

Malaysia has right formula, says Clinton

NST-21/9/2006

FORMER US President Bill Clinton and a group of community and non-governmental organisation leaders in New York view Malaysia as a successful model in managing a society of diverse culture, race and religion.

The group met Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday in a meeting focused on seeking ways to narrow the gap between the West and Islam. Abdullah is in New York to attend the United Nations general assembly.

Speaking to reporters later, Ab-

dullah said he related Malaysia's experience in managing a multi-racial and multi-religious society to the group.

"I told them that in Malaysia, there is even the Sedition Act which prevents all actions that can incite racial and religious hatred among the population and of the various activities the government promotes to foster closer relations between the different races," he said.

"They see Malaysia as a successful nation in that aspect and feel that the country's experience

has to be studied and applied elsewhere."

In his meeting with the Asean-US Council later, Abdullah said the American businessmen expressed their commitment to continue investing in Malaysia. "They appreciated our recent move to lower the corporate tax," he said.

Malaysia announced that it will reduce corporate tax by one per cent next year and another one per cent in 2008.

Commenting on the speech by US President George W. Bush to the general assembly on Tuesday,

Abdullah said what Bush said was in line with the US' stance towards many of the present global issues.

Bush's speech, however, was not as confrontational as earlier expected. While defending America's policies, particularly in West Asia, Bush offered Iran an olive branch, saying the US was ready to return to the negotiating table if Teheran abandons its nuclear programme.

The President also criticised the UN's inaction in solving the security and humanitarian crisis in Darfur, Sudan.