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Muhyiddin-Premier

MAHATHIR'S STATEMENT NOT UNUSUAL, SAYS MUHYIDDIN

KANGAR, June 19 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement that non-Malays too could become prime minister was aimed at opening up the minds of the Malays towards their political future, Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said today.

He said the statement by the Prime Minister and Umno president was not unusual in a country that practised democracy.

But the present reality is that a Malay from Umno, which is the backbone of Barisan Nasional (BN), serves as the prime minister, he told reporters after meeting Perlis Umno leaders.

"This (non-Malay as the prime minister) may happen in the future but at present the BN component parties accept Umno's leadership," he said.

Muhyiddin, who is Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister, said what was important for the Malays was to always remain united so that they were respected by the other communities in the country.

"I don't think the Prime Minister's statement can weaken Umno," he said when asked if the statement could erode the people's confidence in the party.

Dr Mahathir had said during the MCA general assembly on Saturday that Chinese and Indian Malaysians too could one day serve as the prime minister.

-- BERNAMA

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