

# Tight security for world economic talks in New York

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NEW YORK: Security will be extremely tight at the biggest gathering of world leaders for the World Economic Forum (WEF) here beginning on Jan 31.

More than 20 heads of state and government are scheduled to attend this annual gathering.

They include Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, Australian Prime Minister John Howard, Philippines' President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, Jordan's King Abdullah Hussein, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien, Nigerian President Oluse-

gun Obasanjo and South African President Thabo Mbeki.

The United States will be represented by Secretary of State Colin Powell, Secretary of Treasury Paul H. O'Neill and former president Bill Clinton.

WEF, in a statement, said the theme for the four-day conference was "Leadership in Fragile Times: A Vision for a Shared Future."

It said the shifting of the conference from Davos in Switzerland to New York signalled the determination of members to tackle head-on the extraordinary challenges faced by the world after the Sept 11 attacks.

"We created a brand new programme for this annual meeting a programme de-

signed to stimulate discussion and provide insights that will help us better cope with the fragility of our times," said WEF president Klaus Schwab.

A record 3,000 participants are expected at the meeting.

"When we began planning this meeting, in the aftermath of Sept 11 and in the midst of the anthrax scare in New York, we could have hardly imagined the level of participation we are looking at today," said Donna Redel, managing director of the Forum's Centre for Global Industries.

"It is clear that our members feel that this meeting is both necessary and important at this time," she added.