

Minister told to look into Lukman's case

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — The Prime Minister has instructed Health Minister Datuk Lee Kim Sai to look into the case of a Ministry staff who has been denied a transfer to Pahang for the last 10 years.

Deputy Health Minister Datuk Farid Ariffin said today the Ministry received Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's letter on Feb 10, two days after the employee, Encik Lukman Nadarajah Abdullah, complained to the New *Straits Times*.

In his letter published by the NST on Feb 8 Under the name L.N. Abdullah, Lukman, among other things, alleged that in 1982 his superiors told him that he was transferred out of Pahang on the order of the Sultan.

He said what was done to him was "most mean and inhuman" and said the Sultan's pressure "has ruined me and my family". Lukman's requests for a transfer back to Pahang in 1986, 1989 and 1992 were also denied.

Farid said it was true that the Sultan of Pahang had forbidden Lukman from working in the State again but pointed out that the Ministry would have to contact all persons involved in the case before deciding on Lukman's fate.

He gave the assurance that the Ministry would conduct a thorough investigation to ascertain the truth of Lukman's allegations, adding that the matter had been discussed at the highest level in the Ministry.

A Ministry spokesman said Lee had briefed the Cabinet on the matter.

"We are looking into all aspects due to the delicate background of the case. It appears that there is more to what has been published," he said when contacted at his office here.

Farid was commenting on an article written by NST group editor Encik A. Kadir Jasin in his column "Other Thots" in the New *Sunday Times* yesterday which highlighted Lukman's predicament

Lukman an assistant pharmacist at Pusat Kesih-

tan Besar Jelebu in Negeri Sembilan, claimed that he was transferred out of his home state, Pahang, soon after being summoned to Istana Negara to have an audience with the Sultan of Pahang, who was then the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, on Dec 27, 1982.

He had since been transferred to Kelantan, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan. He claimed that each time he applied to return to Pahang, he was told "the Sultan of Pahang did not want him back in the state."

In his letter to the NST, Lukman appealed to the Sultan of Pahang to deny that he (the Sultan) was not involved in his transfer and in denying him the right to return to Pahang to work.

In the most recent attempt to get a transfer to Pahang where his two wives and nine children are living, Lukman received a letter dated Oct 16, 1992 from the Ministry stating that his appeal could only be considered if he could submit written proof that the office of the State Secretary of Pahang had no objection in accepting him back in Pahang.

According to Farid, the issue was not "a simple case of alleged victimisation and transfers", adding that the matter had become more complex because religious issues were also involved.

(Kadir in his column traced the events leading to Lukman being summoned by the then King and the uncertainty concerning his faith.)

Farid said: "Let me talk to the concerned parties first. We must sit down and discuss the facts because this is also a religious matter."

"This is why the Ministry has not responded to his (Lukman's) letters."

It was learnt that besides writing to the Ministry seeking a transfer to Pahang, Lukman had made several attempts to see the Health Minister but failed. His two wives had also sent separate appeal letters to the Ministry asking that he be allowed to work in Pahang.