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Kuan Yew clarifies AWSJ report

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew, in clarifying an Asian Wall Street Journal report, said he does not believe that Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was responsible for Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's black eye or arrest under the Internal Security Act.

In a letter to the AWSJ which appeared in the newspaper under the heading Dr Mahathir is innocent, Lee's Press secretary Yeong Yoon Ying said the Senior Minister wanted to put this on record.

"With the Anwar trial over, Mr Lee wanted to put on record his belief that Dr Mahathir was not responsible for Mr Anwar's arrest under ISA, nor for Mr Anwar's black eye - two events which triggered what followed," Yeong said.

Yeong's letter, which appeared in the Sept 1 to 3 edition of the AWSJ, was to clarify its Aug 18 report entitled Singapore's Lee says Anwar case was mishandled. The report was based on Lee's Press conference here after his visit.

According to Yeong, Lee had met Dr Mahathir in Davos four months after Anwar's arrest and had asked him about the matter.

Yeong said Dr Mahathir had told Lee that he did not know about the arrest under the ISA as that was the prerogative of Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Rahim Noor. He also had nothing to do with the black eye.

"The police inspector-general committed these blunders. Dr Mahathir carried the political fallout from Mr Rahim's acts and paid a heavy price.

"The impression the world had was that Dr Mahathir had personally ordered Mr Anwar's arrest under the ISA and the subsequent black eye he suffered while in police custody.

"And Mr Anwar with his black eye on world TV and newspapers coloured international perceptions of the Anwar trial. It also affected the subsequent general election."

According to Yeong, Lee could not understand Dr Mahathir's attitude until he learnt from the latter's close friends that he tended to be very loyal towards officers who worked for him.

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