

# PM: No decision yet to amend rule

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By PAUL GABRIEL

ALOR STAR: The Government had in the past reviewed but never made a decision to amend the Federal Constitution concerning the position of the rulers, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

The Prime Minister said the Government had also found it "very difficult" to consider Tunjku Abdul Rahman's suggestion in 1987 for a Royal Tribunal to try a ruler who had committed an offence.

Allowing the Conference of Rulers to deal

with errant **rulers** meant "all (rulers) had to agree (on any action)," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Government always acted according to the law and wanted to "abide by it."

"But if the rulers break the law, it automatically affects their stature," he told newsmen on arrival at the Sultan Abdul Halim airport here.

(Article 38 (4) of the Federal Constitution states that no law directly affecting the privileges, position, honours and dignities of the rulers shall be passed without the consent of the Conference of Rulers.

(Article 181 (2) states that no proceedings whatsoever shall be brought in any court against a ruler in his personal capacity.)

Dr Mahathir was asked whether the Government intended to review the Constitution on the position of the rulers in light of the Sultan of Kelantan controversy.

To a question, the Prime Minister said the royal code of conduct being jointly drafted by the Umno Supreme Council "may include new elements."

He said that only the Federal Government had the right to decide on mat-

ters of tax exemption.

He said Kelantan could not decide on its own the number of cars the Sultan could buy.

"And the statement that the rulers are not governed by any code of ethics, except the Quran, in itself clearly shows that he does not follow any ethics," the Prime Minister said, adding that the press had to highlight the controversy to "defend itself" against the Kelantan Government's criticism that it was biased.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the Home Minister, said the best solution was for the Sultan to pay.