

PM to woo investors in New York

SUN - 2 FEB 2002

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will lead top government officials and corporate leaders to an investment meeting in New York on Monday.

The PM will talk with equity and fixed-income investors, and also seek to draw more foreign direct investment into Malaysia at the talks organised by Salomon Smith Barney, a unit of Citigroup Inc.

This will be Mahathir's first

visit to the US to win support since the 1998 Asian crisis, when Malaysia lost favour with international investors after imposing capital controls, trapping as much as US\$10 billion (RM38 billion) of portfolio funds for a year.

Mahathir spent much of 2001 reshaping Malaysia's economy by getting tougher with defaulters, setting deadlines to fix corporate debt and adding pressure to replace management of ailing companies.

The key Kuala Lumpur Composite Index rose 3.3% in January. It is the 10th-best performing stock market in the world over the last six months.

Mahathir made cleaning up RM30.4 billion of overdue corporate debt a priority, so that banks could be freed to lend more money to help fuel economic growth. The economy shrank 1.3% in the third quarter last year, its first contraction in more than two years.

Bank Negara governor Tan Sri

Zeti Akhtar Aziz and KL Stock Exchange executive chairman Datuk Azlan Hashim will speak on economic policies, political developments and improvements in corporate governance.

The PM will be accompanied by Tenaga Nasional Bhd chairman Tan Sri Jamaludin Jarjis, Malayan Banking Bhd managing director Datuk Amirsham A. Aziz and YTL Corp managing director Tan Sri Francis Yeoh, among others. - Bloomberg