

01 JUL 1996
Judge-Resign
CONFIRMED -- HIGH COURT JUDGE HAS RESIGNED

KUALA LUMPUR, July 1 (Bernama) -- Chief Justice of the Federal Court Tan Sri Eusoff Chin confirmed today that High Court judge Datuk Syed Ahmad Idid Syed Abdullah Idid has resigned.

Syed Ahmad did not give any reason for his resignation which took effect today, he told reporters at his office here this afternoon.

Eusoff earlier today had an audience with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to submit Syed Ahmad's resignation letter which was dated today.

He said the King consented to the resignation.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was informed of the resignation of Syed Ahmad on Saturday and he had no objection, he added.

Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah, responding to a newspaper report on Saturday, had said a judge of the High Court would be resigning.

Asked whether the resignation was linked to a widely circulated poison pen letter which alleged irregularities in the Judiciary, he declined to say why the judge was resigning.

Eusoff said that under Clause 125 (2) and (5) of the Federal Constitution, a judge of the Federal Court, Court of Appeal or High Court could resign by submitting a letter addressed to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

The judge was not obliged to give any reason and this was explained to Syed Ahmad Idid by the Chief Registrar of the High Court, he said.

Eusoff also declined to make any connection between the resignation and the poison pen letter scandal, saying: "Since he (Syed Ahmad Idid) did not state the reason why he resigned...I cannot say if it is linked to the poison pen letter."

"I could not say whether he was involved or not and I think it is fair for me to say I did not have the papers on investigations conducted by the police and Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) and I am not in a position to say he wrote the letter or was involved in the scandal.

"I believe the Attorney-General will make an announcement on this at the right time because it falls within his jurisdiction. Therefore, I am in the dark on this matter," he said.

To a question, he said as far as he could recall this was the first time a High Court judge had resigned.

Asked why the resignation was allowed since no reason was given by Syed Ahmad, Eusoff said: "This is the judge's wish and if he doesn't feel like working, we cannot force him."

Early this year the Attorney-General directed the police and ACA to investigate the poison-pen letter which, among other things, had alleged corruption in the judiciary.

Asked if he was briefed on the police and ACA investigations, Eusoff said he was not.

However, he was aware of the Attorney-General's statement that those responsible for writing the letter had been identified.

Asked whether Syed Ahmad would be entitled to benefits like pension following his resignation, Eusoff said according to the Judges Remuneration Act, Syed Ahmad would not qualify for pension.

The act stipulates that only judges who resign on medical grounds and are above 60 years old are entitled to get pension.

To another question, he said actions like writing poison-pen letters would definitely smear the judiciary's image and undermine the morale of judges.

"If the writer is a judge...he is not fit to hold the post because this act is a betrayal of his own institution," Eusoff said.

Anyone identified to be the writer of the letter can be charged in the Magistrate's Court, he said.

Asked whether there was any truth to the allegations contained in the letter, he said: "It is all false." -- BERNAMA

RHM NHD YBY