

Estrada meets Wan Azizah ²⁸ despite Sizaon's assurance

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KUALA LUMPUR: Philippine President Joseph Estrada met with Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail hours after his Foreign Secretary Domingo Sizaon said no such meeting would take place.

Estrada, who made no mention of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim when he met Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for bilateral talks in the morning, met Anwar's wife at Legend Hotel here in the evening.

They met at the penthouse suite of the hotel at 11.30pm for about an hour.

The Philippine leader refused to talk to the press while Dr Wan Azizah, who was accompanied by her daughter Nurul Izzah, gave the newsmen the slip.

A presidential spokesman said the meeting was cordial but declined to give details.

In the morning, Sizaon told reporters after the meeting that Manila was satisfied that there was transparency in the ongoing trial of Anwar.

Sizaon had also said that neither Estrada nor

normal and good.

Asked if he thought the trial was being conducted in a fair manner, he said: "It's all right. So far so good."

He said Dr Mahathir and Estrada also exchanged views on the currency crisis and Malaysia's currency control measures.

"We indicated that unfortunately in our case, the experience of being under a very long period of currency control measures was rather negative.

"However, the fundamentals were different and the Philippines is an archipelago with porous borders that makes it easier for smuggling," Sizaon said.

He said both leaders also agreed to continue with joint ventures, adding that more than 50 Malaysian companies had invested in the Philippines.

He said Estrada was impressed with the KL International Airport in Sepang and congratulated Dr Mahathir on Malaysia's economic and infrastructure development.



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any of his ministers would be meeting with Dr Wan Azizah, adding the "President is here on official business." He said the Anwar issue was not raised at all during the meeting with Dr Mahathir, the first of its kind between the two leaders.

"Between friends, no explanation is needed," Sizaon said, adding the relationship between Kuala Lumpur and Manila was