

**Malaysia Never Claimed Mandailing Culture As Its Own, Says Muhyiddin
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By Ahmad Fuad Yahya**

JAKARTA, July 3 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's plan to register the Mandailing culture under the country's National Heritage Act is aimed at preserving the heritage and not to claim it as its own.

This was emphasised by Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin to Indonesian vice-president Boediono when they met to discuss bilateral cooperation and matters of mutual concern here Tuesday.

The registration process would take into account Indonesia's views, including mentioning where it originated from, he told a news conference at the end of his visit to Jakarta.

"By registering it under the National Heritage Act, it will also benefit Indonesia in the long-run as it is meant to preserve and conserve, otherwise the culture will disappear with the passage of time," he said.

The proposal to register the Mandailing's Tor-tor dance and the Gordang Sambilan drumbeat had sparked an immediate and fierce reaction from several Indonesian groups, which misconstrued that Malaysia was making a claim on the culture.

Muhyiddin said he also explained to Boediono that the people of Malaysia and Indonesia came from the same roots and although some Indonesians had become Malaysian citizens over the years, Indonesia remained their roots like for the Mandailing and Bugis communities.

The explanation was well-received by Indonesia, said Muhyiddin.

He said the meeting also touched on other bilateral issues, including the supply of maids from Indonesia and disputes over maritime boundaries.

On the economy, he said they agreed that Malaysian and Indonesian investors and entrepreneurs should capitalise on the good economic cooperation between the two countries.

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