

PM: Difficult to curb new form of graft

Nov 2.4 JUL 2001

'Party promising supporters a place in heaven'

MEASURES have been taken to combat graft but nothing much can be done to stop a new form of corruption in which a political party promises a place in heaven to those who support it.

In an obvious reference to Pas, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said while the Government and Umno had declared war against corruption, the party concerned encouraged its members to commit this new type of corruption.

"Corruption involving money or gifts can be detected and eradicated by those entrusted with the responsibility.

"What is difficult to curb and eradicate is bribery in which one is

promised a place in heaven in return for his support. Those giving promises in which the truth cannot be verified is not only committing corruption but is telling a big lie," he told Dr Tan Seng Giaw (DAP-Kepong), who had earlier asked about the success of measures taken against money politics.

Saying corruption should not be confined to just money politics, Dr Mahathir stressed that any success against this new form of corruption depended on the individual or the organisation involved.

"If they have the conscience and fear against committing something sinful, then we will succeed in eradicating such corruption.

"But so far, no efforts have been

made and this form of corruption has proliferated," he said, adding that as long as there were people who did not fear God, bribing someone with a place in heaven would continue.

Replying to a supplementary question from Datuk Raja Ahmad Zainuddin Raja Omar on steps that should be taken to stop the practice, Dr Mahathir said what the Government could do was to impart the real teachings of Islam.

But this was marred by the political party instigating teachers not to teach religion to students but other things like "drawing of moon", a reference to Pas which has the moon as its symbol.

"This is what is being taught ...

that's why nowadays we see how easy our children are being influenced by negative things like black metal, committing murders and rapes because their iman (faith) is weak."

Asked by Mohd Apandi Mohamad (Pas-Jeli) on why money politics was not rampant in other political parties except Umno, Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, replied:

"Umno members do not have the heart to use religion as a bribe, so they resort to money. But Pas promises the heaven because (it knows) no one can verify the truth ... those who go to heaven have never returned to tell," he said to laughter from the MPs.