

Zahid Flies into Ulaanbaatar to Attend 11th Asem Summit

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From D. Arul Rajoo

ULAANBAATAR (Mongolia), July 14 (Bernama) -- Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi arrived here Thursday for the 11th Asia-Europe Meeting (Asem) Summit.

Ahmad Zahid and his wife Datin Seri Hamidah Khamis landed at the Chinggis Khan International Airport here at 4.24pm (3.24pm Malaysian time).

The Malaysian delegation was greeted on arrival by Malaysian Ambassador to China Datuk Zainuddin Yahya, who is concurrently accredited to Mongolia, and officials from both the host country and Malaysia.

The two-day summit beginning Friday, with the theme '20 Years of ASEM: Partnership for the Future through Connectivity', marks the 20th anniversary of ASEM since its inception in 1996.

The participating leaders are expected to discuss and review the progress and achievements of the two decades of partnership as well as chart the course for the inter-regional dialogue process for the next decade.

Political developments in Asia and Europe, counter-terrorism and migration are among the current issues to be discussed, as well as strengthening of the ASEM partnership through greater connectivity.

Senior officials held their two-day meeting on Tuesday and Wednesday to prepare the Ulaanbaatar Declaration, which aims to chart the future course of ASEM into its third decade.

Ahmad Zahid is scheduled to deliver a statement at the first plenary session of the summit which will have discussions based on the topic 'Two Decades of Partnership: Taking Stock and Looking Ahead'.

He is also expected to hold bilateral meetings with leaders on the sidelines of the summit to discuss bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest.

ASEM is a platform for dialogue and cooperation based on equal partnership between the

regions of Asia and Europe.

It has 53 member partners, consisting of 21 Asian countries, 28 European Union member states, two other European countries, the European Union, and the ASEAN Secretariat.

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