

# GREEN MOVE AGAINST TIMBER GOODS PM: Another case of arm twisting

By AZAM ARIS

THE latest move by the Green movement in Europe to get finished products such as timber furniture and components put on the boycott list is seen as another instance of economic arm twisting by developed nations.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the Green movement is active lately and had staged demonstrations in Sarawak and in the process even broke the country's law.

He said the environmentalist groups had simply refused to accept the fact that global warming is also caused by developed countries and not just by developing countries like Malaysia.

"It is not just caused by the logging of tropical forests. The thinning of the ozone layer is mainly due to the high content of carbon dioxide, chloroflourocarbons and toxic wastes dumped by industrialised countries.

"In addition, these countries have already cut down most of their forests," he told reporters in Petaling Jaya yesterday after launching the new identity card (IC), which has much improved safety features.

**BANK Negara turned down an application by the troubled Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) to set up a branch in Malaysia about seven years ago. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Bank Negara was not satisfied with BCCI's management. "We knew well ahead that the bank's management was not strong," he added.**

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who is also Home Affairs Minister, said what is sad is that these foreign environmentalists have the support of some of the pressure groups in the country.

"Members of these pressure groups are holders of Malaysian ICs, a privilege which the Government considers being misused.

"Many people have applied to become Malaysian citizens. Unfortunately, there are some Malaysians who enjoy the citizenship privileges but who are not loyal to the country," he said.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia is a liberal country with a lot of pressure groups but some of them are being used as a tool by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the developed country.

"I will not mention names but the people can figure out the groups which have been influ-

enced by foreign interests," he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the NGOs come from countries that profess the "rule of law" which they consider only applicable in their country but not in others.

"They say they practise the rule of law but then they can come into a country like Malaysia and break the law. Why the double standards? It just shows that they are hypocrites," he said.

Although the European Community (EC) has not banned any imports of timber products, the pressures by the Green movement have resulted in an increasing number of companies and local municipalities boycotting timber products.

The Timber Exporters Association of Malaysia has reported that the IKEA group, one of Europe's

largest furniture retail stores, recently stopped buying furniture components — products considered of high value added — made from tropical hardwoods.

Asked if the Government will intensify efforts to counter the anti-tropical timber campaign, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said: "What more can we do. We are a small and weak nation."

Earlier, the Prime Minister said the new IC has additional safety features that make forgery difficult.

The IC identifies someone as a citizen of this country and it serves as an important document in executing privileges like the right to vote, to get a passport, to get government aid and services like health care and education.

"But the rights (that we get from being a citizen) are not free. Nothing is free. In this case, citizenship has to be justified with loyalty and responsibility towards the nation," he said.

The new IC is smaller in size and of better quality. It will gradually replace the current IC which has been in use for the last 30 years.