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Asean-Meeting

ASEAN OFFICIALS MEET IN BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN

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BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, July 25 (Bernama) -- Foreign ministry officials from Asean countries met here today prior to next week's 35th Asean Ministerial Meeting (AMM).

The meetings of the Asean Standing Committee (ASC) and Senior Officials Drafting Committee were held at the International Convention Centre, which will also be the venue for the AMM, 9th Asean Regional Forum (ARF) and Post Ministerial Conferences.

These three meetings will take place from next Monday to Thursday.

Malaysia's delegation to the ASC meeting was led by Kamal Ismaun, director-general of the Asean Department in the Foreign Ministry.

Details of the meeting were not made available to the press.

The ASC is the policy arm and organ of coordination of Asean and reviews the work of various committees with the view of implementing policy guidelines set by the AMM.

Comprising the directors-general of the Asean Departments of the respective member nations, the committee reports directly to the Asean foreign ministers who in turn report to the heads of state or government.

The ASC meeting was followed by the Task Force on Initiative for Asean Integration (IAI) meeting. The IAI was launched at the 4th Asean Informal Summit in Singapore in November 2000 and is aimed at narrowing the gap within Asean member countries and to enhance Asean's competitiveness as a region.

The initiative is guided by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's "prosper thy neighbour" principle.

It provides a framework for regional cooperation through which the more developed Asean member countries could help those member countries that most need it with the focus on education, skills development and worker training.

Asean or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations was established on August 8, 1967 in Bangkok and is currently made up of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

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