

PM surprised by S'pore stand

By **FREDERICK FERNANDEZ**

SHAH ALAM: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has expressed regret over reports that Singapore is going ahead with the reclamation work in the Straits of Johor despite protests by Malaysia that the project will have environmental impact on the narrow waterway used by trading vessels.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia

was waiting for the environmental impact assessment report on the reclamation work, which would take some time, before pursuing the matter further with the Singaporean government.

Asked if this meant that Singapore was not willing to co-operate with Malaysia to resolve the issue, Dr Mahathir said: 'We hope Singapore co-operates.

"If Singapore wants us to co-oper-

ate with them, then they have to co-operate with us."

He added that if Singapore did as it wished, Malaysia would do likewise.

Dr Mahathir said he was taken aback by Singapore's decision to proceed with the reclamation work as the republic's Deputy Prime Minister Brig-General Lee Hsien Loong had recently said they would resolve the matter with Malaysia.

"Now, another minister is saying that they are going ahead with the work," he told a press conference after opening the Selangor Barisan Nasional convention at the Selangor Youth and Cultural Complex here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said there were also claims that Point 20, which was part of the area being reclaimed, was still under dispute as it could involve Malaysian territory.