

Dr M: I wasn't trying to scare the Malays

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad did not mean to scare the Malays when he said that non-Malays can become prime minister as well.

"It is a political fact that might take place in view of the principles of democracy that we practise in this country," he told Kerk Kim Hock (DAP-Kota Melaka) during question time in the Dewan Rakyat today.

Mahathir added that the principles of democracy in Malaysia are such that any political party which obtains

'Non-Malay PM a political fact that might take place'

the majority votes in the general election can form the government and appoint its leader as prime minister.

"The constitution did not note racial status as a prerequisite to be prime minister, so it is not impossible for non-Malays to take the top leadership post if Malaysians agree to it," he said.

In response to a supplementary question from Datuk

Yusof Yacob (BN-Sipitang), Mahathir said in multi-racial and multi-religious Malaysia, only someone accepted by the people can hold the prime minister's position.

He said if a Chinese can be accepted by the Malays, that person has the right to become prime minister.

"I think the opposition who always instigates racism with its rejection of the rights

of the non-Muslims and proposes moves that scare off the Chinese, will not be accepted by the people," he said.

Instead, he said, a Malay who upholds religious moderation can easily be accepted as prime minister, whereas "the other type (referring to the opposition) can only rule in a few states and become Mentri Besar, that's all".

He also said a prime minister is not as powerful as he is said to be. His powers are controlled by legislation and the type of democracy practised by the country.

• See also Page 10