

Dr M: Authors hiding behind

DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad called authors of poison-pen letters "cowards" with dubious intentions, who presented half truths as absolute truths.

He likened their methods to those of Goebbels, the notorious Nazi propaganda minister who promoted a terrorist named Hitler.

The prime minister said if these people had legitimate criticisms against party leaders and the government machinery, they should come out in the open.

The fact that they hide behind unsigned letters which are circulated among members is proof that they are cowards, the Umno pres-

ident said.

Poison-pen letters contained "half truths," Dr Mahathir said, adding that the contents were designed to destroy the party. He reiterated his earlier belief that Umno could not be threatened from outside, but could be weakened from within.

The letters have nothing

positive to offer except create suspicion, doubts and mistrust between the leaders and the people.

Dr Mahathir, whose winding-up speech was televised live, said Umno members were guided by the tradition that they were free to criticise the leadership as long as it was based on the truth.

poison-pen letters are cowards

He said the Umno leadership would accept the criticisms no matter how painful as long as it was constructive and meant to improve the party. The assembly should be the forum where members can air their views on party leaders and the machinery, and not through poison-pen letters,

he added.

He said he was disappointed that some members would accept the contents of these letters as advice.

However, he reminded delegates that while they were free to criticise, they must also remember that the allegations would be exploited by enemies of the

party, more so if they were baseless.

"Don't give them the weapon to threaten or attack us," he added.

The prime minister also warned members to be wary of political corruption, a culture which he said could also destroy the party and country. He urged the party

to reject the culture at all levels.

He remarked that political corruption should not be allowed in this country. He cited instances when candidates were known to have offered foreign holidays to win support, adding that this had adverse implications on the country.