

DON'T TAKE US FOR GRANTED"

8 5 . 8 . 98

By HARPAJANSINGH and JACQUELINE TEO

JOHOR BARU: Malaysia has no wish to quarrel with Singapore but the island republic must not take Malaysia's considerate and tolerant nature for granted, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

Addressing a mammoth gathering of 8,000 here, the Prime Minister said Malaysians only wanted Singapore to accord them the kind of treatment that Malaysia accorded the republic.

"We have been considerate. But what did we get in return? They have asked us to leave Tanjung Pagar when we supply them with water," he said, drawing shouts of potong, potong from the crowd.

Dr Mahathir said he felt sad when Malaysia faced problems in its relations with Singapore, adding that he did not understand what the problem was when Malaysia had had its (Immigration and Customs) offices for so many years in Tanjung Pagar.

"That too on our land. They (Singapore) also have property here. But we have never created any trouble.

"Malaysia is not a nation that likes to create problems for others. We want to be good with all. We do not have a big army to attack anyone.

"We have tried to be good neighbours. But don't take us for granted. I do not want to say anymore, but *dengar, dengar, dengar*," he said to a thunderous

● TURN TO PAGE TWO

Mahathir: We **don't want** any quarrel with anyone

● FROM PAGE ONE

roar from the Barisan National supporters at the city council's, indoor stadium.

The Prime Minister's remarks came four days after Singapore had shifted its Customs, Immigration and Quarantine (CIQ) checkpoint from **Tanjung** Pagar to Woodlands.

Talks between the two countries ended in deadlock last week.

Malaysia had refused to move its

^{35.8.98} checkpoint from **Tanjung** Pagar and continued to operate its Immigration clearance -from there de-spite the Aug 1 deadline issued by Singapore for Malaysian Immigration to cease operations there.

Singapore's adamant stand and refusal to entertain Malaysia's contractual right to base its CIQ operations in **Tanjung** Pagar have brought the republic under fire from-politicians-and groups in Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir said he had no intention of inciting the people's feelings over the issues with Singapore but added that facts were facts.

He said at a time when the nation was busy trying to resolve its economic problems, Malaysia did not want any quarrel with anyone.

"Therefore, take note please," he said, adding that Malaysia subscribed to the **prosper-thy-neighbour** policy.

Earlier the Prime Minister also

ticked off foreign financial institutions which offered high interests rates for ringgit deposits to lure the ringgit, which he said they would later sell for margin profits.

His criticism was obviously directed at certain banks in Singapore which offered between 27% and 40% interest per annum for fixed deposits of RM100,000 or more.

Mentri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said Malaysia's neigh-

bours, including Singapore, should not take advantage of the economic downturn.

Also present were Barisan secretary-general Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, vice-presidents Datuk Chua Jui Mene and Datuk Ong Ka Ting, Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Defence Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar.