

NSP - 7 AUG 2003

Second EAC to be held in June next year, says Noordin

THE Institute of **Strategic** and International Studies (ISIS) hopes to **organise** the second East Asia Congress next June.

Its chairman and chief executive officer Tan Sri Dr Noordin Sopiee said the institution planned to include probably two more issues, apart from the present ones, at the next congress.

Speaking after chairing a session at the end of the three-day **congress** here yesterday, he said the additional issues would include regional environment, and political and security co-operation.

"I think **we will** pursue the same areas in the next congress. The present issues discussed are health, tourism, trade, monetary and financial co-operation. We may add one or two issues," he said.

However, he said war against terrorism would not be on the agenda of the EAC.

"We do not think that terrorism is central to East Asian agenda. Terrorism is fought globally."

On calls to invite more businessmen to the congress, Noordin said many businessmen had attended the gathering but they were not vocal enough.

On whether the congress would lose its appeal upon Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's retirement, Noordin said it would not as for the years to come, Malaysia was committed to East Asian co-operation.

"It is not a question of personality but a matter of reality and logic. Obviously, everybody is committed," he said.