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BN anniversary celebrations to focus on power sharing

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - The Barisan Nasional 50th anniversary celebrations next Saturday will focus on how the power-sharing formula among the different races has brought about progress to the country, coalition secretary-general Tan Sri Mohamed Rahmat said.

There are still Malaysians who are not aware that the formula, first practised by the country's founding fathers, had helped establish a stable foundation for the country to achieve success in various fields, he added.

Mohamed said when the Alliance - the BN's predecessor - was formed, there was realisation among the leaders then that for the country to progress, it was necessary to share power among the different races.

"Umno, as the dominant party in the Alliance then, could have ruled the country without the help of other races, but Umno leaders realised that it needed the help of the various races to bring development," he said, adding that the formula had brought about peace and stability.

Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting and MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu are scheduled to deliver speeches. They represent the three parties that made up the Alliance.

Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud would also deliver a speech on behalf of all political parties in Sabah and Sarawak.

The highlight of the celebration is Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's keynote address.

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to retire in October, after having led the coalition to victory through five general elections in his 22 years as Prime Minister.

Among the programmes lined up for the day are a guard-of-honour mounted by BN Youth and Wanita leaders and a choir rendering patriotic songs.

Mohamed said the BN spirit was still very much alive and cited the example of Penang where despite Umno having the most seats in the State's legislative assembly, the Chief Minister was a Chinese.

He also expressed confidence that Malaysians would continue to support the BN's power-sharing formula.

"The formula works so well that even the Opposition tries to copy it. But we know that they are not sincere and their form of partnership is doomed to failure," he added.