

# Pak Lah on roads to peace

## Muslims and West must work together, PM and Bush agree

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**NEW YORK:** The United States and Malaysia both realise that Muslims and the Western world must work together for world peace, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Abdullah met US President George W. Bush here on Monday and discussed subjects ranging from Palestine to a free trade agreement.

The Malaysian Prime Minister, who described the meeting as an engaging 55-minute discussion, said that they exchanged views on the Middle East and the Western world's perception of Islam.

The bilateral meeting between the two leaders at the Waldorf-Astoria was initiated by Bush. In his brief remarks to the press later, Bush described Abdullah as one of the out-

standing leaders in the Asian region who had a role to play in achieving long-lasting peace.

Abdullah, who met Bush in his capacity as Malaysian Prime Minister and OIC chairman, told Malaysian reporters: "We had a *rancak* (engaging) discussion."

"I did not manage to raise the subject of the two Malaysians detained in Guantanamo Bay on terrorism charges," he said, adding that the Malaysian Embassy had relayed its views to Washington on the need for due legal process for them.

The Prime Minister, who is here to attend the 61st UN General Assembly, said that discussion over having an FTA with the United States would proceed but caution should be exercised to ensure that Malaysia would not end up on the losing side.

He said Malaysia's bilateral ties with the United States were good in terms of trade or

investments.

On Palestine, Abdullah said efforts must be made to form a united government which truly represented the people there.

"I will be meeting Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas," he said, but declined to reveal when the meeting would take place.

He also said Bush had responded well to efforts to send peacekeeping forces to Lebanon.

On Iraq, Abdullah said he conveyed his hopes that attention be given to stop the fighting between groups in that war-torn country.

He also stressed that he was not "seeking fairness" in his talk with Bush, as reported earlier, adding that he hoped the US president would acknowledge efforts to resolve conflicts.

On Iran's nuclear standoff with the West, Abdullah said no conditions should be set in negotiations with the country.