

Govt's right to transfer officers: PM

SINGAPORE, Thurs. — A democratic Government elected by the people such as the one in Kelantan has the right to transfer civil servants to ensure effective administration, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said the controversy surrounding the transfer of 20 Kelantan Government servants showed that it was politically motivated by certain people.

He regretted that a democratic Government elected by the people was being opposed by the State civil service which was not elected by them.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on the latest developments pertaining to the transfers and his meeting with Kelantan Menteri Besar Tan Sri Haji Mohamed Yaacob.

He said Tan Sri Mohamed briefed him on the audience he had with the Sultan of Kelantan and the explanation given to the Ruler.

Dr Mahathir said: "In our view, the Government has the right to transfer its officers.

"There will be no effective administration if one party administers (Government officers)

and another party transfers them. This disrupts the democratic process."

Dr Mahathir said if the situation was not resolved, the Government will look into the legal aspects and also matters pertaining to administrative practice.

Asked to comment on the denial of former Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah that he was not involved in the matter, the Prime Minister said the situation showed there was political motivation.

The Kelantan civil service had never done this before, Dr Mahathir said.

"And this sudden action shows that there were people with vested interests behind it."

He believed that the controversy was due to the prevailing political situation.

He added that the officers affected by the transfers were not to be blamed.

Asked if a ruling would be implemented requiring all transfers in the State civil service to be approved by Menteri Besar, he said the matter would be studied.

"Any matter that affects the powers of an elected Government will be studied," he added.