

Muhyiddin: BN weak because component parties weak
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By Mohd Farhan Darwis

PUTRAJAYA, March 18 — Barisan Nasional (BN) is weak is because its component parties are weak, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said today, urging them to shore up efforts to buttress the ruling coalition's battle in Election 2013 which is just weeks away.

The BN deputy chairman said the weakness was not only within Umno but also with its coalition partners like the MCA, MIC and Gerakan which were roundly defeated by opposition parties in Election 2008.

"The weakness is not just Umno but the component parties also have a big problem... we need to do something to strengthen their parties," he said at a luncheon meeting here with 250 former elected representatives, Umno veterans and retired senior civil servants from the Federal Territory.

Muhyiddin (picture), who is also deputy prime minister, said if no action was taken to address the weaknesses of the parties, the spirit of its members will fade, warning that BN would suffer a bigger loss in the 13th general election.

"Only the improvements take a long time... if we absolutely do nothing, the people will certainly reject us," he said.

Muhyiddin also conceded that the challenges facing the ruling coalition in Election 2013 will be harder compared to previous elections.

"Hence why we have discussed if the party is ready to face the general election, which is likely to be the hardest, (most) challenging compared to the 12 elections we had undergone in the past.

"We know the challenges will be hard. Election 2008 we failed to defend our parliamentary two-thirds and a few states; if we don't do something about it what would happen *nauzubillah* (may god forbid)," he said.

In its worst-ever electoral showing since 1968, BN lost its customary parliamentary supermajority and four states — Penang, Selangor, Kedah and Perak — in the March 8 polls; Kelantan also remained under PAS rule.

BN later regained Perak after three Pakatan Rakyat (PR) lawmakers defected.

Muhyiddin said the ruling coalition had taken radical steps to bolster support through several initiatives immediately after Election 2008.

"We have taken drastic measures, amend the Constitution, meet with grassroots leaders, initiatives like holding courses consistently," said the BN No2.

The deputy prime minister also said there is a possibility that a major restructuring of the government would take place after the coming polls.

"Our situation generally is getting better and we expect to maintain it but if we can we

would want to fortify the grey areas," he said, referring to constituencies identified as a fallible.

"What we are waiting for now is only on the candidacy," he added.

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