

Members hold key to fighting corruption

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Amendments only provide the framework, says Mahathir

The amendments to the Umno constitution will not automatically eliminate corrupt practices and money politics but will preserve the spirit of the party which is important.

Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the amendments are only a framework, which will be meaningless without sacrifices and change of culture within the party.

He said the amendments do not guarantee that bad practices and gradual destruction within the party will be removed.

"Laws have never eliminated crimes, they only curtail criminal activities. What really saves and develops a society is the culture embraced by society.

"It is the same with Umno," he said when opening the Umno Special General Assembly.

Mahathir said a serious disease which has afflicted Umno is corruption and money politics.

He said by just saying that corruption exists in other countries does not turn money politics into something clean.

"There are some who say that they only gain a little while the people they help have a lot more to gain, and so there is nothing wrong with taking a little extra money.

"After all, if they don't accept it, others will," he said, adding that such attitude condones the practice and makes it a part of our culture with everyone accepting bribes believing others are on the take too.

"There is no way we can eliminate corruption.

"I have cajoled, appealed,

cried and prayed. Now, we will try amending the constitution. I know many of us are uneasy with the changes to the party constitution, including myself.

"So, please help. Please love our people and grandchildren.

"Reject bribery, expose those who indulge in it, gather enough evidence and expose them. Please reject everything which smells of corruption for the sake of our people," he said, choking back tears.

Mahathir said the constitution is not important but the spirit and sense of togeth-

erness which are the only thing that can overcome problems in the party.

He said previously the supreme council elections were held every year without problems and now there was a proposal for it to be held every five years.

"But we still remain doubtful of overcoming the problems. We will amend our constitution but as long as we favour a little personal gain, our problems will persist.

"Trust me, the people will reject us and our party. When that happens, it will be meaningless to be a leader," he said.