

# Islamic affairs, M-East on Abdullah's agenda

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## ■ From Shahrizan Johari in Davos, Switzerland

THE World Economic Forum this year will be the biggest in terms of attendance. It will also be the first for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak represented Malaysia here in 2005.

What makes Davos special is the people who go there. Some 24 heads of states, 800 top chief executive officers of the world's biggest firms and 2,400 partici-

pants will rub shoulders in an informal environment.

"It's unique because it's probably the only chance that you could be in a crowd and talk to, for example, (former US president) Bill Clinton," said Malaysia's ambassador to Switzerland, Datuk Mohd Yusof Ahmad.

The WEF is very well known as a top networking event.

Abdullah, who arrived here last night, will be joined by heavyweights who include German chancellor Angela Merkel and business leaders such as media

magnate Rupert Murdoch, Lakshmi Mittal of the world's biggest steelmaker, Arcelor Mittal Steel, and the world's richest man, Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft.

But the forum will be important to Malaysia for two reasons. One is the opportunity for Abdullah to share his ideas on the state of affairs between the Islamic world and the West.

He is likely to touch on the conflicts in the Middle East like Palestine. This will be delivered in a speech tomorrow.

Secondly, the WEF will also of-

fer an opportunity for Malaysia to market Visit Malaysia Year 2007. Petronas will hold a gala dinner for the participants on Saturday. Cultural dances, local food and local singers are set to dazzle participants.

Abdullah will also squeeze in meetings with CEOs, including Intel Corp's Datuk Craig Barret. He is due to meet prime ministers from the Ukraine, Pakistan, Swiss president Micheline Calmy-Rey and Jordan's King Abdullah.

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