

DPM-to-be coy over 2nd DPM proposal
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Deputy Prime Minister designate Muhyiddin Yassin has refused to be drawn into MCA's suggestion that a second prime minister's post be created for the party president.

"We don't want to discuss this at this stage," the newly elected Umno deputy-president told reporters after attending a function in Kuala Sepetang, Perak yesterday.

Asked further, Muhyiddin said the focus now should be on the new prime minister and the new Cabinet line up, expected to be announced on April 8.

"I have no personal view on this (MCA's proposal)," said Muhyiddin, the BN elections director, who is campaigning in Bukit Gantang.

MCA deputy-secretary general Loke Yuen Yow caused a stir when he suggested that MCA be given a deputy premier post on April 3, hours after Najib Abdul Razak was appointed prime minister.

Other than the creation of a second deputy prime minister's post, Loke also suggested that a second Barisan Nasional deputy president post be created.

Loke argued that the the creation of a Chinese deputy prime minister's position will help to realise the "true ideology of a power-sharing administration."

He added that the move would not only show that the government recognises the contributions of the Chinese community towards the country but also help draw up fairer and more justifiable policies.

Umno leaders disagree

Though Loke's proposal is nothing new, the matter has received widespread coverage in the Chinese dailies.

His timing however is seen as a political strategy to win back Chinese support during the three simultaneous by-elections on April 7.

Expectedly, Loke's suggestion has drawn flak from Umno leaders.

Umno vice-president Hishamuddin Hussien poured cold water on the idea, according to Berita Harian yesterday.

"I have never heard their (MCA) leaders raising this in cabinet, BN management meetings or BN supreme council meetings," said Hishamuddin, who is also education minister.

Similarly, ousted Umno supreme council member Rais Yatim said Najib has better things to do than to entertain MCA's suggestion.

"A second deputy prime minister post does not exist in the Federal Constitution. What is

more important is to help win the by-elections," said Rais, who is also foreign minister.

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