

Plan to cut accidents by 30pc in 10 years

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leage of the impending actions.

"But if the public wants better road safety then they should view the Government's action constructively," Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir told reporters after chairing the committee's meeting in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Also present at the meeting were Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, Public Enterprises Minister Datuk Napsiah Omar and Information Minister Datuk Mohamad Rahmat.

Other ministers who are members of the committee are Education Minister Anwar Ibrahim and Works Minister Datuk Leo Moggie.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the Government has allocated \$20 million (not inclusive of the various ministries' allocations to minimise accidents) to the committee to implement the various measures.

The Prime Minister said moves such as requiring commercial vehicles to install speed warning devices will obviously increase transportation costs but have to be done as such vehicles are the main traffic offenders.

Of the 4.5 million vehicles registered in the country, lorries/vans make up 6 per cent, buses 0.48 per cent and taxis 0.4 per cent but they are involved in the most accidents.

He said the proposed moves by the Government will not be effective without the cooperation of the public and road users.

"This includes paying the compound instead of bribing the enforcement officers to lower the compound. They should also report any bribery attempt by the officers," he said.

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By KEAM ARIS

THE Cabinet Committee on Road Safety at its first meeting yesterday, set a target to reduce the number of road accidents and fatalities by 30 per cent by the year 2000.

It is hoped that the ratio of accidents in the country be reduced from 7.22 per 10,000 vehicles to 3.4 per 10,000 vehicles by the year 2000.

An average of 3,000 people are killed and 20,000 injured in accidents on Malaysian roads annually. The cost resulting from road accidents amounts to nearly \$1 billion a year or 1.1 per cent of the country's gross national product.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who chairs the committee, said the 30 per cent reduction target may not be high enough in view of the increasing number of accidents but if achieved it will put Malaysia on a comparative level with many developed countries, which have a low number of road accidents.

Some of the actions that the committee is considering are:

■ Amending existing laws pertaining to road safety and enforcement;

■ Increasing the number of staff in the Road Transport Department and police;

■ Introducing more weighbridges and new technology such as cameras on the highways and tachographs. The Government will consider waiving import duty on these items.

■ Imposing mandatory compounds (which are higher than the current maximum of \$300) to reduce the 88,000 backlog of traffic cases. Higher fines and sentences will be imposed if the cases are taken to court.

■ Withdrawing drivers' licences for serious offences.

"The Government has to take stern action to reduce the number of accidents. It may increase the cost to the public and transport companies and the move may be unpopular to many. Some groups may even make political mi-

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