

Dr M wants NAM to play bigger role Movement must be more active

From K. Bala

BELGRADE, Sun. — Malaysia wants the Non-Aligned Movement to be more action-oriented, especially in dealing with social and economic problems facing Third World countries.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that after 28 years of existence the movement's role in dealing with problems confronting it should be assessed.

However, he conceded that to get the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to move in a business-like direction was not easy as "taking action is not as easy as talking of action".

"After 28 years, an assessment has to be made about the role of the Non-Aligned Movement especially in the context of the world which is now distinctly divided between East and West," he told Malaysian newsmen at his suite in the Inter Continental Hotel where he is staying.

"We want to know how the movement can play a better role and hope to guide it

to play an important role."

Dr Mahathir arrived yesterday as head of the Malaysian delegation to the ninth NAM beginning tomorrow.

The Prime Minister will be the third speaker on the opening day — after President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak — a placement considered an honour for Malaysia in the 102-member movement.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia had always been interested in the NAM, adding that it placed the movement above the Commonwealth.

He said the NAM was important as it

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represented the majority of countries in the world.

"When we speak, it is heard not only by the NAM but by the rest of the world, especially the rich and powerful countries."

On his selection as the third speaker and Malaysia as one of the 22 vice-presidents for the summit, the Prime Minister attributed this to Malaysia's position as Group 77 chairman.

Issues he will raise at the summit will include South Africa, the Palestinian question, drugs and the debt problem confronting many countries.

He said Malaysia was also concerned with what seemed to be an attempt to force through a new concept on human rights and democracy at the summit.

This was worrying as the issue came at a time when most countries were still tackling the basic problems of want and instability.

"There seems to be less attention to resolving these basic problems."

Malaysia, he said, would press on with the issue of protectionist trends by developed countries.

"We are concerned over protectionist trends, especially among exclusive groups like the Group of 7."

He said the actions by these groups affected the rest of the world.

On his proposed talks with several Third World leaders, Dr Mahathir said he wanted to know their stand on several issues.

He said he would especially discuss environment problems pertaining to Antarctica, the ozone layer and the "greenhouse effect".

The Prime Minister has been besieged with requests from the non-aligned leaders to hold talks.

Among the leaders he is scheduled to meet are PLO head Yasser Arafat and President Kaunda.