

Speed up processing of new applications, says PM

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The proposal to expedite the processing of new applications into Umno will help ensure that new members have a deeper understanding and appreciation of the party's struggles.

Party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the move will also help to curb and monitor "certain parties"

attempting to control and use the party for their own ends.

At the opening of the Umno special general assembly, Mahathir said a new system needs to be introduced to eliminate the difficulties and obstacles faced by Malays who are interested in joining the party.

"Umno belongs to all Ma-

lays and bumiputras who accept its policies and objectives," he said. "Nobody, for their own selfish reasons, has the right to prevent Malays from joining the party."

"Whoever tries to stop Malays who believe in Umno's struggles from joining the party are actually betraying Umno."

However, Mahathir said, the new system does not mean anyone can join Umno and then create problems from within, as had been attempted by certain quarters before.

"We still need to vet applicants, but the power to do this should lie with those people who do not have any (personal) interests. And once an

applicant is accepted, he will enjoy all the rights as other members as well as access to all party activities."

Mahathir said senior Umno members must be willing to make way for young members and leaders, regardless of the extent of their (the seniors') contributions.

"Umno has to make

changes. We have to accept the fact that time makes us older, and the old have to step aside so the younger members can play an active part.

"If Umno is to survive, if Umno's struggles are to be continued, changes have to be made and they have to be made by the young generation."