

Malaysia to share expertise

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CHOGM2005.MT

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VALLETTA (Malta): Malaysia is set to lead the discussions on five key issues during the three-day Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) which kicks off here today.

They include good governance, combating terrorism and promoting tolerance and trade.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will also share the country's experience in poverty eradication and networking for development.

"Pak Lah is expected to set the pace for informal discussions and the free flow of ideas during the meeting," Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar told Malaysian journalists here yesterday.

More than 3,000 delegates have begun converging on this island for what has been touted as the biggest-ever conference hosted by the Maltese Government.

Brushing aside military might and unilateral actions to combat terror threats, Malaysia has called on its Commonwealth partners to look at more

tolerant ways to tackle the issue.

Syed Hamid said the grouping could play a greater role to reduce this threat, based on its cultural, religious and ethnic diversities.

He proposed:

- AN inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue to help promote a culture of tolerance among the global community;

- A SPECIAL committee to deal with the problem of terror, as it can't be resolved through military action or outside the multilateral system; and

- A PROGRAMME to instil respect, understanding and goodwill among the people of the Commonwealth.

Abdullah flew in at 3pm and was met on arrival by the Maltese director of protocol, Charles Inguanas, and Malaysian ambassador to Libya Datuk Zulkifli Yaacob, who is accredited to Malta.

The Prime Minister is expected to hold bilateral talks with his counterparts from New Zealand (Helen Clark), Pakistan (Shaukat Aziz), Zambia (Levy Patrick) and Seychelles (James Michel) on the sidelines of CHOGM.

Public interests come first

VALLETTA (Malta): Malaysia will not compromise the people's interests as it works with Singapore to resolve the issue of building a bridge to replace the Causeway.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said the Government was keen to reach

an agreement with Singapore, but not at all costs.

"If we feel that any solution will jeopardise the country's position, we will look for other means to resolve it," he told Malaysian journalists covering CHOGM here yesterday.



WELL-WISHERS: Government officials seeing Abdullah off at the TUDM airport in Subang yesterday. — Bernamapic