

15 JUN 2003

Muhyiddin-Post

MUHYIDDIN WON'T CHALLENGE ANYONE PICKED BY PAK LAH

JOHOR BAHRU, June 15 (Bernama) -- Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said he would not challenge anyone chosen by Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi for the post of Umno deputy president after the latter takes over the party leadership from Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Besides not challenging the choice to be made by Abdullah, Muhyiddin, who is also Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister, said the leader who would be chosen should be given full support.

"For me personally, if the president and prime minister at that time has decided to pick someone from among the leaders as his deputy, I will give my support and accept his decision," he told reporters after attending the Johor Umno Convention, here today.

Muhyiddin said Abdullah was a mature leader and would take everything into consideration before making a decision.

"Personally, I myself will not challenge anyone picked by Datuk Seri Abdullah for the post of deputy president," he said, adding that normally the person holding the post would also become the Deputy Prime Minister.

Muhyiddin said the person picked by Abdullah should be accorded the rightful honour so that he could discharge his responsibilities to assist the Umno president.

"This way will give much benefits and advantages...so, as far as I'm concerned, Yang Amat Berhormat the Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad) need not worry about my own attitude.

"I will stick to my stand and I will respect whatever decision that would be made by Datuk Seri Abdullah in this matter," he said when asked to comment on Dr Mahathir's concern about the possibility of a tussle for the post in the party.

Dr Mahathir was reported to be concerned about the tussle for the posts of Umno deputy president and vice-presidents after his retirement in October.

Muhyiddin felt that it was probably time that no contest was held for the number two post in the party although in terms of the party's regulations and constitution the post of deputy president was elected under the democratic system.

"There is some good in terms of curbing political manoeuvres and preserving party solidarity if the post is not contested," he said.

"I feel there are grounds for Dr Mahathir's concern (about the tussle for the number two post in the party) when we look at the history of the party...we respect his views," he said.

"From past experience, we know that when there is a tussle, there will be problems such as cracks and weaknesses in the party. Although this is democracy, sometimes there are negative effects arising from elections," he said.

Muhyiddin said Umno could possibly start a tradition whereby anyone picked as the party's deputy president should be given the space and support without any challenge to the position, so that subsequently he would continue to assist the party and government.

-- BERNAMA

MNY AO