

PM: It is up to S'pore now

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IPOH: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will not contact his Singapore counterpart Goh Chok Tong on the Tanjung Pagar issue, saying that the ball is now in Singapore's court.

At this stage, the Prime Minister said, the Government would wait for Singapore to "respond positively" on the matter.

He said discussions was now confined to official-level and reiterated that the Gov-

ernment would stay put in Tanjung Pagar if there was no other way out of it.

"The problem started when Singapore said the time was up for us to agree to go to Woodlands.

"They said as there was no more space, they can only provide two tables at the platform. Not nice lah. We can (operate at Woodlands) but let us have some comfort to work there.

"Suddenly, they said there was no more space as we were late (in agreeing) and then they act like they are

37.8.98
kicking us out of Singapore," he said.

Speaking at a press conference after addressing 8,000 people at the Indera Mulia Stadium, Dr Mahathir also thanked the nation and opposition parties for their support on the matter.

Also present were MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, People's Progressive Party president Datuk M. Kayveas and Perak Mentri Besar Tan Sri Ramli

Ngah Talib.

Asked about reports that Singapore Immigration was limiting the number of days of social visits for Malaysians to between three and nine days, Dr Mahathir said it was their right to do that.

"It's okay, then we don't enter. Might as well work in our own country," he said.

On Indonesian President B.J. Habibie's statement that he was unhappy with the republic, Dr Mahathir said it was Habibie's own opinion which was based on personal experience.

On the downgrading of Malaysia sovereign risk rating by Thomson Bankwatch, the world's largest rating agency, to BBB from A-, Dr Mahathir said such agencies had the power to destroy the people in the country.

"What they don't want us to do is to try to save our economy.

"Anything we try to do to save our economy, they will frustrate and this is within their power.

"We have no power, so they can do what they like," he added.