

10% toll hike is small, says PM

'Budget perks will compensate for increase'

SUN - 7 DEC 2001

By Ferida Abdul Kudhus

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs: The 10% increase in toll charges along the North-South Highway (PLUS) is small compared with the other benefits that the government has given the people.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the Budget 2002 offers many perks, such as tax reduction, salary increment and bonus for civil servants.

"These benefits are far higher than what the people have to spend on the PLUS highway as we don't use it everyday.

"The PLUS toll increment should be increased by 30% but the government only allowed 10%, and this means the government has to again sub-

ROUTES	OLD RATES (RM)	NEW RATES* (RM)
• Jalan Duta - KLIA	7.00	7.20
• Jalan Duta - Seremban	10.10	11.20
• Jalan Duta - Ayer Keroh	17.80	19.70
• Jalan Duta - Yong Peng(U)	28.70	31.60
• Jalan Duta - Skudai	38.30	42.20
• Jalan Duta - Ipoh	21.90	24.00
• Jalan Duta - Kuala Kangsar	24.80	27.30
• Jalan Duta - Taiping	29.00	31.80
• Jalan Duta - Sg. Petani	38.80	42.40
• Jalan Duta - Bkt. Kayu Hitam	47.90	50.90

*Estimated rates based on 1.12 sen increased per km

sidise," he told a press conference after tabling the Budget 2002 at the Dewan Negara here.

Mahathir, who is also finance minister, said civil servants will receive a 10% pay rise next year.

This is in addition to the 10% increment given last year, and that is far more than what they would incur when using the PLUS highway.

He said there are many new roads, such as the

Middle Ring Road and the Lebuhraya Damansara-Puchong, which were costly to build but do not require toll if motorists use only parts of it.

"In fact in Malaysia, many expressways are free of toll, and if tolls are imposed, they are among the lowest compared with other countries.

"The subsidy we provide is not to help the companies but to ensure that the toll increment is reduced. I don't understand why there are so many complaints," he said.

Asked about an alternative to the problem, Mahathir said: "We close the highways and you use the old road and see how much you'll have to pay and how much time you'll have to spend. How much wear and tear on your vehicle, its free, that is the only way."