

THE SUN

DATE: 11/04/2008

PM to reveal measures on judicial reform

The Sun - 11/4/2008

by **Maria J. Dass**
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will announce the steps being taken by the government towards judicial reform "sooner than most people think", Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Zaid Ibrahim said yesterday.

He told a press conference Abdullah is committed to judicial reform and there is no need to doubt or question his commitment on the matter.

He said among the components taken into account in the reforms are:

- » the separation of power (between the executive, judiciary and the legislature),
- » the vesting of judicial power in the courts, and
- » the appointment of judges in a transparent manner, that gives confidence to the people.

"Whatever proposals (including that made by the Royal Commission on the

Lingam video clip), reforms and laws will be undertaken with the agreement of all parties," he said, adding that the government is open to suggestions from the public in this matter.

"We will take into account the suggestions to form a commission to appoint judges and this is something the government will view seriously," said Zaid.

He said there needed to be more input on this matter as "the journey towards judicial reform is long and wrought with many challenges".

"We need to start with the acceptance that the judicial body must be a free body and have judicial power as provided for in the Federal Constitution. When we give this power to the judiciary, people from within and outside the country will trust the credibility of our court decisions, and have confidence that it (decision) cannot be influenced by outside parties."

Zaid said he was touched by the support given by the

Chief Justice and the Regent of Perak Raja Dr Nazrin Shah, who said on Tuesday that Malaysia needed nothing short of a "judicial renaissance", and that incremental and cosmetic modifications were not sufficient.

Asked about statements by several senior politicians blaming former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad for the rot in the judiciary, he said: "I share the view (of what happened during Mahathir's tenure) on the sacking of judges, incidence of allegations of corruption in the judiciary, the laws and amendments to the federal constitution that were passed to take away judicial powers, all the allegations and problems ... the right people not getting the right post, the wrong people getting the right post ... so I leave it to you to make the conclusion."

He, however, refused to be drawn to comment on this as "I'm now interested in moving forward, not going back".