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'Leadership has to change for Umno to survive'

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KUALA LUMPUR: Umno will fade away if immediate changes are not made to the leadership, its vice-president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said.

"If changes are not implemented, Umno will lose power and be unable to make a comeback."

The International Trade and Industry Minister said the general election results showed the people's misgivings about the party leadership.

"I worry that if no changes are made, the people will reject Barisan Nasional and Umno. I think the sentiments are growing among the grassroots.

"I am afraid that it can eventually lead to disaster for the Malays and Umno," he said in an interview with *Mingguan Malaysia* published yesterday.

Muhyiddin said the election results also showed that Umno's domination of Malay politics, which has long been regarded as beyond challenge, had weakened.

"We thought we could not lose but five states are now under Pakatan Rakyat's rule.

"The question now is, to what point can the Malay political power sustain itself in the years ahead?

"Can Umno survive this term to the 13th general election and recover from its losses or will it collapse into the political chasm for good?"

Muhyiddin said there were Umno members who regarded the election defeat merely as a small setback.

"Now, the BN does not only have a reduced majority (in parliament), it also failed to defend its long-held two-thirds majority.

"It is better for Umno to adopt the worst-case scenario approach."

Meanwhile, Johor Umno information chief Dr Mohd Puad Zarkashi called for the transition of power from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak to speed up.

"At its meeting with Abdullah on Friday, Johor Umno requested a plan for the transition of power."

He said a large number of division chiefs wanted the succession to be carried out quickly. — Bernama