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Mahathir-Eusoff

EUSOFF CHIN'S TERM AS CJ LIKELY TO BE EXTENDED

CYBERJAYA, June 16 (Bernama) -- Tun Mohamed Eusoff Chin's term as Chief Justice of the Federal Court is likely to be extended, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"I think his term will be extended because we need to ensure that everything is in place before there is a change," he told reporters after launching the Motorola Software Centre, here.

He said this when asked if Eusoff's term would be extended.

Asked for how long the term would be extended, Dr Mahathir said: "I don't know."

Eusoff will reach the mandatory retirement age of 65 on June 20.

The term of the Chief Justice of the Federal Court can be extended for not more than six months from the date of compulsory retirement upon approval by the Yang Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

Article 125 of the Federal Constitution states that the Chief Justice should hold the post until he reaches 65 years old.

Yesterday, Eusoff declined to comment when asked by reporters in Kuantan whether he would accept it if the government decided to extend his term. Eusoff was in Kuantan to attend the Conference of Malaysian Council of Judges.

Eusoff, who was born in Batu Gajah, Perak on June 20, 1935, succeeded Tun Hamid Omar as Chief Justice on Sept 24, 1994. He was a High Court judge from 1982 and a Supreme Court judge from 1992.

He began his legal career as a magistrate in 1959 and served in Pulau Pinang, Alor Star and Ipoh.

On the proposal by the judiciary that litigants in civil cases be charged fees to speed up hearings and avoid the calling of unnecessary witnesses, Dr Mahathir said the government would have to study the proposal.

"I don't give opinion until I study it... I am a very careful man, especially when talking to journalists," he quipped.

Eusoff was quoted as saying yesterday that the fees could be waived in cases involving the poor.

The Chief Justice had said that the fee would in principle be similar to that levied by the Bar Council mediation centres which charge RM375 for a half-day and about RM700 for a day's hearing.

-- BERNAMA

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