

# PM: It's an achievement for the people

DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad described the 1994 Budget as an extraordinary achievement for the nation by which the Government has managed to balance revenue and expenditure.

The Prime Minister said although the Government was able to table good budgets for a number of years in the past, this year's Budget was "better than usual."

"When we spoke of a balanced budget in the past, we did not take into account development expenditure, which we have included this time through a RM13 million allocation," he told newsmen at Parliament House.

Dr Mahathir said another feature which made the 1994 Budget attractive was the reduction of tariffs and abolishment of duties for a long list of items apart from impressive incentives designed to promote inflow of foreign investment.

"A new feature is the move to pay bonuses to civil servants. In the past, we used to pay 13th-month salaries to offset the rising cost of living.

"Although cost of living has not risen, we are paying bonuses to keep our promise to those not affected by the privatisation process," he said.

Dr Mahathir said staff in privatised departments

had gained from salary increases, bonus and allotment of stakes while civil servants in other departments did not benefit.

"We feel this is unfair," he said.

He said the tax "exemption" for about 60,000 taxpayers was a good objective which took into account the interests of the lower income group.

"Although this will mean lower revenue, we are confident overall revenue will increase with impressive economic growth apart from larger returns expected to be felt by the private sector.

"Largely, it is dependent on growth. We are able to pay RM400 bonus-

es although Cuepacs made a request for a RM300 figure because we can afford it.

"We are determined to keep our promise," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the nation should always be cautious as the impressive economic performance could be jeopardised if it was not followed by efficient management of funds and expenditure control.

He said the Government would also speed up the privatisation of urgently needed infrastructure projects to ensure that economic growth was not hampered by infrastructural inadequacies.