

Altering historical facts is a crime of knowledge - Sultan Nazrin

Malaysiakini

01 October 2020

Altering historical facts is an intellectual crime and a crime of knowledge that denies the right of future generations to obtain real facts, said Perak ruler Sultan Nazrin Shah.

He said that recording, cataloguing and archiving historical material accurately is a duty that must not be compromised.

“A complete historical record plays an important role in helping the country defend its sovereignty and frontiers,” Sultan Nazrin said when officiating the Perak National Archives of Malaysia's new building in Meru today.

Citing the example of the Pulau Sipadan-Ligitan claim in 2002, Sultan Nazrin said Malaysia's success in winning the case was due to the fact that the country has strong evidence of archival material, while the failure to defend the claim to Pulau Batu Puteh (Pedra Branca) in 2008 was due to a lack of that material as the main source of evidence.

His Majesty said the task of archivists is increasingly complex and challenging to meet the demands of researchers who need information easily, accurately and quickly. This is especially so with documents now in electronic form and universal records are accessible to the international community.

“Alhamdulillah (praise be to Allah), the archivists have proven to be sensitive to the dynamics that are taking place by making a paradigm shift, from academic research driven based on the need to know, to information promotion activities and to facilitate easy access to information to the world community,” he added.

The Sultan said that archives no longer play a passive role in collecting and storing materials, but more of an enabler of access; from record keeper to information provider, as well as striving to spark interest and public enthusiasm for history.

Therefore, the need for new services should be matched with the latest infrastructure as well as the willingness of archivists to explore the changing work culture.

“More professional human resources and higher funds are needed to ensure the archives do not end up with a fate similar to a lonely abandoned maritime cemetery, and the archiving profession does not accept the fate of dinosaurs that

are extinct due to being abandoned by the rapidly evolving electronic technology.

“The development in the environment should not be viewed as a threat but to be seen as an extension of new opportunities that inject a more dynamic dimension to the archiving profession,” he added.

Sultan Nazrin, in his speech, also praised the level of professionalism of the archivists as well as the quality, reliability and authenticity of the information in the National Archives which helped him tremendously when he was working on his previous two books. His Majesty is in the process of publishing his third.

The Perak ruler also expressed his appreciation to the federal government for providing the provision to build a modern archive building in Perak and hoped that the National Archives would continue to move forward, on par with international archival institutions.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd

Source: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/544758>