

Malaysia must play role in world affairs says PM

From V.K. Chin

BELGRADE, Fri. — Malaysia has no desire to lead the world and neither does it want to be too prominent in international affairs, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said here yesterday.

“We want to be able to play a reasonable role in international affairs because we find that we will otherwise not get any attention at all,” the Prime Minister said.

He was speaking to Malaysian journalists covering the 9th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit which ended late last night.

He said: “Unless you are known, people do not care about you. So you have to show an interest in others for others to show an interest in you.

“And when you have some problems, the fact that you **know** people will help to solve them. But there is no desire for us to lead the world.”

On the summit, **Dr Mahathir** said it was much better than the previous one because of the focus on practical matters and the general feeling of wanting to do something tangible.

He also expected **something tangible** in the next **three years** under the chairmanship of Yugoslavia.

Describing NAM as a world forum, he said what was discussed would be heard not just by the participants but also the developed nations.

Malaysia was using it to present its views **and** discuss **problems** common to developing countries, he

Due to the change in East-West relations, he said it was also necessary for NAM **to** do the same. For example, there were less **ideological** differences, which were now **out-of-date**, in the movement, he added.

Dr Mahathir said the moderates in the movement had always been interested in practical issues. It was through such concern that the Group of 16 proposal came about.

The idea came from Yugoslavia which felt that a smaller group would be more effective since NAM was too large and **unwieldly**.

The group will concentrate on implementing recommendations made by NAM, especially on **economic** issues.

According to Foreign Ministry deputy **secretary-general** Datuk **Abdul Majid** Mohamed, Dr Mahathir would like to concentrate on the Malaysian-Indian educational proposal of setting up centres of **excellence** where those from the South can send their students for university studies.