

MORE THAN 500 PEOPLE ATTEND INAUGURAL FAMILY GATHERING.

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(From Bernama The Malaysian National News Agency)

IPOH, Dec 28 (Bernama) -- More than 500 family members from the fifth and sixth generations of Dato' Jenaton attended an inaugural family gathering here today.

The family members came from throughout the country while others were from Singapore and Australia.

Among family members who attended the gathering held at Dewan Bandaran here was United Nations Special Envoy to Myanmar and Special Advisor to the Prime Minister, Tan Sri Razali Ismail, who was the sixth generation family member of Dato' Jenaton.

During his speech, Razali said Dato' Jenaton and his brother Dato' Setia had established Penang earlier than Francis Light, in the 1730's.

The two brothers from the royal Minangkabau family in Pagar Ruyung, Sumatera, together with 180 other followers, had sailed from Sumatera and had first gone to Kedah.

Dato' Jenaton's family history was closely related to the country's history and had contributed to the rise in nationalism and the creation of the Malay intelligence movement.

This was seen through the involvement of Abdul Aziz Ishak and Yusof Ishak which led to the setting up of the Utusan Melayu newspaper in 1939.

Abdul Aziz had also been appointed as Agriculture Minister under Malaysia's first Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman's cabinet whereas Yusof was Singapore's first president.

A third sibling, Rahim Ishak, had also served as State Minister and ambassador to Indonesia under former Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

Other family members who also held high posts were Tan Sri Wan Sulaiman Pawanteh, a former Federal Court Judge, Datuk Wira Wan Yahya Pawanteh, a former High Court Judge and Datuk Wan Mahmood Pawanteh who was the deputy secretary general in the Information Ministry.

Meanwhile, Razali described the family gathering as unique as it displayed the importance of closeness within a family institution.

"I spent almost all my adult years overseas. I have been to many places... but the one thing that I would never be able to put aside is my love towards my family," he said.

Such family gatherings should be encouraged to foster closer ties between family members, he said.

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