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Eusoff's tenure extended (HL)

CYBERJAYA, Fri. - The tenure of Tun Mohd Eusoff Chin as Chief Justice of the Federal Court will be extended, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said this was to enable Eusoff to put things in order before he retired.

"I think it will be extended because we have the need to see that everything is in place before he leaves," he told reporters after opening the Motorola Multimedia Software Centre at the Cyberview Lodge.

He was asked to comment on whether Eusoff's term which ends on Tuesday would be extended. The compulsory retirement age for judges is 65 years.

Dr Mahathir, however, did not know how long the extension would be.

Born in Batu Gajah, Perak, on June 20, 1935, Eusoff 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.

Eusoff began his legal career as a magistrate in 1959 and served in Penang, Alor Star and Ipoh.

Before this, he was an English school teacher, a labour officer and an assistant district officer. He was called to the Bar in 1963 at Lincoln's Inn.

On the proposal by Eusoff yesterday that litigants in civil cases be charged fees from the second day of hearing to speed up hearings and avoid calling of unnecessary witnesses, he said the matter would have to be studied.

Asked if it was necessary, he said he did not want to arrive at an opinion on the matter until he had studied it as "I am a careful man".

Bernama meanwhile reports that Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali's service as Chief Secretary to the Government has been extended for another year on contract basis from July 15 to July 14, 2001.

It quoted a statement from the Prime Minister's Office as saying that the Government decided on the extension as Halim's services were still needed.

Halim made history when he became the first foreign service officer to be appointed to the number one civil service post on Sept 17, 1996.

He had then just been appointed Foreign Ministry Secretary-General after 30 years in the diplomatic service.

Abdul Halim reached retirement age in July 1998 but his service was extended by two years to July 14 this year.

Kedah-born Halim is a Universiti Malaya graduate and has served as ambassador to Vietnam and Austria.

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