July 28.

The foreign ministers will each make a statement at the ceremony. The foreign ministers of Laos and Myanmar will also present to the Asean secretary-general Datuk Ajit Singh an inclusion list of Common Effective Preferential Tariff products. A flag-raising ceremony will also be held.

Abdul Kadir said Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, in his capacity as the chairman of the 30th Asean Standing Committee, will host an informal working dinner for the Asean foreign ministers on July 23.

He will also host an informal working dinner between the foreign ministers of Asean and those from China, Japan and South Korea on July 27.

While here, the foreign ministers and representatives of Asean, its observer countries and ARF and PMC dialogue partners will also meet Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who will open the AMM on July 24.

Prior to the AMM, a two-day Asean SOM and the Asean Standing Committee meeting will be held. The SOM will be attended by secretaries-general of the Asean foreign ministries while the Asean Standing Committee meeting will be attended by the Asean directors-general.

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