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KUALA LUMPUR, APRIL 27⁹⁰ (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY DESCRIBED THE MOVE BY MALAYSIAN TRADES UNION CONGRESS (MTUC) PRESIDENT ZAINAL RAMPAK TO JOIN SEMANGAT 46, AS A LOSS TO WORKERS.

EXPRESSING DISAPPOINTMENT OVER ENCIK ZAINAL'S ACTION, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THIS SHOWED THAT HE HAD ONLY USED HIS POSITION AS MTUC PRESIDENT FOR HIS POLITICAL INTEREST AND NOT TO LOOK AFTER THE LOT OF THE WORKERS.

ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, SELANGOR SEMANGAT 46 LEADER DATUK HARUN IDRIS HAD CONFIRMED THAT ENCIK ZAINAL'S APPLICATION TO JOIN THE OPPOSITION PARTY WAS RECEIVED TWO MONTHS AGO.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WAS SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AT HIS OPEN HOUSE AT SERI PERDANA WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY ABOUT 8,000 PEOPLE, INCLUDING VIPS AND THE PUBLIC.

HE SAID: +THE NUMBER IS MUCH BIGGER THAN PREVIOUS YEARS.+ -- MORE
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HE SAID HE WAS HAPPY TO HOST THE OPEN HOUSE AND CELEBRATE HARI RAYA WITH THE PEOPLE THIS YEAR BECAUSE LAST YEAR HE WAS ON MEDICAL LEAVE. HE HAD UNDERGONE OPEN-HEART SURGERY AND HAD BEEN ADVISED BY HIS DOCTORS TO REST.

THERE WAS A CONTINUOUS STREAM OF WELL-WISHERS AT THE OPEN HOUSE FROM 10AM TO 5.30PM. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC GREETED THE EVER-SMILING DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR AND HIS WIFE DATUK SERI DATIN PADUKA DR SITI HASMAH MOHAMED ALI +SELAMAT HARI RAYA+ AND SHOOK HANDS WITH THEM.

+THERE WERE VISITORS WHO ASKED ABOUT THE FORTHCOMING ELECTION AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE BARISAN NASIONAL WILL WIN. THERE WERE ALSO OTHERS WHO HOPED TO MEET ME AGAIN HERE,+ DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID. -- BERNAMA