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Eusoff Chin: PM satisfied with the judiciary

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PETALING JAYA, Thurs. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has expressed his satisfaction with the judiciary during his first face-to-face dialogue with judges since he became Prime Minister.

During the closed-door dialogue with 65 judges and eight Judicial Commissioners at the Pan Pacific Glenmarie Resort in Subang today, the Prime Minister also said he would respect whatever decisions made by the court.

Briefing reporters later, Chief Justice Tan Sri Mohd Eusoff Chin said that Dr Mahathir respected decisions made by the court as he (the Prime Minister) knew the court only made a decision after examining all the facts and relevant laws.

Mohd Eusoff said there was always the avenue for appeal such as the Court of Appeal in the case of any decision which was not right.

"The Prime Minister said he is happy with the judiciary and with the functioning of courts. During the dialogue we also had an opportunity to voice our problems such as the shortage of manpower including support staff and wages."

On whether the case in Kuching where the election court on Monday had nullified the election of the State Assemblyman for Kemena constituency was brought up, Mohd Eusoff said Dr Mahathir did not mention it.

On the dialogue which was held in conjunction with the annual judges' conference, Mohd Eusoff said it was just to meet the judges.

"In fact he has not seen the judges. He knows their names but he has not met them.

"At the same time we also know him just like everybody else but have never met him," he said adding the judicial department was under the Prime Minister's Department.

Asked about his feelings about the dialogue, he said: "We feel very proud that the Prime Minister has taken the time to come and meet us and find out what we need and to ascertain whether there are any shortcomings.

"It just shows that he is interested in the judiciary."

On Dr Mahathir's message to the judges, Mohd Eusoff said he wanted members of the judiciary to work hard and follow the law.

Asked about the independence of the judiciary, the Chief Justice said judges were independent to make decisions according to the law.

"In other words a judge cannot make decisions based on his own whims and fancies," he said adding that Dr Mahathir was happy that so far the judges had been making decisions according to the law.

Also present were Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Abang Abu Bakar, President of the Court of Appeal Tan Sri Lamin Mohd Yunus and Chief Judge of the High Court of Sabah and Sarawak Datuk Chong Siew Fai.

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