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Muhyiddin prepared to help find solutions to Umno problems

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Acknowledging that Johor Umno was facing "problems", newly-elected vice-president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin today extended an olive branch by saying he was willing to "play his part" in helping find solutions.

Muhyiddin, who is Pagoh Umno division head, scored a surprise win for a spot in the vice-presidency in the just concluded general assembly.

He defeated six other candidates, including Johor Umno chief and Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman and State party deputy chief Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar.

Muhyiddin, who is also Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister, suggested that veteran Umno leaders from Johor be asked to initiate a round-table discussion on how to solve the problems in the State.

"I am willing to invite my colleagues from Umno Johor to discuss our problems sincerely and openly," he said after meeting 40 representatives from 17 Umno Clubs worldwide.

He was asked on the implications of his victory on Umno's unity in Johor, the State which fielded three candidates for the vice-presidency.

"I don't want to hide the fact that there are problems (in Johor Umno) based on the election results," he said.

"But we can't afford to see friction in the Johor Umno due to the presence of different factions which represent either Ghani, Syed Hamid or myself."

Muhyiddin said he hoped the mandate given to him as a vice-president would "spark off" a willingness among all in Johor Umno to strive for unity.

"I am ready to play my part and so it is up to my colleagues in Johor Umno to undertake follow-up measures, be they division heads or ordinary members.

"Hopefully, we can settle our outstanding problems once and for all."

Asked on who should lead the move, Muhyiddin said: "Anyone can do it, as long as we are prepared to sit down and thrash out our problems.

"After all, Ghani is my close friend; we used to ride bicycles together, so I don't think this problem is so big that Johor people cannot solve it among themselves."

On his meeting with Umno Club members, Muhyiddin said many such meetings were under way to reach out to Umno's target groups.

He said party president and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had instructed party leaders and also Cabinet Ministers to have more meetings with local undergraduates overseas.

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