

18 SEP 2002

M'SIA-NAM

M'SIA PLAYING A LEADING ROLE IN NAM

By: Saraswathi Muniappan

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 18 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is playing a leading role in pushing forward progressive ideas shared by developing countries in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), said Bangladesh ambassador to Malaysia, Masood Aziz.

"Malaysia is playing a very effective role. It is standing up, because it has the economic and political clout," he told Bernama in a recent interview.

The country is in a stage whereby the world leaders listen and give attention to whatever the country, especially its leader Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, has to say, he said.

He said closer co-operation among the developing nations in global issues would be crucial to put forward the views and interests of these countries.

Bangladesh also makes independent decisions, for example the country believes in peaceful resolutions and Malaysia's thinking in the issue is close and that would reinforce and add strength to any policy sought at the international level.

With the role it is playing, it would be a tribute for Malaysia to host the 13th NAM Summit to be held here for five days starting from Feb 20 next year, he said.

The first NAM conference was held in 1961 with participation from 25 countries. The event provides a platform for developing countries of the South to air an alternative view point on matters of global interest.

Masood said although it was actually Bangladesh's turn to host the 13th NAM Summit, the country's new government, being realistic, had expressed that it was not in the position to handle a large-scale Summit involving nearly 119 countries.

"Although we have a conventional centre with excellent facilities and space, we also need to have many hotels and cars," he said.

Malaysia has all the basic facilities and it is also hosting the Organisation of Islamic Countries' (OIC) meeting in October 2003, Masood added.

-- BERNAMA

SM SD