

# PM to Razaleigh and Musa:

# JOIN MY CABINET

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad invited Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and Datuk Musa Hitam today to join the Cabinet as Ministers without Portfolio "for the sake of Malay unity."**

The Prime Minister made the invitation when closing the Umno Baru general assembly, and was given a standing ovation.

The announcement — which Dr Mahathir said he was making as Prime Minister and not as party president — surprised the delegates and others in the Dewan Merdeka of the Putra World Trade Centre.

It came just when it seemed that Dr Mahathir was about to end his speech.

After replying to points raised during the three-day assembly, Dr Mahathir said: "I am now making an announcement as Prime Minister and I hope all the delegates will not be shocked by it."

"Some of you may not like it, but I hope all will stay calm."

"As we all want unity and serious efforts must be made towards achieving this objective, I invite Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and Datuk Musa Hitam to become members of the Cabinet as Ministers without Portfolio."

"This is a sincere invitation and I am doing this as a step towards improving unity of the Malays and Umno."

Dr Mahathir later told a Press conference that he would send letters of offer to Tengku Razaleigh and Datuk Musa soon. "I hope they will accept for the sake of unity."

He said the offer should put to rest allegations that the party had opened its doors to all Malays just before the Parit Raja by-election because it was weak.

"The move (to open membership to all Malays) was sincere as we can see now

that unity in Umno is alive."

Dr Mahathir said it was his prerogative to offer the Cabinet posts to Tengku Razaleigh and Datuk Musa.

He said he discussed the matter with his deputy, Encik Abdul Ghafar Baba, but made the decision to invite the two to the Cabinet only "at the end of the general assembly while I was addressing the delegates."

He said there was no need for a Cabinet reshuffle if the offer was accepted because "there are only two of them and they won't be filling someone else's place."

Asked about other former Ministers and Deputy Ministers who supported Tengku Razaleigh and Datuk Musa, he said: "We do not want a big Cabinet. It is big enough with the two of them in."

The Prime Minister said he would have no problem working with the two who have been critical of his administration since leaving the Government.

"We have said nasty things about PAS and Gerakan and they have said nasty things about us, but PAS was once in the Government and Gerakan still is."

"We can say nasty things but later on we may become good friends, as in the case of SUPP. Datuk Amar Stephen Yong is in the Cabinet."

"I have worked with people who have hurt me before. I think I can work with them."

"When Datuk Musa decided to leave the Cabinet and party, I told him that I was quite willing to work with him if he returned, and he stayed on (as Umno deputy president)," he said.

He also said there was no deadline for Datuk Musa and Tengku Razaleigh to accept the offer.

When asked if the offer was subject to them joining Umno Baru, Dr Mahathir said: "We will discuss this when the time

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comes. My powers go as far as inviting them to join the Cabinet. Umno has opened its doors to all Malays, including both of them."

Asked if the offer was to strengthen his position in the party, Dr Mahathir said: "My position depends on the members. How can I strengthen my political position when it is up to the members?"

To another question, he said he had criticised the two at the assembly before making the offer because "it would be difficult for me just to keep quiet when the others on the floor were talking about them."

He also said that his invitation to Tengku Razaleigh and Datuk Musa for unity talks was still open.

On speculations of a snap elections in April, Dr Mahathir said: "I have 130 members in Parliament who are for me. Is there any reason for it?"