

Weak must get together in NAM, says Mahathir

CAIRO: With the world at the mercy of a single superpower, it is important that smaller countries put up a united front.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said on Wednesday the relevance of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) today should not be questioned as the movement will allow weaker countries to face the challenges of a world now dominated by a single power.

"It is more relevant today because a world that is dominated by one power alone is bound to disregard the weaker countries," he told reporters after delivering a lecture on the importance of Muslim unity at Al Azhar University here.

"So the weak countries must come together, they can do so in NAM, in order to strengthen themselves and oppose any oppression by the single power."

Mahathir also said it was wrong to think that NAM was no longer relevant with the end of the Cold War or the non-existence of conflict between East and West.

Malaysia will host the

NAM summit next month, and the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) summit in October.

He said Malaysia also feels that the best way to resolve problems besetting Muslim countries was for them to talk and discuss how best to strengthen the ummah.

"Which is why we consider the OIC and NAM meetings in Kuala Lumpur very important," he said.

"We have to talk to each other to find the best way to protect the Muslims who are today being attacked by people who are against us. We have to close ranks so that we can defend ourselves."

Mahathir ended his three-day visit to Egypt yesterday.

Earlier, he told Malaysian journalists he had invited President Hosni Mubarak to attend the two summits in Kuala Lumpur.

He said that as Egypt had been one of the founding members of NAM, it was only appropriate for its leader to attend.

"He gave an undertaking that he will try, at least for a day. We hope he'll be able to attend," he said.