

PM: No more extra benefits

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — The Federal Government today decided to withdraw all privileges, allocations and other entitlements to the Malay Rulers other than those provided for by legislation and which they are entitled to under other regulations.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad said with immediate effect, the Government would not provide additional allocations when the original funds budgeted for palace expenses were expended.

Responding to reporters' questions at Parliament House, he said, previously the Government was flexible on the issue but added that the Cabinet meeting today decided to adhere strictly to the written provisions.

He said whatever was being provided in excess of existing provisions would be withdrawn including those which were considered not the right of the Rulers.

He said this included the traditional practice of reserving the first 10 numbers

and the Rulers," he said.

"If there is a need to consult the King or the Rulers, it will be done through official channels. It will affect relations a little but there will still be communication," he said.

He said the basis of the decision was that the Government would provide only entitlements, allocations and privileges which are provided for under written provisions and the Government would no longer entertain anything on the basis of the "spirit of the legislation".

"All privileges which are not rightfully theirs because their allocation is not specifically provided for in

for car registration plates for the palace.

"It is not written anywhere that this privilege be awarded to the Rulers," he said.

Dr Mahathir said if it was found that there were no written provisions for royal wards in government hospitals, this too would be withdrawn. The wards would be used by the *rakyat*.

He also confirmed that he would stop giving the Yang di-Pertuan Agong the weekly pre-Cabinet briefing since it was merely a convention and not a requirement of the law.

The Cabinet also decided that all civil servants, whether federal or state, would no longer answer summons for duties at the various palaces unless permitted to do so by ministers or the respective Menteri Besar.

When asked whether this would affect the relations between the Government

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law or regulation will not be given to them any more," he said.

When asked whether similar measures would be implemented in respect of the allocations for the Yang di-Pertua Negeri (of Penang, Malacca, Sabah and Sarawak), he said they did not have many rights and the Government "will have a give-and-take attitude when it comes to additional allocations for them".

He said the Government had not done a study to ascertain how much funds would be saved through

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ST 2 JAN 1993

FROM

these measures. On the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, he said the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Azlan Shah had not indicated to him whether he would give it the royal assent.

When asked to comment on the overwhelming support received for the Bill, Dr Mahathir said although the DAP and Pas abstained from voting, it was obvious that they supported the Bill from the speeches of their MPs.

"The DAP directed its MFs not to vote for it, but still this is the first time an amendment has received the support of nearly everyone," he said.

On whether the issue would affect investors' confidence in the country, he said, it would not and added that no investor had complained to the Government about it.

In Shah Alam, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib said the State Government decided

today not to spend more than the amount budgeted for the royalty.

It would not entertain requests for additional funds or workers for the palaces. This meant that the state would pay for the maintenance of the main palace, but not for the Sultan's other palaces, rest houses and private vehicles including boats.

Payment of salaries and maintenance of official palaces would only be done according to government procedure.

He added that there would also be no more special consideration or privileges in the allocation of land or approval of applications for the Sultan.

"We have been lenient in the past, but from now on such facilities and special privileges will be withdrawn and the Sultan will have to pay for the water and electricity bills for the unofficial palaces.

"I have directed the state financial officer to review all allocations of funds for the palace and reject exces-

sive expenditure including bills for goods purchased overseas," he told reporters after chairing the weekly State Executive Council meeting here.

Muhammad said the Sultan of Selangor, who is now holidaying overseas, had the right to have his bills paid by the State Government, but any excessive purchases would not be entertained.

He also said heads of department would not be allowed to attend palace functions which have not been approved by the State Government.

They should have the prior approval of the State Government to carry out any duties for the palace, including the Ruler's birthday celebration.

He said the State Government would, from now on, abide strictly by the regulations in line with the wishes of the people.

On the Sultan's birthday programme, Muhammad said the State Government would decide the official functions and government

officers could attend only those approved by the State Executive Council.

He added that even official visits to any district or departments by the Sultan would be decided by the State Executive Council.

In Ipoh, Perak Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib said the State Government would maintain normal relationship with the palace, but said he expected the situation to be tense over the next few days.

This follows the Rulers' rejection of the amendments to the Constitution.

However, he said the State Government would adopt a non-hostile approach in its relationship with the Perak palace in the conduct of government matters.

"Our relationship with the royalty will be tense initially, but we will try to maintain a non-hostile approach when meeting them," Ramli told a Press conference at his office today.