

PM hands over job to Najib in 2 years
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Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has set his retirement date - he will hand over the leadership to his deputy Najib Abdul Razak in two years' time.
MCPX

"I have decided to hand over my position to Najib to take over as party president in June, in the middle of 2010," Abdullah told a press conference.

umno special briefing abdullah ahmad badawi announce resignation date 100708 05His announcement today is to pre-empt challenges to his position at the party polls in December.

This came despite ringing endorsements from Umno divisions in four states - Penang, Perlis, Selangor and Malacca - all of which said they would back Abdullah as party president.

The handover came as a blow to Umno veteran Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah who has voiced his intention to fight Abdullah in the party polls.

It will almost certainly end his bid to garner the necessary nominations as the party's 19,000 branches kick off their meetings next Thursday.

According to Umno's constitution, candidates for the president's post must obtain 30 percent of the total 191 divisional nominations.

While there is nothing to stop Umno divisions from nominating anyone else for the president's post, today's move will dampen the anti-Abdullah campaign.

Muhyiddin out in the cold

bn component party polls 080708His decision to announce a firm handover date is expected to pacify certain Umno grassroots who are clamouring for him to step down with Najib being widely seen as the best choice to lead the embattled party.

Abdullah has been under pressure to quit or hand over the reins early ever since Barisan Nasional's unprecedented setback in the March 8 general election.

Also factored in the decision is the fear that Abdullah may be humiliated with not being able to get enough nominations to defend his post.

Moreover, Najib's camp was getting a bit impatient as the deputy prime minister is increasingly troubled by the virulent attack from the opposition, led by PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim.

muhyiddin yasin muhyiddin yassinThe handover deal has also thrown a spanner in the works for another possible challenger for the deputy president post, Muhyiddin Yassin - he will have to wait another three years before he can vie for the post.

There were talks of a possible alliance between Muhyiddin and Najib for the top two posts,

which could knock out a weakened Abdullah at the party polls. Now that Najib is assured of the top post in two years' time, Muhyiddin has been left out in the cold.

umno party post polls quota

Umno has not seen any contest for the top position since Tengku Razaleigh took on Dr Mahathir Mohamad in 1987.

Since then, the closest the party ever came to an election for the top two posts was when Anwar challenged Ghafar Baba for the deputy president's post in 1993.

But that too did not reach the polls as Ghafar backed down after Anwar obtained 165 nominations to the incumbent's seven.

However, Umno will not enforced a no-contest rule for this year's election, a departure from the party polls since 1987.

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