

Party leaders upbeat at event

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KUALA LUMPUR: Umno members and leaders from all levels lauded the anniversary celebrations, saying it was crucial in rallying the party for the upcoming general election.

"The celebration also shows that 100,000 people can gather in a peaceful manner without causing disturbance to others like the recent Bersih 3.0 rally," said Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Dr Awang Adek Hussein.

Kuala Krai Umno division chief Datuk Ramzi Abdul Rahman said the gathering was "more than just celebrating Umno's 66th year in existence".

"It is also to show support for the party leadership in view of the coming general election," he said.

He hoped that other organisations would follow Umno's example in organising peaceful gatherings.

Malacca Umno liaison committee working secretary Datuk Akbar Ali said that under Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak's stewardship, Umno had regained its respectability and strength following a battered image after the 2008 polls.

He added that Najib's inclusive approach showed that Umno served the *rakyat*, irrespective of race.

Compared the gathering with the Bersih rally, Akbar said there was a big difference as Umno's was confined to the stadium while Bersih's caused chaos on the streets.

Johor Baru Umno division information chief Abu Talib Alias said the huge crowd at the celebration showed how much the members loved the party.

Rembau Umno division committee member Sulaiman Sidek, 73, was clearly delighted by the mammoth crowd.

"The celebration is fantastic; it increases the *semangat perjuangan* (spirit of struggle) within us."

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