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## Role of Asean to top agenda in PM's talks with Habibie

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - The continued role of Asean in regional and international affairs will top the agenda in talks between Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta when Indonesian President B.J. Habibie makes his day-long working visit to Malaysia tomorrow.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Habibie are scheduled to have a four-eye meeting at the new administrative capital of Putrajaya, followed by a delegation meeting.

Briefing the media on the visit today, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said the two countries would also discuss bilateral issues, the latest developments in the regional and international scenario and whatever outstanding matters between Malaysia and Indonesia.

The bilateral meeting would focus on the issues of illegal immigrants, migrant workers, co-operation in education, haze management and technical co-operation. Other issues like East Timor and Aceh are also expected to feature in the discussions, according to a Wisma Putra statement today.

Habibie will lead an 80-member delegation, including Cabinet Ministers and senior government officials, on his second trip to Malaysia since assuming the presidency.

His first visit was in November last year for the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation meeting.

The delegation includes the Economic, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Trade and Industry, Justice and Defence Ministers who would be joined by their Malaysian counterparts during the delegation meeting.

The meeting between Dr Mahathir and Habibie would be their third encounter, the last being in Batam, Indonesia, last May.

The two leaders are scheduled to hold a joint news conference at the end of their bilateral meeting in Putrajaya.

Syed Hamid said the meeting was a follow-up to the previous get-together working meeting in Batam where both countries focused their discussion on trade and economic co-operation, as well as for the two leaders to update themselves on the current economic situation in their countries.

"In our previous meetings, we touched on the macro-economic situation. We usually talk about recovery, political situation and also how we can enhance our relationship.

"It is important for us to continue discussing the question of the forest fires that have taken place (in Indonesia). I think this is one of the regional efforts that have been undertaken by all countries in Asean. There is a very close co-operation," he said.

On the issue of illegal workers, Syed Hamid said Malaysia wanted to reduce the number of "guest" workers wherever possible, except in areas that had been agreed upon.

Habibie is also scheduled for an audience with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah, at Istana Negara in the morning.

(END)