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Dr Mahathir to meet with EC chief

Nuraina Samad in Seoul

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is scheduled to meet European Commission president Romano Prodi here on Friday on the sidelines of the Asia-Europe Meeting or Asem III.

Malaysian officials said Dr Mahathir's meeting with Prodi would be for about 30 minutes. He is also scheduled to meet his Luxembourg counterpart Jean-Claude Juncker.

Asian and European leaders often hold bilateral talks on the sidelines of Asem, an informal process of dialogue and co-operation bringing together the 15 European Union member States and the European Commission with 10 Asian countries,

Dr Mahathir, who arrives here this evening, joins nine the leaders for the two-day summit which begins Oct 20.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Abdul Hamid Albar will be attending the Ministerial Preparatory Meeting. He is expected to represent Dr Mahathir at the Asian Leaders' Meeting in the evening.

Malaysian Foreign Ministry secretary-general Datuk Abdul Kadir Mohamad said yesterday that the leaders are expected to approve three documents - the chairman's statement, the draft of the Seoul Declaration for Peace on the Korean Peninsular and the Asia Europe Co-operation Framework 2000 (AECF 2000).

Abdul Kadir said the draft on the Seoul declaration for peace would be the first document the leaders would be looking at.

The AECF 2000, he said, is the plan of action for Asem for the next few years.

He said the senior officials held a "co-ordination meeting" this afternoon to prepare the drafts for the Ministers who will begin their meeting tomorrow.

Abdul Kadir said there will be three closed sessions during which dialogues on political, trade and investment and cultural co-operation. Will be held respectively.

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