

It's test time for Umno Youth

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KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has challenged Umno Youth members to accomplish three tasks to prove their commitment to the party's cause.

The Umno president said they were:

- TO get each member to draw at least five non-members into the party;

- TO help ensure that all eligible members and supporters are registered as voters; and

- TO help set up operations room in their respective branches and divisions.

"What I am asking you to do may not be as romantic as shouting slogans but these are practical things which will guarantee Umno's survival.

"These are also practical tests to prove whether you are committed to the party or otherwise," the Prime Minister said in his keynote address before 8,000 members at a special Umno Youth gathering at the Putra World Trade Centre yesterday.

During the hour-long address, Dr Mahathir reminded Umno Youth members that although the natural term for

the current Parliament does not end until 2004, they should start preparing for the general elections from now.

He also urged the Youth wing members to have a good grasp of democratic principles in preparing themselves to inherit Umno.

This includes the principle relating to winning and losing in Umno elections.

"You must keep yourselves well-disciplined so that you will not be easily tempted to betray the interest of the party or your race by promises of wealth and positions," Dr Mahathir said.

Early this month the Umno supreme council endorsed the party disciplinary board's finding and action against six members for resorting to money politics in recent divisional polls.

The board nullified the election of three of them as division chiefs.

Dr Mahathir said: "If money is misused to influence certain outcome, then we will be the victims.

"Being so hard up for money, we are willing to trade off our dignity.

"Today we may sell votes in party polls. Once it becomes a

habit, we may even sell our votes in the general election and pawn our dignity," he said.

The Prime Minister said he could not guarantee that all who were involved in money

politics would be punished.

"We may not be able to get all of them. But those that we get, we will mete out proper punishment to deter others.

"But just because we cannot

get at all of them in 'one go', it does not mean that we should slow down.

"With full support of the members, we will continue this quest to clean up the party's image," he said.