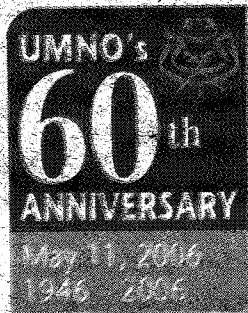


'Malays must emerge as developed race by 2020'

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Today, we are heirs to that trust. Let us honour this trust and continue with our struggle. We shall not limit our struggle to just 60 more years but till the end of time.

Ghani

JOHOR BARU: The Malays have to seize opportunities that will take them to developed race status by 2020.

In a message underlining the fact that time was running out, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the community had only 14 years left to overcome obstacles in its path.

“Failure is not an option. We must achieve the objectives of Vision 2020 and emerge as a developed race,” the Umno president told 60,000 Umno members at the party’s 60th anniversary celebrations at Istana Besar here.

Describing Vision 2020 as a gift to the community, he said it would help the Malays stand tall.

Istana Besar was Umno’s birthplace where Umno founder, Datuk Onn Jaafar, announced the party’s formation in 1946.

The celebrations were also attended by Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Najib Razak and Johor Umno liaison chairman Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman.

Former Umno president Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali were also present.

Abdullah said the Malays had to continue with their struggle and strive to improve their lot.

Only then, he said, would future Umno leaders be able to stand tall and proclaim to the world that the Malays had become a developed race.



Abdullah raising the Umno flag at Istana Besar yesterday. With him are Ghani (right) and Najib (on Abdullah’s right). — NST picture by Khairul Ghazali

“I hope this will happen in 2020,” he said as the crowd erupted into shouts of “*Hidup Melayu*” (Long live the Malays).

He said it would be most unfortunate if Umno leaders let the opportunity to become a developed race slip out of their grasp.

If that happened, Umno leaders would have to scramble later to find excuses to explain why they could not help the community realise its hopes and aspirations.

Earlier, Ghani, who is also Johor Menteri Besar, defended Malay nationalism as advocated by Um-

no, saying it was neither narrow nor parochial.

He said it was magnanimous and accommodating as it fought for the peace, freedom and prosperity of all Malaysians.

“We must never forget that 60 years ago, the Malays gave their lives and put their hope and trust in Umno as they were then in a precarious and threatened position.

“Today, we are heirs to that trust. Let us honour this trust and continue with our struggle. We shall not limit our struggle to just 60 more years but till the end of

time,” he said to thunderous applause.

Ghani said although the past six decades had been fraught with challenges, Umno had overcome them and emerged stronger.

This fighting spirit, he said, should prevail as the party looked to the future with confidence.

The Sultan of Johor, who also spoke briefly, reminded the people that Umno was not an ordinary party.

“Umno was founded on the regal grounds of Istana Besar. Don’t ever forget that,” he said.