

Bruno Manser meets Mahathir

DE JANEIRO: Self-styled champion of the Penans Bruno Manser met Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Sunday morning.

The Prime Minister said the Swiss had requested the meeting to express his concern over the Penans and his keenness to help the indigenous people return to their former lifestyle in the jungle.

"I told him we want to give Penans a choice," said Dr Mahathir.

"Blacks in America who were dragged from Africa were badly-treated. When they were freed, they did not choose to return home.

"This shows that, if the Penans were asked to choose, chances are that they will choose to stay in the city."

He said Manser had

also expressed unhappiness with the inaccurate coverage of the Penan issue by the foreign media. Manser, on crutches as his legs were injured in an accident, had been attending events at the Global Forum and has also been seen at Riocentro, the site of the summit.

He had also met Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Taib Mahmud.