

A testament to Independence

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Tunku's home bears witness to our fight for freedom

ALOR SETAR: Before Malaya gained independence from the British in 1957, various negotiations were held at Rumah Merdeka, the home of Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj in Jalan Putra here.

As a royal prince from Kedah, Tunku Abdul Rahman often returned to the state and stayed at Rumah Merdeka, which became his sanctuary to find inspiration for his writing, as well as a place to collect thoughts and ideas to continue the struggles for independence.

National Archives Perlis/Kedah branch director Abdul Jabar Mohamed Ridi said the house originally belonged to Tunku's mother, Che Manjalara, before she bequeathed it to him, and was often used by the leaders to meet up and plan various political strategies.

Discussions on the policy to win the first federal election in July 1955 were also held at Rumah Merdeka.

"The National Archives took over Rumah Merdeka in 2003.

"Since then it has done its best to repair and conserve the structure of the historical building," he said recently.

According to him, Tunku also often received visitors at the house, located on the banks of Sungai Anak Bukit, a tributary of Sungai Kedah, to hold discussions on various matters including official affairs of the country.

Tunku, the seventh son of Sultan Abdul Hamid Halim Shah, the 24th Sultan of Kedah, was also known for his charming personality and it



Freedom's home: Rumah Merdeka, situated near Sungai Anak Bukit, was named by Tunku Abdul Rahman in 1954 and was used as a base of operations for the 1955, 1959, 1964 dan 1969 general elections. — Bernama

was no big surprise when he led the delegation to London to negotiate the independence of Malaya in early 1956.

Meanwhile, a student from an institution of higher learning, Muhammad Izzat Syafiq Ibrahim, 25, from Kota Sarang Semut near here, said his curiosity to know more about Rumah Merdeka prompted him to visit the two-storey bungalow.

"I was born in Perak, but my parents are from Kedah.

"They told me if I want to know about Tunku Abdul Rahman and the history of Merdeka, I don't have to go to all the way to Kuala Lumpur or Melaka, but just go to Rumah Merdeka because Bapa Kemerdekaan (Father of Independence) was from Kedah.

"It is true, a lot of history was recorded here and I am also amazed to discover that the goodwill mis-



Airy spaces: A view of Rumah Merdeka's living room, as preserved by the Kedah/Perlis branch of the National Archives. — Bernama

sion from Jakarta, which consisted of Indonesian military officers, once came to consult with the late

Tunku at this house on the issue of Malaysia-Indonesia Confrontation," he said. — Bernama