

# Muhyiddin's govt hit by royal bombshell

The severe reprimand from the Palace has dealt a big blow to the Prime Minister's Cabinet, but he is a fighter and has no intention of quitting.

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Analysis by JOCELINE TAN

TAN Sri Muhyiddin Yassin's government has been hanging on by a thread for more than a year, but that thread may have finally snapped.

His government appears to be teetering after the stinging royal rebuke from the Palace, which came at around noon yesterday and set the already highly-strung mood in Parliament on fire.

The statement from the Palace is a devastating blow to the Prime Minister, who has struggled from day one with the numbers to stay in power.

Is Muhyiddin's position still tenable after what happened?

The stern reprimand, which also singled out Datuk Seri Takiyuddin Hassan, may have effectively ended the political career of the de facto Law Minister, who is a key part of the Prime Minister's inner circle.

The opinion out there is that Takiyuddin, who is from PAS, will have to resign for what the Palace claimed to be an act of misleading Parliament and for going against

the Palace.

Takiyuddin had apparently revoked the Emergency Ordinances, thereby going against the King's advice to table the ordinances for debate in Parliament.

The fiasco may also cost Attorney General Tan Sri Idrus Harun his job.

"It is a blazing mess," said lawyer Ivanpal S. Grewal.

The resignation of Takiyuddin and the Attorney General, if it happens, may take the heat off Muhyiddin although much damage has been done.

The Emergency, which was widely seen as protecting Muhyiddin's government from a challenge, has instead turned around to bite him.

"The supreme irony is that the government that was formed to protect the interests of the Malays now finds itself accused of disloyalty to the King," said Ivanpal.

This was also the same sovereign who, at the first Parliament sitting after Muhyiddin became Prime Minister, made it crystal clear that Muhyiddin had his support.

"It's going to be tough for them to salvage the situation. There is no

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Ivanpal S. Grewal

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winning for a Malay leader who fights with the Palace," said former Kapar Umno division chief Datuk Seri Faizal Abdullah.

According to Faizal, the last Malay leader to take on the Sultans and win was Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad. But Dr Mahathir knew how and when to pick a fight. He was then a powerful leader of a strong party and there were controversies involving the royal houses.

Muhyiddin is hardly in a position

to take on the Malay Rulers. Public sentiment has turned against his government and his party does not have much clout on the ground.

"The prime minister derives his power from two sources in any system where there is a monarchy. The first source is the support from the people and the second is that the monarch must have confidence in him," said Ivanpal.

It is evident that there is a breakdown of trust between the Palace and the Prime Minister.

Can the Prime Minister still face the King and offer advice on important government issues after what happened? Will the King not have doubts about any future advice he gets from the Prime Minister?

The Opposition's calls for the resignation of the Prime Minister will grow louder in the coming days.

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is leading the pressure for Muhyiddin to go and accusing the government of "derhaka" or treachery to the Malay Rulers.

The Opposition Leader has never come this close to taking over.

Those glued to the live streaming of the Parliament sitting the last few days have noted that Anwar has carried himself with confidence, refusing to be part of the wild behaviour of some of his Pakatan Harapan colleagues.

Takiyuddin scored an own goal when he dropped the bombshell about the revocation of the Emergency Ordinances.

But the ball is now in Muhyiddin's court and the Prime Minister has shown that he has no intention of stepping down. He has defended the revocation, insisting that it was done according to the law.

He is not backing down. His lengthy statement released late in the day basically says he acted according to the Constitution and that the constitutional monarch has to act on the advice of the Cabinet.

Muhyiddin is no quitter. He is digging in his heels and intends to live to fight another day. But the coming days could be the toughest in his political career.

**The views expressed here are the writer's own.**