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Dr Mahathir to join world leaders at Asem Three

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad joins leaders of 10 Asian and 15 European Union member countries at the third Asia-Europe Meeting or Asem III in Seoul, South Korea from Oct 20 to 21 to discuss wide-ranging issues.

In the Malaysian delegation will be Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Abdul Hamid Albar and International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz.

Billed the First Asem in the Millennium, this informal forum of dialogue and co-operation, in which the European Commission also sits, is expected to further strengthen inter-continental relations covering political, economic and cultural areas.

This is the third Asem since the first held in Bangkok in 1996. The second was held in London in 1998. The venue of biennial meeting rotates between European and Asian cities. The fourth, after Seoul, will be held in Copenhagen in 2002.

With the exception of Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai, all other leaders of Asem have confirmed attendance to the summit, themed "Partnership for Prosperity and Stability in the New Millennium".

For South Korea, hosting this round could not have come at a significant time in the wake of growing rapport between the two Koreas.

The Seoul summit is expected to address the future directions of the Asem process into the first decade of the new century.

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