

Malaya Was Never Fully Colonised, Says Historian
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By Erda Khursyiah Basir

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 25 (Bernama) -- Malaya was never fully colonised by the British who instead, merely controlled its administration, said historian Datuk Prof Ramlah Adam.

She said, as proof, the institution of the monarchy was not abolished but played a role in Islamic affairs and Malay customs.

"Although, the British administered Malaya before independence, they did not get rid of the role of the Malay kings because they recognised their role as an important element in the administration of the country...what they did away with were the chief minister (bendahara) and defence minister (temenggong).

"Some parties say Malaya was fully colonised by the British. But, if we refer to history, Malaya was never fully colonised because the Malays prevailed in certain matters," she said in her speech as a panelist in the Malaysian Historical Colloquium at University Malaya here today.

At the colloquium, Ramlah touched on the issue of the struggle for independence, Tuanku Abdul Rahman's struggles and independence, history of the Federation of Malaya and the struggle against the Malayan Union.

"All historians play a role in the struggle for independence in various aspects. So, in order to become a nation of a Malaysian race which thoroughly understands history, we need to refer to the original struggles of past figures.

"But, we must remember that among them were those who were successful and those who were not, as some were straight-forward while there were those who twisted and turned," she noted.

At the first session of the colloquium, Ramlah also touched on Tuanku Abdul Rahman's struggle as the Father of Independence who was picked as the first leader by all communities.

She said the tradition of discussion and give-and-take was the main recipe for success in winning the trust and power to rule from the people.

"Actually, there is no difference between the past and present struggle. Violence is not the correct modus operandi to gain power in a country.

"In the past, we had the leftist and rightist party, now we have the government party and the opposition and, not excluding, in both cases, supporters who are subversive.

"There is no difference. So, I hope history will not be used for personal interests."

Ramlah has written books, carried out historical researches and served as lecturer at the Universiti Malaya and Universiti Teknologi Mara.

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