

16 SEP 2003

Mahathir-Address

PM TO DELIVER IMPORTANT MESSAGE AT BN GATHERING

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 16 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has an important message to deliver at the 50th anniversary gathering of the Barisan Nasional (BN) on Saturday, BN secretary-general Tan Sri Mohamed Rahmat said today.

He said the prime minister's address would carry special significance as it would be made just weeks before his retirement.

"This will be his last speech to BN members throughout the country. I believe his speech will be important," he told a media briefing at the BN headquarters here on the celebrations.

"But don't regard it as a farewell speech. Because even after he retires, Dr Mahathir will remain an Umno member and a BN member. Whatever it is, he will have something important to say," he said.

The mammoth gathering, themed 50 Glorious Years of Power-Sharing, will begin at 2pm at Stadium Merdeka. More than 50,000 representatives of the 14 BN component parties and the public are expected to throng the historic stadium for the celebrations.

Mohamed said the celebrations were important to remind all BN component members and the younger set on the importance of power-sharing to ensure that Malaysia remained peaceful, progressive and prosperous.

"Power-sharing has been a very important element in shaping our country all this while," he said.

However, many people, especially among the younger generation, did not fully appreciate the concept of power-sharing, he said.

Mohamed said the gathering would be filled with speeches by leaders of BN.

It will begin with a ceremony to raise the BN flag to the accompaniment of the BN song. Those present will then take a pledge.

MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu will be the first leader to make a speech, followed by MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting and Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu Sarawak president Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud, who will be speaking on behalf of the BN components in Sabah and Sarawak.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who is organising chairman, will then speak, followed by Dr Mahathir, the BN chairman.

-- BERNAMA  
RBZ AHH YBY