

# PM: Umno must be clean

STAR

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JITRA: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday many Malays lack interest to join and support Umno because of alleged corrupt practices by its leaders.

The Prime Minister said this was based on feedback he received from the people during his recent nationwide tour.

"I met, among others, professors, university lecturers, government officers, soldiers and policemen who

explained their perception of Umno and why they have lost interest in supporting the party.

"They told me that Umno is being led by untrustworthy people who are involved in corruption and used money to become leaders," he said when opening the Kubang Pasu Umno delegates meeting here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said they described party leaders as those who only cared for

their own interest.

He said such perceptions could ruin the party and country if Umno members did not take them seriously.

"There is no point in saying that corruption occurs in other parties just to cover up the wrongdoings in our party," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Umno members had the responsibility to ensure the party was clean at all levels.

"If the people's perception on Umno's leadership is

clean, then only they will support us and we can win and form a government.

"But now, their perception is still vague and they are of the opinion that Umno had absorbed a dirty culture ... a culture of corruption."

Dr Mahathir pointed out that there were some Umno members who attended branch meetings because they received money and were promised free trips if they supported certain candidates.

"This has spoilt our culture as there are many ordinary members who are poor and attend the meetings because of the lucrative offers."

He also said there were PAS and Keadilan members who attended Umno branch meetings and participated in the elections.

"Our party will be destroyed if our enemies elect our leaders. This is a crime which is being committed to destroy our party."