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Anniversary

OTHER MALAY PARTIES INVITED AS OBSERVERS ONLY AT UMNO CELEBRATION

KOTA BAHARU, March 15 (Bernama) -- Malay opposition parties invited to Umno's 50th anniversary celebrations in May will participate only as observers, Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said here today.

They would not be asked to give speeches or take part in any discussion on party matters, he told reporters after a meeting with the Kelantan Umno on the ongoing party membership verification exercise.

He said all Malay opposition parties like PAS, Parti Melayu Semangat 46, Hamim and Berjasa, will be invited to attend the historic event which would be opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is Umni president.

Najib, the Education Minister, said although the celebrations was organised by Umno, he considered as vital the participation by the Malay opposition parties in commemorating the Malay struggles.

"If the Malay opposition parties do not respect the occasion, it would be as though they are denying Umno's struggles to free the Malays from the yoke of colonialism," he added.

He said the opposition parties should accept the fact that Umno had played a vital role.

On the proposal by Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat that PAS might organise a separate function, he said it would mean that PAS did not recognise Umno's struggles.

The history of the nation could not be altered or tempered with, and it should be cherished for posterity, he added. -- BERNAMA

WM AR LDB