

PRIME MINISTERS OF MALAYSIA

Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj

(1957 - 1970)

CHRONOLOGY

- 1903:** Born on 8th February in Alor Setar, Kedah, to the Sultan of Kedah and Che' Menjalara
- 1913:** Attended Debsurin School in Bangkok, Thailand
- 1915:** Attended Penang Free School, Pulau Pinang
- 1920:** Furthered his studies at St. Catherine's College of Cambridge University, England
- 1925:** Graduated in Law and History
- 1931:** Served in the Kedah Public Service
- 1938:** Served as Sungai Petani District Officer and later in Kulim, Kedah
- 1939:** Married Tun Sharifah Rodziah Barakbah
- 1940:** Appointed Deputy Director of Civil Defense in southern Kedah
- 1941 - 1945:** Japanese Occupation of Malaya
- 1946:** May - UMNO was set up to oppose the Malayan Union
- 1948:** The Federation of Malaya was established to replace the Malayan Union
- 1949:** Elected Kedah UMNO chairman
- 1951:** Elected as President of UMNO, replacing Onn Jaafar who left to set up the multi-racial IMP
- 1954:** Became President of the Alliance
- 1955:** Became member of the Federal Legislative Council
- 1955:** Elected Chief Minister of Malaya, holding the portfolio of Minister of Home Affairs
- 1955:** Led the independence delegation to London
- 1956:** Held additional portfolios as Minister of Defense and Internal Security
- 1957:** Became the Prime Minister of Malaya upon the nation's Independence from the British
- 1959:** Won the Kuala Kedah Parliamentary seat
- 1961:** Proposed the idea of Malaysia, to consist of Malaya, Singapore, Brunei, Sabah, and Sarawak
- 1963:** 16th September - Malaysia was formed, consisting of Malaya, Singapore, Sabah, and Sarawak
- 1963:** Became the first Prime Minister of Malaysia
- 1965:** Singapore seceded from Malaysia
- 1969:** 13th May - Racial riots broke out in KL
- 1970:** Resigned as Malaysia's Prime Minister and President of UMNO; succeeded by Tun Razak Hussein
- 1971:** Became the Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)
- 1973:** Resigned as Kuala Kedah's Member of Parliament
- 1988:** UMNO was declared illegal; Tunku refused to join UMNO Baru
- 1989:** Became advisor of opposition party Semangat 46
- 1990:** 6th December - Passed away at the age of 87 and given a royal funeral

FAMILY

Wife: Tun Sharifah Rodziah Syed Alwi Barakbah (3rd marriage)

Children: Tunku Khadijah & Tunku Ahmad Nerang; Faridah, Sulaiman, & Mariam



IN BRIEF

Remembered as the "Father of Independence", Malaysia's first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, had recognised the vital importance of fostering cooperation among Malaysia's various ethnic groups as a way to overcome political challenges.

The seventh son of the 25th Sultan of Kedah, Sultan Abdul Hamid Halim Shah, and Che' Menjalara, Tunku contested - and won - the Presidential elections of the United Malay National Organisation (UMNO) in 1951. As UMNO President, he established a political coalition with the Chinese and Indians, resulting in the birth of the coalition that is now known as the National Front (Barisan Nasional). Tunku led the negotiations for independence, and on 31st August 1957, the Federation of Malaya declared its independence from the British.

It was also Tunku who envisioned the idea of Malaysia - a federation of Malaya, Singapore (which later seceded in 1965), Sabah, and Sarawak which was established on 16th September, 1963. Tunku is also recognised for his elevation of Islam to the status of official religion and he was instrumental in the setting up of the Organisation of Islamic Conference in 1969, of which he was its first Secretary-General. It can be said that Tunku Abdul Rahman's greatest single achievement was in giving Malaysians a sense of pride and nationhood.