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50,000 to join Dr M in BN anniversary celebration

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Tomorrow afternoon, the grounds of Merdeka Stadium here will reverberate with sounds of a glorious celebration - Barisan Nasional's 50th anniversary.

Some 50,000 people will join Prime Minister and BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and BN leaders in celebrating 50 years of power-sharing that has brought peace, stability and prosperity to the country.

They will also listen to a speech by Dr Mahathir whom BN secretary-general Tan Sri Mohamed Rahmat has touted as "the nation's warrior".

Dr Mahathir steps down next month after 22 years as Prime Minister. Although Mohamed has pointed out that this would not be a "farewell gathering" for Dr Mahathir, the event is, nonetheless, expected to see some emotional moments.

Another "warrior" and Dr Mahathir's successor, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will also deliver his speech. MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting and MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu will take turns to address the crowd.

Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) president and Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud will speak on behalf of all BN component parties in Sabah and Sarawak.

Members of all the 14 BN component parties together with veteran leaders and those who have supported BN throughout the years will join the celebration, themed Kongsi Kuasa Kejayaan Malaysia (Power-Sharing is Malaysia's Success).

Tomorrow's event is the start of a nationwide celebration, with all States expected to hold celebrations in the coming months.

Mohamed said the celebration would stress the need to preserve the time-tested power sharing formula which has ensured Malaysia's growth and development all these years.

The formula too has laid the foundation for the country's stability and ensured racial harmony over the past 50 years.

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

History, Mohamed said, had made Merdeka Stadium a suitable venue for the celebration.