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Dzaiddin-Judges

THERE'S AN URGENT NEED TO FILL VACANCIES FOR COURT OF APPEAL JUDGES

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 28 (Bernama) -- Chief Justice Tan Sri Mohamed Dzaiddin Abdullah said today there is an urgency to fill six vacancies for Court of Appeal judges to deal with backlog of cases pending appeal.

He said the number of Court of Appeal judges would be increased from 10 to 15, making it six vacancies with the recent retirement of Datuk Shaik Daud Ismail.

Dzaiddin said he would submit the names of the nominees for Court of Appeal judges to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the appointments would be made as early as end of March next year.

"I may suggest to elevate a few High Court judges (as Court of Appeal judges) because we are proposing for simultaneous sittings of two quorums of judges by Jan 2 next year," he said.

Dzaiddin was speaking to reporters after Datuk Balia Yusof Haji Wahi took his oath of office as a judicial commissioner before him and Chief Judge of Malaya Datuk Ahmad Fairuz Sheikh Abdul Halim at the Federal Court today.

He said that as at Jan 1 this year, there were 5,240 civil and 4,900 criminal cases and 812 applications for leave to appeal before the Court of Appeal.

Asked who would succeed Court of Appeal President Tan Sri Wan Adnan Ismail who died on Dec 24, Dzaiddin said he had not thought about it yet.

Ahmad Fairuz is currently performing the duties and functions of Court of Appeal President.

Asked about the deadline for judges to prepare their judgments, Dzaiddin said the period had been extended from six to eight weeks from the date of the notice of appeal was filed.

"We think this (time frame) would be sufficient (for the judges to write judgments) taking into account the increase and complexity of cases," he said.

Meanwhile, Balia Yusof, 49, who hails from Parit, Perak, will serve as a Judicial Commissioner in Alor Setar from Jan 2.

He started his career as the Johor Legal Aid Bureau Assistant Director in 1977 upon completing his law degree in Universiti Malaya.

He had served as a deputy public prosecutor in the Attorney-General's (AG) Chambers and in Negeri Sembilan in 1980 and as a Legal Advisor for the Royal Customs and Excise Department.

Balia Yusof, who is married to a bank officer Datin Faridah Amiruddin and have four children, was a senior federal counsel in the A-G's Chambers in 1992.

He had also served as Parliament Deputy Legislator, Solicitor at the Treasury and Chairman and Special Commissioner of Income Tax at the Treasury.

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