

Mahathir's mission

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will concentrate on galvanising support from fellow Commonwealth leaders next week to pressure for the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa.

This will be one of his priorities at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in the Bahamas beginning Oct 16.

He will push for action on the part of the bigger, developed nations to impose pressure, particularly in the form of sanctions, on the Pretoria Government.

Foreign Affairs Ministry deputy secretary-general (1) Datuk Razali Ismail said today that Dr Mahathir hoped to generate the "political will" necessary to start changes in the South Africa regime.

While conceding that Malaysia "singlehandedly" would not be able to cause the abolition of apartheid, he said it could nevertheless actively help influence the bigger nations with substantial investments and interests in South Africa to maximise their pressure and action against Pretoria.

"Dr Mahathir could help generate the political will to get things going," he added when briefing newsmen on the Prime Minister's participation in the CHOGM, his first since taking office in 1981.

Datuk Razali made it clear Malaysia was not offer-

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ing a specific programme of action in sanctions against South Africa at the Commonwealth forum.

However, the Ministry had studied all aspects of sanctions and believed that more could be done with the co-operation of other members of the Commonwealth.

It was this co-operation which would be sought at the meeting.

Datuk Razali said Dr Mahathir would also deliver

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one of the four keynote addresses at the opening of the meeting and head the discussions on economic issues during the executive sessions.

It was an honour given the Prime Minister in view of his heightened international standing and the respect he has gained from fellow world leaders.

Both occasions would allow Dr Mahathir to expound his views on world affairs, both political and economic.

During the week-long meeting, the Prime Minister

would also emphasise increased co-operation between the developing member nations in the Commonwealth so as to enhance their strength and bargaining position in international economic affairs.

He would also forward Malaysia's views on the situation in Afghanistan and Kampuchea and join fellow nations in condemning the escalating arms race between the superpowers.

Datuk Razali reiterated that Dr Mahathir's attendance of the meeting after twice abstaining — from the Melbourne meeting in 1981 and New Delhi in 1983 — did not reflect any change in Malaysia's position towards the Commonwealth.

Malaysia would still emphasise meetings and co-operation between smaller groups of Commonwealth nations, namely at the Heads of Government Regional Meeting (CHOGRM).

"Dr Mahathir is attending this year because of developments in the international scene, especially in South Africa, and fellow leaders have felt that he could help increase the momentum towards getting more tangible results and action from this larger forum of Commonwealth nations," said Datuk Razali.

Dr Mahathir leaves for the Bahamas on Saturday and will return on Oct. 19.