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Anuar to head four-member commission

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Tan Sri Anuar Zainal Abidin, who will head the independent commission of inquiry set up to investigate the alleged police assault on Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, said today he looked upon the appointment with a great sense of responsibility.

"It is an onerous responsibility," he said when contacted at his home in Taman Tun Dr Ismail here.

"So much has been said about the matter but I will approach the task with an open mind. I am confident the other members of the commission will agree with me.

"We will be fair in carrying out our duties."

Anuar retired as Chief Judge of Malaya on April 1, 1997, after a legal and judicial career that began in 1964 after his return from reading law at Lincoln's Inn in London.

He was appointed a Judicial Commissioner in 1978, and was elevated to the High Court in 1980. Anuar was appointed Chief Judge of Malaya in 1994.

Perak-born Anuar was a popular judge even when relations between the Bench and Bar was at its lowest ebb.

Lawyers said they liked him for his sense of humour, his unassuming personality and his willingness to hear out both sides of an argument without losing his calm.

Anuar is married to Toh Puan Azimah Mohd Ali and they have two children.

Anuar will head the four-member commission, which includes former Court of Appeal judge Datuk Mahadev Shankar, Pantai Medical Centre's consultant orthopaedic surgeon Datuk Dr Yeoh Poh Hong and former Attorney-General Tan Sri Abu Talib Othman.

The setting up of the commission was announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today.

Abu Talib, 60, was Attorney-General for 13 years from 1980 to 1993. After reading law at Lincoln's Inn, he joined the Malaysian Government Services in 1963 and served as a magistrate in Kuala Lumpur until April 1965 when he was promoted to Sessions Court President.

He later became Deputy Public Prosecutor for Negri Sembilan and Malacca in 1965 before being appointed Terengganu State Legal Advisor in 1967.

He served his post in Terengganu until June 1974 before moving to Penang as State Legal Advisor.

He was Senior Federal Counsel from 1975 to 1978 and in January 1979 he assumed the position of Solicitor-General of Malaysia.

He became Attorney-General in September 1980.

After leaving the A-G's Chambers, Abu Talib became chairman of Malaysia Building Society Bhd until 1995.

He is now chairman of Tan & Tan Developments Berhad.

Datuk Mahadev Shankar, 65, received his early education at Victoria Institution, Kuala Lumpur, and was called to the Bar in 1955.

A lawyer for many years and former partner of legal firm Shearn Delamore and Co, Shankar was appointed High Court judge in 1983 and was later elevated to Appeals Court Judge. He retired last year.

Penang-born Datuk Dr Yeoh Poh Hong graduated in medicine from Universiti Malaya in 1973.

He was made a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh in 1978 and obtained his Master's in Orthopaedics from the University of Liverpool in 1980.