

\$100,000 A DAY PAYOUT

By Wong Chun Wai

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — The Government is paying \$100,000 a day in compensation to the Jalan Cheras toll project developer, Teratai K.G. Sdn Bhd, following a Cabinet decision to suspend toll collection on Wednesday.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Government had to bear the cost as a result of the suspension.

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The Government, he said, would have to fork out \$1 million in compensation for 10 days.

"In order to resolve the mounting burden, the Government hopes the problem can be resolved quickly," he said.

Dr Mahathir was speaking to newsmen after opening the Federation of Malaysian Hokkien Association's annual meeting here.

He said the Government was, however, prepared to shoulder the burden to avoid unpleasant incidents.

On whether toll paid before the suspension would be refunded to motorists, he replied:

"That is beyond limit ... it's

like giving an inch and you want a foot. By right, those who protested by throwing stones should be the ones to pay the compensation."

Asked why adequate notice was not given before the toll was imposed, he said the public already knew about it but they only protested after the toll was imposed.

Dr Mahathir said he was disappointed with the demonstrations at the interchange.

"This is not the Malaysian way ... In Malaysia, if there is any problem, we have representatives who can discuss it amicably with the Government," he added.

He said the Government

agreed immediately to discuss the grievances of the Cheras residents when it received appeals from various bodies, including the MCA and Umno.

Earlier, when opening the association's meeting, he said the Government had never resorted to harsh measures like sending in tanks to resolve a problem with the people.

As an example, he said, the Canadian government sent troops and tanks to deal with the Mohawks stand-off on the land issue but the tanks were not sent to Cheras to deal with the protesters.

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Dr M: We've been liberal in our policies

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Dr Mahathir said the Government had been liberal in its policies, including education and economy.

"There are Western countries which claim to be liberal on education policies but they are not. They do not allow their schools to use other languages," he said.

He said that in Malaysia, the Government had allowed the setting up of Chinese and Indian schools. In Australia, there were no schools using these two languages except English.

"As a result, the children of many Malaysian immigrants in that country cannot speak their own mother tongue well and have lost touch with their own culture," he added.

Dr Mahathir said there were about 1,000 Malay students in Chinese

schools and the Government had not stopped them from attending these schools.

He said the Government had administered the country well and this had been acknowledged by the world.

"The world recognises this ... where others have failed, we have succeed-

ed," he said, adding that the country had been peaceful and stable.

Dr Mahathir said there were over two million Hokkiens in the country. He had the participants applauding when he spoke several words in Hokkien, saying that he had picked them up when he was practising as a doctor in

Alor Star.

Earlier, association president Lim Geok Chan expressed the hope that the new Education Act and the post-1990 economy policy would benefit all Malaysians.

He urged the Prime Minister to allow Chinese associations to play a bigger role in the Govern-

ment's privatisation programme.

Among those present were MCA deputy president Datuk Lee Kim Sai, MCA secretary-general Dr Ting Chew Peh, DAP vice-chairman Dr Tan Seng Giaw and the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry president Tan Sri Wee Boon Ping.