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# 'Change – or fade away'

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## Muhyiddin: Polls showed misgivings on Umno leadership

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Umno will fade away and not be able to make a comeback if no immediate changes are made to the leadership, party vice-president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said.

"If changes are not made immediately, Umno will also lose power and can never make a comeback," said the International Trade and Industry Minister.

He said the general election results clearly showed the people's misgivings on the party leadership and now people in and outside Umno questioned its leadership on family links and the system practised.

"I worry if there are no changes made, as demanded not only by Umno members but also by people from outside the party, the people will reject Barisan Nasional and Umno.

"I think the sentiments are boiling at the grassroots. Therefore, if change does not happen in Umno, many adverse things will surface.

"I'm afraid if I don't speak the truth, 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 showed the domination of Malay politics through Umno which was long regarded as beyond challenge had become a myth.

"As such, we thought we could not lose. But today, many Umno leaders in the five states now under Opposition rule never expected to lose power. That's why, to me, it is a very bitter lesson and cannot be taken lightly."

"Can Umno survive this one term to the 13th (next) general election and will it be able to redeem its loss while we face the wave of new political thinking or will we collapse into the political chasm for good?" he said.

He said it was better to adopt the worst-case



**Meeting with leadership:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi sharing a light moment with (from left) Muhyiddin, Datuk Seri Khaled Nordin, Johor Mentri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman and Johor Umno secretary Datuk Ali Hassan before the start of the Johor Umno Liaison Committee meeting in Johor Baru on Friday.

scenario approach.

"If we do not take any immediate steps, we will fade away. I've said earlier that political power can slip away from our hands and Umno may never rise again, ever," he said.

Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam called on party members to remain calm and to wait for the outcome of the post mortem and not make calls for transition of leadership.

Ranau Umno chief Datuk Masidi Manjum said calling for Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's

resignation was not the best approach for Umno's resurgence and to win back the hearts of the Malays.

He said Abdullah's quitting would not resolve the problems being faced by the party and Barisan.

"Pressuring the Prime Minister to leave is not the way. We in Umno should acknowledge weaknesses within the party and overcome them. Heaping the blame on one individual is not the way to go about it," said Masidi, the Sabah Umno assistant secretary.