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Parliament-Judge

GOVT EXPLAINS EXTENDED TENURE FOR OUTGOING CHIEF JUSTICE

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 13 (Bernama) -- The six-month extension of the tenure of Tun Mohamed Eusoff Chin, who was originally supposed to retire as Chief Justice of the Federal Court last June, is constitutional, the Dewan Rakyat was told today.

The Parliamentary Secretary of the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Noh Omar said the extension was in accordance with Article 125 (1) of the Federal Constitution.

That particular article states that a Federal Court judge can hold the position up to the age of 65 or for a period not exceeding six months after that, he told the House during question time.

"It is true that Tun Mohamed Eusoff was due to retire last June 20 but at that time then his successor has not been appointed yet by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong. So his service is extended by another six months," he said replying to Mat Basir Rahmat (PAS-Parit).

He was perplexed that, based on their queries, the opposition appeared ignorant of the Constitution, Noh said referring to Mat Basir questioning the relevance of the six-month service extension of the outgoing Chief Justice.

Mohamed Eusoff's extended tenure expires on Dec 19.

In his supplementary question Basir asked why Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad seemed reluctant to announce the appointment of the new Chief Justice.

Noh said: "The prime minister did not announce it sooner as he has yet to receive an official announcement from the Conference of Rulers.

"If the prime minister were to announce well in advance, it can turn into a political issue accusing Dr Mahathir of by-passing the Rulers."

On Dec 7, the Office of the Prime Minister announced that the King has consented to the appointment of Tan Sri Mohamed Dzaidin Abdullah, 63, as the new Chief Justice of the Federal Court.

Noh said Malaysians should respect the decision on the appointment of the new Chief Justice.

"If the opposition themselves show disrespect towards the judiciary, imagine what will be the attitude of people who follow their example," Noh added.

-- BERNAMA

SLR MNY RYN