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Religious, racial ties on Gerakan agenda

PENANG, Thurs. - Malaysia's economic competitiveness and its inter-religious and racial relations will be among the issues to be discussed at the Gerakan national delegates conference.

The three-day assembly, dubbed the NDC2000, will have its customary opening by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Sept 23.

The assembly, the first outside Kuala Lumpur in 15 years, is expected to draw 2,000 delegates and observers.

The Gerakan Youth and Wanita conferences are scheduled to be held at the City Bayview Hotel on Sept 22 while the NDC 2000 will be held at the Hotel Equatorial on Sept 23-24.

Barisan Nasional component leaders have been invited to the opening, where party president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, in his keynote address, is expected to touch the role of women and youth, the Sauk arms heist and the need to preserve the country's diverse value system.

Another key issue the NDC will address is that State Governments should find ways to fulfil the needs of various religious communities in promoting racial and religious harmony.

"In the light of recent events, we need to be reminded to respect each other's cultures and values," party secretary-general Chia Kwang Chye said today.

Issues relating to Malaysia's competitiveness, in the light of globalisation and the regional economic crisis, will also be discussed, he said.

The 80 resolutions submitted to the party headquarters by various Gerakan State liaison committees will be debated on Sept 24.

Chia also announced Gerakan's "Malam Tanjong Bunga 2000" community event on Saturday night will be held at the Tanjong Bunga Community Hall.

Free medical and eye examinations for children and senior citizens, and multi-cultural performances will be held.

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