

Muhyiddin to PM: I have done wrong, forgive me
Malaysiakini.com
Mar 28, 09
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The man who openly attacked Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's leadership and had undoubtedly hurt the prime minister's feelings along the way apologised publicly today.

Newly-elected party deputy president Muhyiddin Yassin in his closing speech today 'poetically' admitted to have done wrong to Abdullah and asked for his forgiveness.

"I admit to have wronged you, I hope that you forgive me," said Muhyiddin in citing a traditional Malay pantun (poem) to convey the message.

Muhyiddin was one of the main players behind the early retirement of Abdullah and was the most vocal Umno leader to have called for the latter to step down following the party's poor electoral performance in the 12th general election in 2008, its poorest performance since 1969.

His public assaults triggered the domino effect that hastened Abdullah's departure when other senior party leaders began to openly call on him to step down.

Under tremendous pressure then, Abdullah conceded and a power transition plan was mooted.

Although admitting that the party needed the transition plan, Abdullah said he was "a bit disappointed with Muhyiddin" for his open assault against him.

But for Muhyiddin, what Abdullah felt is secondary.

For him, the salvos was translated into huge support which clinched him the party's deputy presidency. He is now set to become deputy prime minister.

His relationship with his former boss however suffered. In an exclusive interview with Malaysiakini last week, Muhyiddin conceded that his ties with Abdullah was "not as good now as one would imagine".

Meanwhile, the new Umno deputy president also thanked Abdullah for his open endorsement to Najib and him to lead the new party.

He also commended Abdullah for fulfilling his promise of meting out the power transition plan as promised and regarded it as a big sacrifice on his part in the interest of the party.

"I would like to thank Abdullah and he will be remembered as the leader with a big heart who sacrificed himself for the party. I thank him for showing and teaching me all this while," he said.

Another coup in the making?

Muhyiddin also made an apparent bid to dispel allegations of his ambition to take over as the party president and the prime ministership.

"A number 2 must be like a number 2 and he cannot act like number 1. If I do, then the ship will sink.

"The experiences of all the number 2 will be my reference to serve and there is no better example of a number 2 than Najib," he said to laughter from the delegates.

In typical Umno fashion, Muhyiddin then pledged his allegiance to Najib as the new Umno president and

called on all party members to follow suit.

“Najib is committed to the agenda of change. I urge members to help Najib with sincerity and commitment,” he said

According to Muhyiddin, he believes Najib can strengthen BN as its new president and this, he said, is very much the hope of the people.

“The new leadership will start to focus on transforming Umno in order to restore public confidence in the party following its dismal performance in the 2008 general election.

“The effort to do this must be immediate and must also be implemented in the BN in order to win back public support to the coalition.

Finally, he pleaded with the Malays to stand by Umno and BN as the party faces a great challenge ahead in the three by-elections scheduled on April 7.

“We will fight to the end and rumble through the opposition strongholds to ensure victory for us,” he said.

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