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Aussie Foreign Minister Downer to arrive tomorrow

AUSTRALIAN Foreign Minister Mr Alexander Downer will visit Malaysia from tomorrow until Friday at the invitation of Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

This would be Downer's fourth visit to Malaysia since he was appointed foreign minister in early 1996, Wisma Putra said in a statement released in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

"The main purpose of the visit is for the two foreign ministers to identify new avenues for cooperation with a view to enhancing further bilateral relations between Malaysia and Australia.

"The two foreign ministers are also expected to exchange views on regional and international issues of common interest," the statement said.

During the visit, Downer will be accompanied by advisers and a senior official from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Besides meeting Abdullah, Downer will make courtesy calls on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He will also call on and hold discussions on issues of common concern with Minister of Special Functions in the Prime Minister's Department Tun Daim Zainuddin and Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He will attend a luncheon given in his honour by the Malaysia-Australia Foundation on Thursday as well as deliver an opening address at the Malaysia-Australia Business Council annual gala dinner on the same day.

Downer and his delegation will leave for Manila on Friday to attend the Asean ministerial meetings/Post Ministerial Conferences.

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