

# Move against money politics

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Umno delegates gave Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad the mandate yesterday to amend the party constitution to disqualify candidates using money to secure party posts.

The mandate was granted with a show of hands by the 1,769 delegates when the party president proposed amendments to check the unhealthy trend where up to RM100,000 was said to have been spent by candidates vying for seats in the 1993 elections.

Speaking to reporters after his closing address at the Umno general assembly, the Prime Minister said the new provision would seek to disqualify candidates who used money, trips, gifts and government machinery to gain support.

He said an extraordinary general meeting would be held soon, possibly by the end of this year, to table the amendments which would empower the party headquarters to disqualify candidates playing money politics.

"We will investigate complaints thoroughly to ensure there is no room for sabotage. It will be enforced at divisional and supreme council levels in the next party election," he added.

Dr Mahathir said he had gone through the 1993 election results and felt there was not much effect (of money politics) as most of the supreme council members who won were senior men who had hardly campaigned, like Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad and Dr Abdul Hamid Othman.

"We know who they are (those who used money). But they did not win. There were only four or five new faces in the supreme council this time who were picked because they had worked hard."

Earlier in his speech, Dr Mahathir said once the amendments were approved, the party would investigate a candidate if it received more than three complaints from delegates.

"You (delegates) have to report to the headquarters even

if the people up here (referring to supreme council members) do such things," he said.

"We will also drop candidates who offer delegates trips to Medan and Haadyai."

Dr Mahathir said corruption and abuse of government machinery in party elections must be checked to ensure the party remained strong with capable leaders.

"We do not want a situation where capable leaders are pushed out of the party by others using money to win seats.

We will have ministers who will be busy looking for funds to channel them to buy votes, what kind of a Government will that be?"

"If we allow this trend, then we do not have to work. We just have to wait for party elections every three years and collect RM10,000, RM20,000 with some even reported to be paying RM100,000 for votes.

"If we want to check this trend effectively, we also have to enforce it at the divisional level.

"What is the point of being a division leader if it means losing the (parliament or state) seat," he added.