

# Banking on a strong show of leadership

PUTRAJAYA, Mon. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi hopes the first East Asia Summit to be "leaders-led", a departure from previous regional meetings where heads of Government met mainly to endorse the agenda prepared by senior officials.

"I would like to see this summit to be a leaders' summit, not just the leaders endorsing what the senior officials have prepared for them to discuss and agree upon," he told senior media editors at a briefing at the Foreign Ministry here.

Malaysia will host the summit from Dec 10 to 14.

Describing the inaugural East Asia Summit as a "historic event in Malaysia", Abdullah said this meeting of the leaders of the 10 Asean member

countries with their counterparts from China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand was of strategic importance in discussing the future of the whole of East Asia vis-a-vis the global environment.

The East Asia Summit will be preceded by a host of other summits — the 9th Asean-Japan Summit, 9th Asean-South Korea Summit, 4th Asean-India Summit, the 11th Asean Summit on Dec 12 and the 1st Asean-Russia Summit on Dec 13.

By the same token, Abdullah said he also expected discussions among leaders at the Asean summit this time to be more free-wheeling.

"This is going to be a very massive exercise for us as host," Abdullah said. "It is of strategic and historical importance." said Abdullah. — Bernama



**ABDULLAH:** Summit a historic event for Malaysia.