

WE'RE NO BULLIES

Dr M: Malaysia not using water issue to cow Singapore

By ESTHER NG and MAIZATUL NAZLINA

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia has never used the water issue to "bully" Singapore despite the fact that the republic has profited from it, said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The Prime Minister said existing arrangements not only assured the republic of enough supply for domestic consumption but also to make "more money than we can ever hope to make from our water."

"We have never indicated that we want to stop supplying water. I, myself, have made the assurance that we will provide them with water in perpetuity," he told reporters yes-

terday after visiting the Lembah Pantai Stadium, the venue of the Commonwealth Games women's hockey matches.

Dr Mahathir said Singapore appeared to be insensitive as it should not raise past issues if it wanted to have good relations with Malaysia.

He was responding to questions on extracts of memoirs by Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew published in The *Sunday Times* yesterday, claiming that Malaysia had used "bullying and intimidation" during the two countries' brief federation, and that he still believed that Kuala Lumpur could use the water issue to cow its neighbour.

Lee also claimed that Umno had instigated

the 1964 racial riots in Singapore and that former prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman had told a British diplomat once that Singapore could be controlled through water supply "and other levels of pressure."

Asked if Umno would object to the accusation on the riots, Dr Mahathir said he did not see the point in doing so.

"It will not solve any problems (but) it will create (more) problems.

"Now, if I were to tell Malaysians to become friends with Singapore, even if I want to, the people will not want to.

"You saw their reaction at the (opening of) Sukom. They cheered for everybody but Singapore," he said.

He said Singapore was able to prosper by

exploiting its neighbours' weaknesses and it gained business by undermining the interests of its neighbours.

Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak also criticised Singapore's "overzealous concern" over water, to the extent that it could not separate it from other issues.

"We have never been irrational or inhumane in our actions, but we have to protect our interest in our dealings with Singapore," he said.

In Johor Baru, Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu dismissed Singapore's claim that the republic has been threatened and bullied over the water issue.

● TURN TO PAGE THREE

Irresponsible act, says Umno Youth

● FROM PAGE ONE

He said the Cabinet had not made any changes to the two water agreements signed between the two neighbours which were to expire in 2011 and 2061.

In a statement, Umno Youth condemned Lee's memoirs, especially its slandering of deceased Malaysian leaders.

The movement's vice chief Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein said the book

and timing of its publication appeared to be "a determined attempt" to strain relations between the two countries.

"This is an irresponsible act. Moreover, it is unbecoming of a so-called Asean statesman," he said.

Hishammuddin noted that Lee's refusal to accept any responsibility for events leading up to the separation of Singapore from Malaysia reinforced the Singapore leader's "skewed" viewpoints.

S 15 · 9 · 98

S 15 · 9 · 98