

CJ: Election petitions will be disposed of on time

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By Hafiz Yatim

Chief Justice Arifin Zakaria has assured that the appeals on election petitions nationwide will be disposed of on time.

This follows the first case on appeal, namely for the Machang parliamentary seat, being brought yesterday.

Justice Arifin also said parties who are also not satisfied with the quantum of costs imposed by the Election Courts can also appeal.

"Yes, yes, (the election petitions) can be disposed of in time as what happened yesterday. I am told is that we are going to combine all related appeals where the issues are similar in a single hearing.

"Hence, we have three or five cases in one hearing and all parties can address and we would make a decision binding. Then, there will not be inconsistency where one panel decides this way or another," he assured.

This, he said is a better approach.

Justice Arifin was speaking on the sidelines after launching a book titled Construction Adjudication in Malaysia written by lawyer Ivan Loo and Law Wai Loon from the firm of Skrine.

More than 60 election petitions were brought to court following the May 5 general elections.

Most have been struck off on technicalities, while few are being heard.

Election petitions are supposed to be disposed of within six months after the case is filed.

On complaints of unequal costs imposed by the Election Court, Justice Arifin said it is subject to the court's discretion.

"However, they can appeal if they want, even on costs," he said.

Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim and other Pakatan Rakyat partners have in the past complained of the high costs imposed by the Election Courts on the opposition, with some exceeding RM100,000, while for BN it is said to be not that much.

The CJ however decline to comment on the Prevention of Crime Act amendments as he said he has yet to see the bill.

On the book, he said the publication will provide an invaluable resource to judges, lawyers, adjudicators and stakeholders over jurisprudence in construction adjudication.

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