

DATE: 29/03/2008

Wan Hamzah not excited about apology proposal

NST- 29/3/2008

■ **By Santha Oorjitham**
santhao@nst.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: "Is an apology really forthcoming?" asked Tan Sri Wan Hamzah Wan Mohamed Salleh, one of the five Supreme Court (now known as Federal Court) judges suspended in June 1988.

The *New Sunday Times* edition of March 23 reported Datuk Zaid Ibrahim as saying that his first priority as minister in the Prime Minister's Department in charge of law would be to propose a government apology to former lord president Tun Salleh Abas and the judges sacked in 1988.

But after yesterday's cabinet meeting, Zaid said this "has yet to be considered" and added, "we have to wait".

"It's only a proposal. Give them a free hand to decide," said Wan Hamzah.

The five judges were sus-



A file picture of Tan Sri Wan Hamzah Wan Mohamed Salleh, who was suspended as a supreme court judge in 1988 and then reinstated

pending after granting Salleh a stay order against the tribunal preparing a report for the king on his suspension.

The five appeared before another tribunal, which sacked Datuk Seri George Seah and Tan Sri Wan Suleiman Pawan Teh but re-

instated Wan Hamzah, Tan Sri Azmi Kamaruddin and Tan Sri Eusoffe Abdoolcader.

Seah later described the tribunal as "young colonels judging the generals".

"That's quite true," recalled Wan Hamzah. "These were junior judges deciding. The normal procedure is to appoint judges of the same stature."

Asked about Zaid's suggestion of a judicial appointments commission, Wan Hamzah said: "It would be better to wait for the royal commission of inquiry into the Lingam video clip to submit its report and then decide."

After his retirement from the bench in 1989, Wan Hamzah lectured at the law faculty of the International Islamic University of Malaysia for 10 years.

But now the 85-year-old is frail and housebound. "I don't get around much."