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'Hold media convention to counter propaganda'

MALAYSIA, as the new NAM chairman, should initiate a media convention for news organisations from member countries to counter propaganda in the Western Press which had labelled NAM as an irrelevant body.

The call comes in the wake of attempts to downplay the coverage of the on-going NAM Summit despite the presence of a large number of foreign media representatives, including Western journalists, in Kuala Lumpur.

CFTV News of India executive director and bureau chief Suhas Borker, who is coordinating the call, said he had written to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the matter and was optimistic about such a convention being held in the near future.

"NAM is not making international news because we (member countries) are not in control of the information and communication system.

"The news about NAM that makes it to print is largely about how NAM was nothing but an irrelevant meet that convenes once every three years," he said in an interview.

Borker said the propaganda by the Western media had turned for the worst since the NAM convention in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in 1976, and thus, the urgent need to check the situation.

He said the continuous onslaught of the Western media had subverted political, social, economic and cultural values and priorities of NAM.

"This onslaught by an alien mindset and worldview attempts to enforce a cultural hegemony and uniformity is totally antithetical to our paradigm of diversity and pluralism."

He said media organisations under the NAM fold should join the struggle for an international and communication order based on democracy, social justice and pluralism.

Borker said media organisations from some 30 NAM member countries and hundreds of journalists present in Kuala Lumpur had joined a signature campaign calling for such a convention in Malaysia.