

North Korea praises Dr M for voicing Third World issues

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — North Korea has praised Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for being vocal and firm in voicing issues involving Third World countries in international forums.

Dewan Rakyat Deputy Speaker Ong Tee Keat, who recently visited North Korea, said: "The North Koreans have said that if there were no strong personalities like Dr Mahathir, none of the issues involving the Third World could be voiced out and made known in the international arena."

During his five-day visit, Ong met North Korea's Supreme House of Representative chairman Yang Hyong Sop and Deputy Speaker Ryo Yon Gu.

"Yang has stressed the importance of understanding among the Third World countries to counter superpower domination in politics, economics and information," he told a Press conference today.

According to Ong, Yang said the superpowers were consistently trying to impose their values like Western-styled human rights, en-

vironmental protection and free trade on developing nation although they themselves never adhered to them.

Ong also agreed with Yang's opinion that an information network for Third World countries be set up to free them from Western dominance in the mass media which constantly distorted information on these nations.

"Often stories reported by Western media like CNN and Reuters are edited to suit the taste of Western countries before they are

sent all over the world," said Ong.

He said Yang had also expressed the hope that Malaysia would forge closer ties with North Korea.

"All this while, North Korea has been importing Malaysian commodities like rubber and palm oil through Singapore or Hong Kong. If they can import them direct from us, it would benefit both countries," said Ong.

He added that the North Koreans were keen to foster closer relations between the two houses of representatives.