

# EXTRAS TO GO

By ZULKIFLI TALIB and MARK KONG

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Government has decided that royal households will no longer receive extra facilities and funds other than that provided for in the law.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Government would also withdraw all facilities and privileges not spelt out in state constitutions or regulations. "Since the Rulers are sticking to the rule of law instead of the spirit of the law (over the constitution amendment issue), the Government will do the same.

"As such, all facilities and privileges accorded them but are not con-

tained in provisions for Rulers, I feel we cannot entertain.

"Whatever extra perks given in the past will be withdrawn," he said at the Dewan Negara lobby in Parliament House.

The decision, he said, was made by the Cabinet at its weekly meeting yesterday and would take immediate effect.

Dr Mahathir said that in the past the federal and state governments had adopted a "give-and-take" attitude when there were requests for additional facilities or allocations from the palace.

Asked whether Royal Wards in government hospitals would also be withdrawn, Dr Mahathir said: "What is not

their right will be withdrawn."

Asked whether the directive also involved withdrawing the allocation of single-digit car number plates to Rulers, he said: "This is not written anywhere so this will also be withdrawn. I do not know yet, we will also have to look into this."

Dr Mahathir, however, indicated that the directive would not cover the Yang di-Pertuas Negri.

"The Yang di-Pertuas Negri are not involved. They did not hold any meeting, they do not even have any privilege," he said.

Asked how much the federal and state governments would save by following the directive strictly, he said it could run into millions of ringgit.

The Prime Minister also said that he would discontinue the weekly pre-Cabinet briefing for the King.

"This is only a practice and not required by law," he said.

On contact between the Government and Rulers, he said that this would be only done when it was necessary and when it concerned official matters.

Asked whether this would strain the relations with the Rulers, he said: "More or less it will, but the ties are still there."

Asked whether the King had given any indication that he would give his assent to the Constitution (Amendment) Bill 1993 passed by Parliament, he said the King had not.