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Umno-Reaction (Speech)

DR M'S TEARFUL PLEA SHOWS HIS DEEP CONCERN FOR UMNO'S CREDIBILITY

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 18 (Bernama) -- Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's tearful plea to party members to reject corruption and money politics was an open expression of his deep concern for the credibility of the party and leaders.

"In his speech, he (Dr Mahathir) analysed elements that can stifle Umno's progress -- money politics.

"If any post is won by using money, he is worried on what will happen to the credibility of the leaders and the party," he said when met by reporters during the morning break of the Umno Special General Assembly here today.

In an emotion-packed opening address at the one-day assembly convened to amend the party constitution, Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, cautioned party members that corruption and money politics could destroy Umno and asked them to expose those offering bribes.

He said if they cared for their race, Umno members should turn down all forms of bribery, including offers of overseas trips and to perform the Umrah, (minor pilgrimage to Mecca).

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar agreed that Umno needed more than the constitutional amendments -- attitudinal change among members -- to ensure the party remained strong and received the people's support.

He said amendments to the party constitution were merely the framework to strengthen Umno but more importantly, members must change their attitude and refrain from indulging in corrupt practices.

Syed Hamid said the existing constitution was adequate to check negative elements in Umno if members strictly abided by the rules and regulations.

Dr Mahathir's consistent speech since before on Umno's struggles ought to be given serious attention by members at all levels, added Syed Hamid, who is also Kota Tinggi division chief.

-- BERNAMA

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