

GREEN TALKS BOYCOTT

Dr M: Pointless to attend conference

By Wong Chun Wai

PETALING JAYA, Fri. — Malaysia may boycott the Earth Summit on environment in Brazil next June in the wake of an organised campaign against the country.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that it would be pointless for Malaysia to attend the conference as the powerful international environmental groups had already made up their mind on the environmental "situation" in Malaysia.

"If they have decided to oust Malaysia from the world, there is no need for us to attend," the Prime Minister said, adding that the aim of the conference was no longer to find answers to the world environmental problems.

Dr Mahathir said if the conference was used to suppress the Third World, it would be better for these nations to hold their own meeting where the developed countries would be excluded.

"It is only then that we can learn what is the real situation (on the environment)," he told newsmen after opening the annual general meeting of the Malaysian College of General Practitioners here.

Dr Mahathir said the facts had shown that the environment was polluted by the developed nations and not by Malaysia.

But, he said, the developed countries appeared to be blaming Malaysia to gain political mileage.

The Prime Minister was commenting on a report that environmentalists had launched a global assault on Malaysia (see Page 15).

The movement is reported to have declared Oct 7 as an international action day for the Penans.

According to the report, environmental groups in Germany are to hold a nationwide day of protest against the timber trade, with demonstrations in 60 cities.

The report said the move against Malaysia was part of a sequence of actions scheduled to take place before the Earth Summit.

During the summit, an international ecological treaty is to be signed which would govern all trade and economic activity in the name of saving the environment.

The report said Malaysia was picked as the first target because it was small and isolated.

It added that demonstrations had been carried out at Malaysian embassies in The Hague and London.

The report said that over the past weeks, the environmentalists had carried out a timber ship blockade in Nantes, France; a port blockade in Bremen, Germany, and demonstrations at the Group of Seven summit in London.

It also said that the campaign would be escalated during the second week of next month, with environmentalists carrying out co-ordinated actions in Western Europe, the United States, Canada and Japan.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was a small country and that there was nothing much it could do against the rich and big developed nations.

"They want to preserve the Penans as jungle inhabitants who do not need care and supervision. They wish to see the Penans remain as museum pieces and as remnants of the cavemen for them to gawk at," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Penan issue was merely a new approach devised by the developed nations against Malaysia, which had already seen some development and had become bold enough to speak up.

Describing the environmental groups as colonialists and imperialists, he said they wanted to see the fate of the Penans to be like those of the Australian aborigines and the Red Indians in the United States.

The Government, on the other hand, wanted to see the Penans enjoy the fruits of development like all Malaysians, he said.

Mahathir: Foreign groups want us to suffer

● FROM PAGE ONE

"The environmental groups are very well-organised and rich. I am sure they are funded by certain economic lobbyists to break the laws of this country and to create problems," he said.

He said these environmental groups were linked to each other and described their actions as a new form of imperialism.

On whether developed nations should be blamed as the actions appeared to be the work of their pressure groups, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was often told that the countries, where the groups originated, had no control over the actions of these groups.

"We are told that their governments are good, only that these people are not, but the effect on us is the same," he said.

Dr Mahathir said these groups wanted to see Malaysia's economy suffer so it would remain poor while their countries continued to be prosperous.

"This is what they want. They do not wish to see Malaysians having a good life. If they were to see us living in peace and prosperity, they will do whatever they can to create chaos," he added.

The report said the foreigners who took part in the anti-logging demonstration in Sarawak on July 5 were flown in from a base of operations called the Rainforest Information Centre in Australia.

The environmentalists are mostly members of Earth First!, said to be an organisation which advocates violence in defence of the environment.

On whether Malaysia would counter the campaign, Dr Mahathir said the Government would explain the situation if it felt necessary.

● TURN TO PAGE 2