

# Dr M: Act now to kill graft culture

*The Star: 26/5/2005: 14*

**PUTRAJAYA:** More and more people are no longer trying to hide the fact that they are corrupt, said Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Voicing his fear that corruption might one day become institutionalised, Dr Mahathir said the Government and political parties must be more serious in tackling the problem.

"Political parties must not allow corruption (to exist). For this they

must be willing to take action against even the most prominent and highest official of the party.

"Otherwise, any of their campaigns to eliminate corruption will not be credible," he said at the Perdana Leadership Foundation discourse on Social Reengineering yesterday.

He said there were indications that corruption might be getting to a point of no return and leaders

were willing to pay money to get elected.

Asked if his statement reflected his concern about money politics in Umno, Dr Mahathir said: "Everybody talks about money politics (in Umno).

"I have been told that this is happening and I am inclined to believe that this is true."

On Umno Youth's call to review the policy of meritocracy, he said it

was up to Umno Youth to go back to the old ways.

However, he said, the organisation needed to understand that meritocracy was introduced "to shake up the Malays" as they had become too complacent and abused the privileges.

"You can give them time and privileges, but if they don't use the opportunities, you can't hold back other people and ask them to wait

while you play catch up. That is wrong," he said.

The New Economic Policy, he said, was not about giving the Malays all the privileges while expecting the other races to wait indefinitely.

It was meant to give the Malays a chance to catch up with the other races but along the way, the policy had been abused and misused by the Malays.