

JAC to emphasise merit and performance
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The Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC) places emphasis on the grounds of judgment as a prerequisite in deciding the promotion of judges, Chief Justice Zaki Azmi said today.

Zaki Azmi, who is also the JAC chairman, said that apart from the grounds of judgment, the statistical disposals of court cases of the judges would also be considered.

"Promotions are based on merit and performance, and not mere seniority," he said at the swearing-in of four High Court judges who were elevated as Court of Appeal judges and nine judicial commissioners who were confirmed as High Court judges.

Zaki said the JAC members would request a candidate's grounds of judgment from time to time.

In assessing judges for promotion, the commission would also listen to comments from the Bar on their temperament and also their behaviour outside court.

At the ceremony, Datuk Wahab Patail, 61, who is the elder brother of attorney-general Abdul Gani Patail, Clement Allan Skinner, 53, Mohamed Apandi Ali, 60, and Zaharah Ibrahim, 58, were sworn-in as Court of Appeal judges.

Wahab is currently serving in the High Court civil division in Kuala Lumpur while Skinner is in Kota Kinabalu. Mohamed Apandi, a former lawyer, and Zaharah are serving at the High Court (Commercial division) in Kuala Lumpur.

The nine judicial commissioners were Mariana Yahya, Dr Badariah Sahamid, Azman Abdullah, Mohd Yazid Mustafa, Zainal Azman Abdul Aziz, Yew Jen Kie, Ahmadi Asnawi, Datuk Zamani Abdul Rahim and Vernon Ong Lam Kiat.

Judiciary's image vastly improved

Zaki said that in evaluating judges for promotion, comments and views of the JAC members, who are also serving judges, were important because they knew the judges better than anyone else.

He also said that the judiciary's image had improved by leaps and bounds in the past one year.

The attitudes of judges, magistrates and court staff towards lawyers and those attending court, had also improved tremendously.

However, the judiciary continued to be firm on enforcement of the law and strictly following policies which were implemented, he said.

"Those who are unhappy with any decision always have an avenue of appeal," he said.

He said judges were expected not only to be working during office hours but also after, and during some weekends when necessary.

Zaki also spoke about the concern over the rising appeals pending at the Court of Appeal,

which he said, had shot up as a result of the rapid rate of disposal by the High Court.

- Bernama

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