
Dr M hopes China will be NAM member

By WONG CHUN WAI

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia hopes China will strengthen the Non-Aligned Movement by becoming a member, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

In an interview with the Indonesian weekly magazine, *Tempo*, he said the 108-member movement would emerge stronger because China was a permanent member of the UN Security Council with veto power.

NAM needed a member country with veto power, the Prime Minister said, adding that he believed most of the NAM members would accept China's membership.

Dr Mahathir said member countries generally agreed that there was a need for NAM to be stronger to face the challenges from the West.

A unipolar world, he was quoted as saying, could become just as oppressive as a bipolar world.

"If the Non-Aligned Movement is not united, we will not be able to face the North," he said.

The magazine, in its latest issue, carried a cover story on Dr Mahathir who was the focus of attention at the recent NAM summit in Jakarta.

It devoted 10 pages to Dr Mahathir's high profile role in international

politics, the Look East policy and the country's economic success.

The prominent coverage on Dr Mahathir by the magazine is seen as a change in attitude by the Indonesian media because during the summit, Dr Mahathir received little coverage from the Indonesian dailies.

On the East Asian Economic Caucus, he told *Tempo* that Malaysia was not interested in forming a trade bloc as Malaysia depended on (external) trade.

However, he said the market would be bigger and more influential if Asean was joined up with Japan, Taiwan, China and Indo-china.

The magazine also reported the criticism in the Malay dailies in Malaysia against the alleged blackout by the Indonesian media on Dr Mahathir during the summit.

It also commented on Dr Mahathir's strong stance against the West, saying the views had not upset President George Bush and British Prime Minister John Major.

Quoting US diplomats based in Jakarta and Semangat 46 president Tengku Razaleigh, the magazine said the views did not create much impact because Malaysia was a small country.
