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# Muhyiddin stands by Najib

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'PM still my friend and I will help him strengthen Umno and Barisan'

**PAGOH:** Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin surprised more than 1,000 leaders here when he said Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak was still his friend and that he would help him strengthen Umno and Barisan Nasional.

During his 45-minute off-the-cuff speech at the Pagoh Umno division, the Umno deputy president touched on an array of national issues, except the 1Malaysia Development Berhad issue.

In addition to Umno leaders, representatives from Barisan component leaders were also invited for the closed-door gathering.

Before the start of the event, those present were reminded not to record it with their mobile phone cameras.

Although Muhyiddin did not break into tears, his voice was nevertheless, at times, choked with emotion.

In his speech after performing Friday and special prayers at Masjid Jamek Panchor here earlier, Muhyiddin said he would continue to support Umno and its leadership as it was his responsibility to do so as the party No. 2.

He said he would never betray the party even after being dropped from the Cabinet and urged those trying to persuade him to switch to the Opposition to stop doing so.

"According to Umno's constitution, a deputy president must be loyal to the president and I will



**Service first:** Muhyiddin acknowledging his supporters at the closed-door gathering at Seri Perkombar Complex in Pagoh.

continue to uphold this," he said. He said he had been entrusted by grassroots members to carry out his duties wholeheartedly.

Muhyiddin said he feared that Umno would lose the next general election under the current political scenario.

"A good leader must perform his duty for the benefit of the rakyat and must not be afraid to voice reminders of what the party

struggles for. "We should pray that the party leadership will receive guidance from the Almighty and change its ways to ensure the people will continue to support Umno," he said.

On his removal as the Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister, he said he felt that a huge burden had been lifted off his shoulders.

"I have served as an elected rep-

resentative for the past 37 years and have held various posts, including as Johor menteri besar before being appointed minister.

"Now, I believe my political career has come full circle. I will continue to serve my constituency for the people of Pagoh," he said.

Muhyiddin said he would also be able to spend more time with his family, especially his grandchildren.