

# BE A GOOD NEIGHBOUR

S 6 . 8 . 98

**KUALA LUMPUR: Anger over the attitude of Singapore ran high in Malaysia as leaders, both in the government and opposition, chastised the island republic for being an insensitive and inconsiderate neighbour.**

A couple of the leaders described it as behaving like the "Israel" of the region while others wanted the Malaysian Government to "put its foot down" once and for all in dealing with Singapore.

In essence, all the reactions stressed the point that Singapore had not been a good neighbour and that it had taken for granted the good naturedness of Malaysia.

Perlis Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim compared Singapore with Thailand, pointing out that the Thais knew how to practise good neighbourliness and safeguard bilateral relations.

As an example, he cited the recent release of seven Perlis farmers with just a minimum fine and two others who had their case dismissed by a Thai court for intruding into Thai territory.

Shahidan said Singapore should emulate Thailand in dealing with its neighbours.

DAP national deputy chairman Karpal Singh called for support without reservation or qualification on Malaysia's stand over the Singapore government's directive to relocate its Customs, Immigration and Quarantine (CIQ) facility from the Tanjung Pagar railway station to Woodlands.

Pointing out that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was right to say that Malaysia should not be taken for granted by Singapore, Karpal Singh added:

"It is high time Malaysia put its foot down."

The DAP leader also said that Singapore should not consider itself an Israel which could impudently flex its muscles against Malaysia in a display of arrogance and intimidation.

Political leaders from Sabah and Sarawak echoed similar sentiments while Johor's Public Utilities chairman Datuk Zainalabidin Zin urged the Government to take control of security management of the Skudai and Linggi water treatment plants

in the state which were currently manned by Singapore officials.

Indonesian President B.J. Habibie's remarks on Tuesday about Singapore further strengthened the sentiments among Malaysians that the island republic could not be considered a good neighbour.

The Indonesian leader was quoted as saying: "You see, a friend in need is a friend indeed. I don't have that feeling from Singapore."

"I have that feeling from the US, from Japan, Australia, mainland China, from Malaysia, from Europe, Germany. But I don't have that feeling (from Singapore)."

Kedah Mentri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid has also joined in to warn Singapore not to take Malaysia's numerous goodwill gestures previously as a sign of weakness.

"When we are nice to people, they always regard us as weak but we are not a weak nation," the menteri besar said, adding that the Government should resolve the constant "irritating actions from time to time from the republic once and for all."

■ More reports on Page Two