

Mahathir wants assurance on Earth Summit

PETALING JAYA: The Prime Minister reiterated that Malaysia may boycott the Earth Summit in Brazil next year if the conference is aimed at finding faults with developing nations.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that his British counterpart, Mr John Major, had persuaded Malaysia to attend the conference to voice its stand.

However, he said there was little point in attending the conference if it concentrated on the "wrongdoings" of developing countries and focuses only on the question of tropical forests.

"Malaysia will decide to attend only if there is an undertaking by the developed nations that the conference will produce positive ideas," he said.

Dr Mahathir said there must be an assurance from these nations that they would not resort to boycotting the import of logs from Malaysia.

Conference secretary-general Dr Maurice

Strong had said on Sunday that the position of developing countries would be weakened if Malaysia did not attend the conference.

On South Africa, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia had discussed with African Nationalist Congress (ANC) president Nelson Mandela Malaysia's wish to have people-to-people relations with South Africa.

He said the people-to-people relations had been accepted by the Commonwealth Heads of Government in Harare.

The Prime Minister also said that negotiations for air links between Kuala Lumpur and Johannesburg would start soon.

Dr Mahathir said he had touched on the need for South Africa and some African nations to practise "positive racial discrimination" to improve the position of blacks in these countries.

He said Malaysia had admitted that it practised such a policy, unlike some which refused to make such an admission.