

DR M TO STRESS NAM'S NEUTRALITY

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PM expected to highlight importance of forum in addressing global problems



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BAKU [Azerbaijan]

PRIME Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is leading the Malaysian delegation at the 18th Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) here, is expected to highlight the importance of the forum in addressing the common challenges in a globalised world.

This will be Dr Mahathir's first appearance at the NAM Summit as Malaysia's 7th prime minister.

The last time Dr Mahathir addressed the forum was when Malaysia hosted the 13th summit in Kuala Lumpur in 2003.

Foreign Minister Datuk Saifud-



Foreign Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah speaking to Malaysian media in Baku, Azerbaijan, yesterday. With him is Malaysian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Datuk Yubazlan Yusof (third from right). BERNAMA PIC

din Abdullah said the theme of the 18th summit was "Upholding the Bandung Principles to ensure concerted and adequate response to the challenges of the contemporary world".

Azerbaijan will hold the NAM chairmanship until 2022. Seventeen heads of states and five heads of government, including Dr Mahathir are attending.

This is the first time that Azer-

baijan, which became a NAM member in May 2011, is hosting the summit.

Saifuddin said Dr Mahathir would address the summit during the general debate and stress the importance for organisation to remain neutral and respect its founding principles.

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to hold bilateral meetings with his foreign counterparts in an effort

to understand pertinent regional and global issues.

NAM had its first summit in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1961.

Its basic concepts originated from the Bandung Conference in 1955, which among others, fought for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations, as well as non-interference in the internal affairs of another country.

Earlier, at the NAM foreign ministers meeting, Azerbaijan Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov had said that bringing NAM in line with new realities was one of the summit's important tasks.

He had said that NAM was a broad and inclusive platform for practical cooperation, and played an important role in strengthening global peace and security.