

'MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE'

Confusion over meeting between two ex-PMs

KUALA LUMPUR: A meeting between Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin on Tuesday night has created confusion.

While an associate of Dr Mahathir alluded to the meeting being about the so-called Malay Proclamation, Muhyiddin said it did not touch on that, but was on Malay unity and support of Perikatan Nasional, which the younger former prime minister chairs.

Whatever was discussed, however, it's been labelled a "marriage of convenience" by a DAP leader.

This is as Dr Mahathir had labelled Muhyiddin a traitor for causing the downfall of the Pakatan Harapan administration, which the former led, in 2020.

The nearly two-hour meeting was attended by the Secretariat of the Malay Proclamation chairman Datuk Seri Khairuddin Abu Hassan, who said the meeting would provide a fresh impetus to the proclamation.

"The willingness of both Malay leaders to set aside their differences is to ensure the struggle to empower citizens in this blessed land continues.

"The admirable qualities of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin will become a new pillar of support for Malays, who yearn for absolute



Malay unity or solidarity.

"Malays are demanding unity to empower the position of the nation's children, so that they become a respected community by all."

Yet Muhyiddin yesterday, in denying that the meeting was about the proclamation movement, said both of them had agreed in principle to strengthen the unity of Malays and increase the support for PN ahead of August's state elections.

"The meeting was conducted in a cordial manner and with mutual regard between the two of us.

"We discussed the position and future of Malays without specifically touching on the proclamation."

Meanwhile, DAP's Dr P. Ramasamy slammed the meeting as a marriage of convenience aimed



Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad (right) and Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin at their meeting on Tuesday. PIC FROM MUHYIDDIN'S FACEBOOK PAGE

at destabilising Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's unity government.

He said Dr Mahathir seemed to oscillate between political extremes.

Ramasamy said having mooted the idea of the proclamation, Dr Mahathir had recently talked about DAP's subversion of the constitution by promoting multiracialism.

He said Dr Mahathir had also criticised Anwar for being the puppet of the DAP by virtue of the latter's control of 40 seats in Parliament.

"I suppose the state elections have brought them together.

"Dr Mahathir and Muhyiddin are political desperados. They just cannot wait to topple Anwar.

"You name it, Dr Mahathir will go the extreme end to destabilise the unity government headed by Anwar.

"It might be the Malay Proclamation, multiracialism as an affront to the constitution, and about the evil designs of the DAP in subverting Malay hegemony.

"Dr Mahathir and Muhyiddin have their differences.

"However, the idea of bringing

down the legitimate government is too enticing to be ignored."

Political analysts, however, said the meeting showed the importance of Malay votes in the state polls.

Nusantara Academy for Strategic Research senior fellow Dr Azmi Hassan said the fact that the two had agreed to move away from their rivalry showed that Malay votes were crucial.

"They are trying to earn the confidence of Malay voters and give an impression that the government is not taking care of Malays and Islam.

"In fact, if Pas president Tan Sri Abdul Hadi Awang was well, he might have even joined the meeting," he said when contacted by the *New Straits Times*.

Political analyst Dr Ainul Adzelle Hasnul said the meeting showed that Dr Mahathir was renewing his ties with Muhyiddin, not on a political platform, but rather based on Malay unity.

He added that the meeting could also be an advantage for PN in the polls as Dr Mahathir was still a respected figure among Malays.