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Muhyiddin reiterates pledge of 'no challenge' for No. 2 post

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said today he would live up to his pledge not to challenge the person chosen by Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to be his successor, when he takes over as Prime Minister.

"By keeping my word, it will make it easier for Abdullah to choose his successor," Muhyiddin, who is Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister, told reporters after chairing a meeting with traders' associations on supply and prices of essential items for the festive seasons near here.

Muhyiddin said it was important for Umno leaders to give their undivided support to the candidate for the party's number two post.

"As a loyal Umno member, I will stand by my word to prevent a split and jostling for posts. The issue of not contesting should not be raised again. This is, after all, for unity and strength of the party," he said.

He was asked to comment on the possibility of a power struggle after Abdullah takes over as Prime Minister and Umno president.

The other two vice-presidents - Datuk Seri Najib Razak and Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib - had also made similar pledges. The three vice-presidents had made public their pledges during the 54th Umno General Assembly held in June.

Abdullah will name his deputy after he takes over as Prime Minister from Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and by convention, it will be one of the three vice-presidents.

It has been widely expected that Najib will be his number two, although Abdullah himself has neither confirmed nor denied this.