

Muhyiddin Wraps Up Successful Indonesian Whirlwind Tour
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NUSA DUA (BALI), July 7 (Bernama) -- Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin today wrapped up a six-day whirlwind tour of Indonesia, satisfied having enhanced ties at government and party levels, resolved outstanding issues and learned how Bali draws the tourists.

He had flown into Jakarta and engaged in talks with Indonesian Vice-President Boediono on matters of mutual interest, encompassing also trade, investment and education.

They also discussed the issues which often cropped up like mushrooms after rain to put a damper on bilateral ties, such as those relating to manpower, maritime borders and culture.

Muhyiddin told Malaysian journalists here he explained to Boediono that Kuala Lumpur had no intention of claiming ownership of the "Tor-tor" dance and "Gordang Sambilan" drum performance of the Mandailing community of northern Sumatra whose descendants also live in Malaysia.

A proposal to recognise the dance and drum performance as part of Malaysian heritage sparked controversy and demonstrations by some Indonesian groups in Jakarta.

Muhyiddin, who is also Umno deputy president, met also with the leaders of three major Indonesian political parties, namely Golkar Chairman Aburizal Bakrie, Democratic Party Chairman Annas Urbaningrum and Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle (DPI-P) Chairman Megawati Sukarnoputeri.

After the meetings with the government and party leaders, Muhyiddin said Malaysia was considering appointing an official government spokesman to tackle any issue speedily and more effectively before it developed into a major problem.

The whirlwind tour also took Muhyiddin, who is education minister, to Yogyakarta where he attended the 7th meeting of Asean Ministers of Education, the inaugural meeting of the Asean Plus Three Ministers of Education and the inaugural East Asia Summit (EAS) of Ministers of Education.

"These meetings have a great impact as this is the first time that emphasis has been given to development of the education sector," he said.

In this resort island of Bali, Muhyiddin looked at the progress of the tourism sector under the efforts of the Bali Tourism Board and said the Malaysian tourism sector could learn from Bali's success in attracting foreign tourists.

He also held a dialogue with Malaysian students in Bali.

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