

# Campaign is getting uglier, says Mahathir

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KUALA TERENGGANU: Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday hit out at political campaigners who supported themselves through money politics, empty promises and the use of all sorts of threats and smearing, including allegations of corruption among rivals.

"I have observed that the scene is getting uglier. There is too much desire for gains nowadays," he said.

The Prime Minister said the scenario of political campaigning had changed so much compared with the early days of Umno when the issue of winning or losing in the party election was not overwhelmingly important.

"Last time, there were no quarrels among contestants, no allegations, no smear campaigns through newspapers, no poison-pen letters or tension in such affairs.

"In previous years, it was not considered a shame for contestants to lose because winning and losing were accepted as part of the normal process of election.

"However, now we have people who want to

win at all costs and this sort of attitude is very unhealthy," Dr Mahathir told some 1,000 Terengganu Umno leaders and members at a gathering here.

The Prime Minister pointed out that he knew the history of Umno well through his own experience as he was in Umno when it was first set up.

"At that time, it was so hard to persuade people to contest in the party election because Umno then did not pay any salary.

"Because not many want to be contestants, there were few problems," he said.

Dr Mahathir also mentioned that he knew of some people who had considered it proper and cheap to spend RM20 million just so that he could be Umno President and the Prime Minister.

"Someone had said this before but after he lost, he said that if he were to spend another RM20 million more, he would have won."

"I appeal to all to adhere to democratic principles in this contest. Campaign by all means but do it in the proper manner," he urged.