

Newspaper	MALAYSIAKINI
Date	7 SEPTEMBER 2016

After Anwar-Dr M handshake, Rais proposes gov't-opposition tea party

Malaysiakini – 7 Sept 2016

Applauding the ‘historic’ handshake between former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his arch-rival, jailed de facto opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, as the pinnacle of silaturahmi (Islamic kinship), an Umno veteran proposed the same for the government and the opposition.

Former minister Rais Yatim proposed that the government and the opposition set aside political differences and sit down to drink tea together and develop close kinship.

“Politics can change from time to time. What is important is the feelings of kinship that acknowledges individual personalities or opinions. Even in political enmity, do not forget about kinship. For example in the coming Aidiladha, the opposition and the government should drink tea and eat lemang together,” said Rais at a press conference in Gombak today.

The former minister was commenting on the handshake between Mahathir and Anwar, when they met at the Duta Courthouse on Monday, the meeting was the first time that the two had met after their falling out in 1998, 18 years ago.

Rais said that the meeting is between Anwar and his former mentor and should not be made much of as it is an example of islamic kinship that should be emulated by all in the political establishment. On Monday, Mahathir unexpectedly turned up at the Kuala Lumpur High Court in a show of support for Anwar in his legal challenge to the National Security Council (NSC) Act 2016.

The move is seen to be an adroit political move by both to solidify the fledgling alliance between Pakatan Harapan spritually led by Anwar and Mahathir’s newly-registered Bersatu in their quest to displace Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak from power.

In 1998, Mahathir fired Anwar who was then his deputy for alleged abuse of power as well as accusations of sodomy, which led to Anwar being imprisoned for the first time and causing a schism between the master and his once-apprentice.

Rais himself left Umno in 1987, joining the rebel splinter alliance Semangat 46 as an opposition member when Mahathir was PM. However, he later like many other ex-Umno rebels, returned to the fold in 1999 and rejoined the cabinet along with Anwar under Mahathir’s reign.