

Eradicate graft, Umno told

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PUTRAJAYA, Wed. — Umno must rid itself of corruption before it can attempt to eradicate this malaise in Government and society.

In a discussion with members of the Umno Youth Culture, Arts and Heritage bureau, former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the party must clean up its house first, before doing so for others.

The bureau's head, Azizul Nizam Bidin, said this was among the issues that Dr Mahathir, who is also former Umno president, touched on in a 45-minute meeting with 30 members of the bureau at the Perdana Leadership Foundation here.

"His (Dr Mahathir's) advice was that members must stop practising corruption and the party must clean itself first, before we try to do it with others," Azizul said when met after the meeting.

Azizul, who is also an Umno Youth executive committee member, said other issues Dr Mahathir spoke on were problems in the Malay community such as sexual crimes and HIV/AIDS.

"His advice to Umno Youth members was that we should strive to remain independent and have high self-confidence.

"He told us to work hard and stay away from corruption and dirty politics," Azizul said.

Dr Mahathir, when asked to elaborate on the subject, declined to comment, except to say that the Government was trying its best to stamp out the practice.

"This should be given prominence instead of us asking what is the moral value of someone sitting on top of a train."

When asked about the request by a nine-year-old boy named Mahathir Mohamad from Desa Mudik in Nias, Indonesia, who wanted to meet him in person, Dr Mahathir said he was willing, but did not know how to do so.

"The boy lives in Nias and I do not know how to go. Unless, of course, *Utusan* (Malaysia) is willing to help me," Dr Mahathir said.

In its issue yesterday, the Malay daily, *Utusan Malaysia*, carried a story of the boy who expressed his wish to meet the former Prime Minister.

"I want to meet him because people say that he is very intelligent," he said.

ONE FOR THE ALBUM: Dr Mahathir with the Umno Youth delegation, led by Azizul (third from right), who earlier paid him a courtesy call. — Bernama picture