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PM's visit adds to political intrigue

Shafie makes surprise appearance to welcome Muhyiddin to Sabah

KOTA KINABALU: It is a time of political intrigue as Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin visited Sabah for the first time after taking over as Prime Minister in March.

Caretaker Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal made a surprise appearance to greet Muhyiddin at the VIP lounge of Kota Kinabalu International Airport yesterday morning.

The two men held a four-eyed meeting for 15 minutes before going their separate ways.

Shafie, who leads the Warisan Plus coalition in the state, is in opposition to the Federal Government led by Muhyiddin's Perikatan Nasional and its allies.

Officials from both sides downplayed the meeting as "normal government business" while a state official said Shafie, as Chief Minister, was according the courtesy to the Prime Minister who is visiting Sabah.

"There is nothing to it but just courtesy given to the Prime Minister, nothing political," said the state official who declined to be named.

Immediately after arrival, Muhyiddin headed to the Sabah Bersatu headquarters at Taman Alam Mesra where he was briefed by state party chief Datuk Seri Hajiji Mohd Noor on preparations for the Sept 26 state elections.

He also received applications for membership to Bersatu from a group of Warisan members led by Mohd Rashdey Sabardin,



Tarmac hello: Muhyiddin and Shafie greeting each other with a fist bump at the Kota Kinabalu International Airport. — Bernama

who handed over 2,235 membership forms from 40 Warisan branches in the Bugaya seat in Shafie's stronghold of Semporna.

Muhyiddin also received from Hajiji over 20,000 application forms from divisions across the state while two former assemblymen, Datuk Musbah Jamli (Tempasuk) and Datuk Limus Jury (Kuala Penyu), submitted about 10,000 membership applications.

Later, during his speech to federal civil servants, Muhyiddin spoke about the importance of federal and state relations.

He expressed disappointment that the state

government was not with him and hoped that the Sabah government could align itself with the Federal Government as it would be for the benefit of all.

"Imagine if Sabah is one with us (Federal Government), it'll be better," he said, adding that it was "a little bit of a campaign".

A question in the minds of many is whether Muhyiddin will launch the Perikatan logo during his time in Sabah.

There has been speculation that Perikatan — comprising Sabah Bersatu, STAR Sabah, Sabah Progressive Party and PAS — will launch

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its logo, as its partners Sabah Barisan Nasional and Parti Bersatu Sabah are keen to use their own logo.

On Friday, PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang said they were prepared to contest in the Sabah polls using the Barisan logo.

Meanwhile, Perikatan will be allowed to use its logo in the Sabah state election, said Election Commission chairman Datuk Abdul Ghani Salleh.

"If the EC has approved it, it means the particular party symbol can be used in the coming elections," he added.