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Remark about non-Malay as PM was not a directive, says Dr M

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told the Dewan Rakyat yesterday that that his statement that non-Malays could in future become the Prime Minister was merely an opinion and not a directive.

He said his would not become reality unless if it was the choice of the people.

"Although my view is being given consideration, it is not a directive," he said in reply to Mohamad Sabu (Pas-Kuala Kedah) who contended that as Prime Minister, his statement "carried" weight and had caused anxiety among Umno members.

To the original question from Kerk Kim Hock (DAP-Kota Melaka) that many had interpreted his statement as a warning to the Malay community, Dr Mahathir said:

"I have made a statement and it is up to people on how they want to interpret it. If the DAP says my statement is welcomed, then say it is welcomed, no need to talk about what the others are saying."

He reiterated that the statement was not intended to inject fear among the Malays.

"We have to remember that Pas has made known its willingness to accept Lim Kit Siang (DAP chairman) as Prime Minister. Is this also an attempt to scare the Malays?"

Replying to Datuk Dr Yusof Yacob (BN-Sipitang), the Prime Minister said he felt Malays espousing politics of hatred and sowing fear among the other races in the country would not be elected Prime Minister.

He said in a multi-racial country like Malaysia, the Prime Minister would have to be someone accepted by all races.

If a Chinese could fulfil this criterion and be accepted by the Malays, it was not impossible that he could gather the support to become Prime Minister.

"But I fear the Opposition which fans racial sentiments like wanting to strip the rights of non-Muslims and instilling fear among the Chinese with various proposals.

"I think people like this will not be accepted by the Chinese and the Indians. But Malays who adhere to the true teachings of the religion and moderation can be accepted."

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