

Muhyiddin wants no Umno mischief ahead of 'mother of all elections'

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By Yow Hong Chieh

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 26 — Umno deputy president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin has warned the party's rank and file not to sabotage candidates fielded by the top leadership in the next general election.

Calling the 13th general election "the mother of all elections", he told Utusan Malaysia that any such attempt would hurt Umno's chances at the polls.

"We are at a snowy mountaintop and if we're not careful, we will slip and it won't be easy for us to get back up once we lose power," he said yesterday.

Muhyiddin (picture) blamed party infighting for Umno's losses in Election 2008, saying the leadership had taken steps to ensure the internal bickering which preceded the last general election would not be repeated.

"The losses were not due to the opposition's strength but internal problems in a few areas," he told the Malay daily.

Umno lost 30 of its 109 parliamentary seats in Election 2008, which saw the opposition sweep to power in five states after denying the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition its customary two-thirds majority in Parliament.

Party members must not only refrain from sabotage but must redouble their efforts if they wished Umno to preserve its political strength and stay in power, Muhyiddin said.

He was speaking ahead of next week's Umno general assembly, expected to be the party's last before snap polls are called.

Speculation is rife that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak will call elections in the coming months, even though his mandate will only expire in mid-2013.

Opposition-led states Selangor and Penang have said they will not dissolve their state assemblies if an early general election is called.

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