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`Important to retain BN power-sharing formula'

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - The future of Malaysia depends on whether the winning formula of powersharing set up by Barisan Nasional is maintained by the younger generation, coalition secretary-general Tan Sri Mohamed Rahmat said today.

The nation was built and developed based on the formula, Mohamed said, so it was important that it was retained for the sake of its future. Young people, he added, enjoyed the fruits of the power-sharing formula - peace, harmony and prosperity - without realising that they were to be had only because of the wisdom of the nation's leaders.

He said it was important for young BN members and their generation to appreciate power sharing.

This was one reason why BN chose to celebrate its 50th anniversary on a mega-scale at Stadium Merdeka on Saturday.

Mohamed said that while much of the world was still unable to solve the problems of race, religion and culture, Malaysia had solved them through its power-sharing structure.

"These days, we don't talk about being Malays, Chinese or Indians - we talk about being Malaysians. No one questions the national language anymore, and there were no problems when we pronounced Malaysia an Islamic nation.

"As long as there is fairness (for all races) in power sharing, the people will be able to accept it," he said at a Press briefing for the celebrations.

Themed Kongsu Kuasa Kejayaan Malaysia (Power Sharing is Malaysia's Success), the celebration here is expected to draw a crowd of 50,000 BN members alone, in addition to the general public.

The KL celebration, Mohamed said, was just the start of what would be a nationwide celebration, with all States expected to hold celebrations in the coming months.

"We will have an ikrar (oath taking) to promise the nation that we will work hard for the people. And we hope that the people will continue to support us, particularly in the general election," he said.

On Saturday, Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting and MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu will speak on behalf of the three parties that made up the Alliance, the predecessor of BN, while Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud will speak on behalf of all political parties in Sabah and Sarawak.

The highlight of the celebration will be Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's speech, which Mohamed said would probably be the Prime Minister and BN chairman's last to BN members.

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

"But this (the celebration) is not a farewell to him - he will still be a BN member even though no longer the Prime Minister," said Mohamed.

He also said the deregistered Sarawak National Party had been invited to the celebration as "an old friend", not as a component member.