

Money politics 'like diabetes'

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KANGAR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad drew an analogy from a disease by describing Umno as a "diabetic patient suffering from rotting toes."

He said the party had to undergo an amputation to contain the practice of money politics despite the strong reaction against the move from within the party.

"The only medicine to check the spread of the disease (money politics) is to amputate the rotten toes (members) to save the party despite the anger and hatred that will be stirred up against me," he told a special meeting with Umno leaders at Dewan Resideni here yesterday.

He said Umno would lose the support of those who were punished for money politics.

However, he said the people would not support Umno if it did not take action against errant members.

Dr Mahathir said the party supreme council would support the decision of the disciplinary board committee chaired by Tengku Tan Sri Ahmad Rithaudeen which had acted against the errant party leaders.

He said no one would want to sit on the committee if the council rejected its decision.

"So, despite appeals against the punishment, they must be upheld for the good of the party."

Dr Mahathir said Umno must be cleansed of money politics, adding that the people would never believe that corrupt leaders could set up a good government to serve them effectively.

"The people will not pick our candidates if they think our candidates are corrupt."

Dr Mahathir said Umno would lose membership if the members do not close ranks after the election process.

He said that winning or losing did not matter as what was paramount was love for the party.

"I want to give a warning ... don't do something that will tarnish the party ... if we love the party we will not do

bad things and we also support the winner," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Umno needed dedicated members who have the party interest at heart and do not fight for personal glory.

He said even Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Badawi, Ministers Datuk Abdul Kadir Skeikh Fadzir and Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar and former deputy minister Datuk Radzi Sheikh Ahmad used to oppose him in the past.

However, as long as they had the party interest at heart, he had no right to reject them, he added.

In Sintok, Dr Mahathir defended the party disciplinary board's decision against

those involved in money politics even as some of the accused gave reasons for their actions.

"Nobody ever said they were involved but we know from the facts they were," he said.

"In a court of law, the accused would claim he was not wrong to commit rape or sodomy," he said when asked to comment on the decision after holding a dialogue with student leaders from all local public universities at Universiti Utara Malaysia.

He said the board's credibility would be undermined if the Umno supreme council did not support its decisions.