

# Majority accepted amendments to constitution, says Mahathir

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Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the majority of the party members have consented to the amendments made to the party constitution.

Citing an example, Mahathir said Puteri Umno was at first opposed by some, but was later accepted during the debate.

"We have to follow the voice of the majority," he added.

Speaking at a press conference after the party's special general assembly, Mahathir said there were some differences in opinion but "we hold on to the majority's decision".

"It was clearly a huge majority ... not split voting, unlike the US presidential election," he said.

Mahathir said all mem-

bers, whether in the committee or not, were given a chance from the beginning to voice their views.

Asked about the closed-door meeting, Mahathir said it was because they were debating on the party's internal matters.

On the decision to continue with the provision to give the supreme council power to defer the party election 18 months after the scheduled date, he said: "The party is being flexible".

He added: "If the party election is held one or six months before the general election, it will create a lot of problems.

"So it is up to the supreme council to decide and they did not deny the council's right to decide."

Asked why the five-year term was rejected although it might reduce politicking, Mahathir said: "They do not want to have a yearly election as it will create excessive turmoil in the party. But five years would be too long, so they took an average approach, which is three years," he added.

He said if the party election is held in the same year as the general election, it will have a negative effect on the latter.

Asked whether the decision to stick to the three-year term would affect him, Mahathir replied: "I am not disappointed. I shouldn't be disappointed. It is not going to affect me."

Mahathir said through the amendments, the party

wanted to show that it is open to all Malays and bumiputras.

"We should continue to work within the context of the Barisan Nasional. We are not extremists in any way and we think our objective is consistent with the needs of a multiracial society," he added.

On the party's decision to open up to civil servants in Division A, Mahathir said it is up to the government and not the party, to allow them to be active in politics.

Asked about his sounding rather sceptical about eradicating corruption, Mahathir said: "Even laws which provide for the death penalty have not really succeeded in completely stopping that kind of crime."