

# Dr Mahathir: We cannot change party rules

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said there was no question of Umno's constitution being amended to accommodate those wanting to join the party.

He said the supreme council did not have the power to do so. The constitution could only be amended at the general assembly.

The general assembly may not take kindly to such demands, he told reporters at the end of its session today.

The Umno president was commenting on the general assembly's endorsement of his proposed meeting with Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and the resolution calling for all amendments to the party's constitution to be referred to it.

Dr Mahathir said these people must join the party first before making any proposal to amend the constitution.

He dismissed claims that the provision could hamper his unity talks with Tengku Razaleigh.

On appeals by a Penang delegate not to have Tunku Abdul Rahman as

the mediator for the talks, he said the delegate had the right to voice such views.

He said he would agree to any request to have a "cooling-off period" before having talks with Tengku Razaleigh.

"But I am cool," he added.

Asked why the Putra World Trade Centre furniture was being exhibited during the assembly, Dr Mahathir said it was to satisfy the queries of members who wanted to know why Umno paid such a high price for it.

Asked why now, he said the actual documents and figures pertaining to its purchases were only recently obtained. A special audit revealed that the building committee, then headed by Tengku Razaleigh, paid 60 per cent more for the imported furniture compared with the cost of local products.

He said action could not be taken because all properties were still owned by the Official Assignee.

He added that it was up to the members to interpret whether the payments made were exorbitant or not.