

West is being

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spiteful,

says Mahathir

By LEE KAR YEAN

KUALA LUMPUR: Western countries are using environmental issues against Malaysia out of spite because they are unable to compete with the products of developing countries, said Danik Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The Prime Minister said threats by the developed countries were motivated more by economic gains rather than concern for the environment.

"We have expected the insincerity of western developed countries in championing the cause of the environment because

their motive is based more on economic gains," he said.

"They resort to issues on the environment when they fail to compete with us," Dr Mahathir told newsmen at his Hari Raya open house in Seri Perdana on Sunday.

US Senator Al Gore had moved to introduce a Bill which calls on Malaysia and Japan to take immediate steps to protect Sarawak's rainforests.

Gore claimed the entire state would be deforested in eight years if logging went unchecked.

Dr Mahathir said Western countries were carry-

ing out such campaigns because they wished to promote temperate woods.

The latest case of envy among oil-producing developed countries was when those countries claimed that oil palm cultivation was polluting the environment, he said.

"But the truth is palm oil can be turned into biodegradable plastics while petroleum cannot."

Asked if Malaysia will be attending the Earth Summit in Brazil, he said the country remained unconvinced whether the resolutions adopted at the meeting had clout.