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Mahathir-Razaleigh

NOT UMNO'S TRADITION TO EXTEND INVITATIONS, SAYS DR M

JITRA, April 28 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today there is no need for him to invite Parti Melayu Semangat 46 president Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah to rejoin Umno because it is not the party's tradition to extend invitations.

"According to Umno's tradition, we don't invite anybody to join our party," the Prime Minister and Umno president said.

"I was once thrown out of Umno but I returned (to the party) ...there was no invitation for me to return," he added.

Anyone who wishes to join Umno, including Tengku Razaleigh, needs to apply by filling up an application form, he told reporters at his Hari Raya Aidiladha open house in Dewan Jitra here.

More than 5,000 people of various races attended the open house, including Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Aroff and state executive council members.

Yesterday, Tengku Razaleigh was reported to have said that he did not rule out the possibility of him returning to Umno if there was an official offer from the party.

Asked about the implication on party unity if Tengku Razleigh rejoins Umno, Dr Mahathir said Umno unity will remain as usual.

In KEPALA BATAS, Umno Supreme Council member Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said Tengku Razaleigh should rejoin Umno if he still has strong feelings for the party.

"It is Umno's policy to accept anyone from among Malays and Bumiputeras into Umno and this surely includes those from Semangat 46," he told reporters at his open house here.

He, however, declined to comment when asked why he thought Tengku Razaleigh is still refusing to rejoin Umno.

Meanwhile, Abdullah, who is the Foreign Minister, said there would be no change in Malaysia's policy towards Chechnya following the death of its liberation leader Dzhokhar Dudayev. --BERNAMA

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