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NON-MALAY PM A REALITY IF MALAYS ARE DISUNITED

KUALA LUMPUR, June 19 (Bernama) -- The Overseas Umno Club Alumni Association said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's view about the possibility of a non-Malay becoming the country's Prime Minister can become a reality in the near future if the Malays and Muslims prefer to be in the opposition.

Its chairman Noh Omar said Dr Mahathir was just stating a fact as the Constitution did not say that the Prime Minister must be a Malay.

He said the trend of Malays inclining towards the opposition was obvious in the 1999 general election which saw 32 Malay opposition members -- 27 from PAS and five from Parti Keadilan Nasional -- elected to the Dewan Rakyat from eight previously.

The number of Malay government backbenchers, from the government's backbone Umno, had dropped from 93 in 1995 to 72 after the 1999 election, he said in a statement today.

Noh, who is Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister's Department, said as such the Malays should close ranks to ensure that the coming generation could continue to enjoy the existing kind of life.

The association, whose members are Malay professionals and intellectuals, said the younger generation should realise that the success and peace being enjoyed now were the fruits of Umno's struggle.

-- BERNAMA

MNY NMO YBY