

Give us the B 15 AUG 1994 weapons, says Dr M

By MERGAWATI ZULFAKAR

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia has called on countries wishing to withdraw their peacekeepers from Bosnia-Herzegovina to hand over their weaponry to those remaining behind.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday they should give their weapons to countries like Malaysia, Pakistan and Turkey.

He said countries such as Pakistan which did not receive any assistance from the United Nations should get weapons from others which did not want to defend Bosnia.

"If they want to withdraw, they should hand over their weapons to Malaysia so that we can use them to defend ourselves and the Bosnians," he told reporters after watching the special stage of the Petronas Rally of Malaysia at Tasik Perdana here.

Earlier, he flagged off 45 cars which took part in the three-day rally through the city, Nilai and Kuala Selangor.

Malaysia has 1,500 troops serving in the United Nations Peacekeeping Force (Unprofor) in the war-torn nation.

Dr Mahathir also reiterated that the arms embargo on Bosnia should be lifted because it was clear Nato did not want to defend the Bosnians.

"In fact, during Serb attacks, they would withdraw and they also say they would do the

same if the sanction is lifted and the Bosnians get arms.

"It is better if they withdraw and let the Bosnians defend their own country. However, the Bosnians should be equipped with the same weaponry as the Serbs," he said.

Dr Mahathir said if UN peacekeepers were withdrawn before the Bosnians obtained their arms, it was like "tying the Bosnian hands and allowing them to be slaughtered by the Serbs."

"I'm sure they would not risk their own neck and safety. They do not want to save others because there is no interest for them," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the same situation prevailed in Rwanda where 500,000 people had died. "So, what is the meaning of assistance?" he asked.

On the rally, Dr Mahathir said he was happy with the performance of Proton cars which had notched success in rallies in Thailand and West Asia.

"This proved that Proton has the capabilities in the field and the certification of Proton cars for rally is a major development," he said.

He said rallies were important to upgrade local engineering skills as it involved modifications to safety features and engine transmission.

The Government, he added, would consider tax deductions on accessories for rally cars.