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# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



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## Traditional Political System for Appointment of Menteri Besar Terengganu (1925- 1959)

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### Abstract

The aim of this paper is to document the prominence history of the Menteri Besar of the Terengganu State. There are only two ways to appointment of the Menteri Besar Terengganu, namely through the Traditional Political System appointment by the Sultan of Terengganu from 1925 to 1959 and through the appointment of Contemporary Political Parties which began in 1959 until now. There are some significant gaps in the administrative history record in the state of Terengganu where it requires academic studies to be implemented to unravel the events that took place. This qualitative study uses the Snowball technique with the aim of conducting face-to-face interviews with 5 respondents consisting of the nearest figures and heirs to collect the required premier information. This primary information is then followed by library research in libraries, archives and museums for the purpose of verifying each primary information obtained. The result of this paper is a finding of authentic information for the personnel record, the prominence of the Menteri Besar Terengganu in terms of his administration and struggles. It is hoped that this paper can be used as a source of reference for the study of the history of Terengganu state administration in the future and as a source of historical lessons for the leadership of the Menteri Besar Terengganu today and in the future.

**Keywords:** History of Menteri Besar Terengganu 1925 to 1959, personal character of Terengganu Menteri Besar Appoinment by Sultan, Administration and Struggles of Terengganu Menteri Besar, History of Terengganu state : Figures and Administration, Family and Struggle of Menteri Besar of Terengganu Appoinment by Traditional Political System

### Introduction

The appointment of Menteri Besar Terengganu by DYMM Sultan has started since the reign of the earliest Sultanate of Terengganu which is Sultan Zainal Abidin I in 1708 AD. Records shows that Che Buang was the Bendahara who was appointed to assist the administration in Terengganu. The tomb of Che Buang located next to the tomb of Sultan Zainal Abidin I at the top of Bukit Keledang, Kuala Terengganu shows the closeness between

the Sultan and his aides (Awang, 1992). During the sultanate era, Terengganu's state administration system often changed according to the ruling Sultan's wisdom. During the reign of Sultan Mansor, the position of Bendahara was abolished and replaced with the Prime Minister. The positions of Prime Minister and Chief Minister have existed in the traditional political system in the state of Terengganu since 1708 to 1925 which serve the similar role as the position of Bendahara in Johor. State Executive Council was established which consist of the Sultan and Ministers who are close relatives of the Sultan. During the reign of Sultan Omar who was also called 'Baginda Omar', the policy of a more modern centralized government system was introduced to replace the traditional political system or feudal system. The appointment of Ministers and dignitaries were chosen from the qualified local residents instead of close relatives of the palace. The River King System was introduced to monitor the condition of the entire state that have faster river flow in Terengganu considering that the river was the main transport in Terengganu at that time (Awang, 1992). During the reign of Sultan Zainal Abidin III, his majesty implemented a modernization policy where there were improvements to the centralized system. His Majesty started to establish several important departments but the main administrative base remained in Istana Badariah. Terengganu was the last state in the Malay Peninsula that was successfully colonized by the British. At that time, the British Empire was  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the world including the empires of Turkey, Persia, China and India which previously were the major powers of the world had succumbed to the British Empire. After Terengganu received a British Agent and then a British Advisor, the state's administrative system began to show significant changes. The reason is that Terengganu, an Islamic kingdom 'Malayuwiyah Islamiyah' which has been practicing Islamic administration, education and legal systems for a long time has been included in the administration of the Unfederated Malay States and is subject to British Administrative Law. Local Ministers and Governors were increasingly reduced and Europeans started to hold important positions such as Resident, District Officer, District Engineer, Magistrate, Judge, senior military officer, police and others. Sultan Zainal Abidin III has taken a drastic step by emulating the Johor State Constitution and enacting the Law for the Self-Government of Terengganu dated 2 November 1911, also known as 'Itqan Al Muluk Bita'dil As-Suluk (Ghazali, 1996).

Terengganu has a law on the appointment of leaders. The Sultan or Menteri Besar appointed must meet the conditions stipulated in the Law for the Self-Government of Terengganu. The enforcement of this Law can ensure the sovereignty of the state of Terengganu is guaranteed even if it is colonized by any power. Following that, on 27 February 1917 the position of Deputy Chief Minister was approved by the Yang Dipertuan Muda Terengganu, Tengku Muhammad. Then, on 12 March 1925, the position of Menteri Besar Terengganu was approved by DYMM Sultan Sulaiman Badrul Alam Shah to balance the power of the British Resident in Terengganu. Menteri Besar Terengganu is a Special Deputy, advisor and intermediary for all matters between His Majesty the Sultan and the British Resident (Ghazali, 1996). The position of Menteri Besar Terengganu is a position of Chief Executive in the Kingdom of Malaya or now the Federation of Malaysia. Among five Menteri Besar Terengganu appointed by His Majesty the Sultan for traditional politics, it can be said that they consist of figures from outside Terengganu but are close relatives of His Majesty the Sultan or senior officials in the state administration, Terengganu. The first and third Menteri Besar Terengganu are brothers of second cousin. They are the sixth generation of Bendahara of the Sultanate of Johor Riau Lingga Pahang and its subjugated colonies, the Orang Kaya Setia Wangsa. The second Chief Minister is the great-grandson of the last Sultan of Singapore,

Sultan Hussain (1819-1834), Sultan Mahmud Syah III (1761-1812) and a descendant of the famous Johore Bendahara, Tun Habib Abdul Majid. The fourth Menteri Besar Terengganu is the son of DYMM Sultan Ahmad Pahang while the fifth is a descendant of the Mendailing Sultanate in Sumatra, Indonesia and is a native of Sungai Besi, Selangor (now Kuala Lumpur). Political appointments are only made up of the two dominant parties in Terengganu which is UMNO and PAS (Aziz, 2015).

However, preliminary search results show that information related to the service record and history of the Menteri Besar Terengganu traditional appointment is less accurate. Therefore, this study aims to re-document the history of the traditional appointment of the Menteri Besar Terengganu by using primary sources which are interviews with the heirs of figures and library research through authentic documents such as record of service books, archive records, files in the State Secretary's office, theses and various authoritative monograph materials. To achieve the purpose of the study, this paper is divided into four parts of writing including literature review, research methodology, research findings that cover family aspects, struggle 1 (service before becoming Menteri Besar Terengganu), struggle 2 (services / contributions) and ends with a conclusion. The findings of this study are a record that is rarely known and is hoped to be a source of reference and a source of historical knowledge in the future.

### **Bibliographic Research**

Bibliographic research was carried out in the University Library, Public Library, National Archives of Malaysia and Terengganu State Museum Board to obtain information relevant to the study. Among the institutions from whom references materials were acquired for bibliographic research are the Collection of Terengganu Unit under Terengganu State Public Library, Terengganu State Museum Board Library, UniSZA Library Archives Unit, Tun Sri Lanang Library, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, National Archives of Malaysia Terengganu State Branch and National Archives of Malaysia Kuala Lumpur.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Research Sample**

The study of sample involved 5 respondents who were the heirs of the traditionally appointed Menteri Besar of Terengganu who had served throughout the years 1925 to 1959 as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

*List of Respondents: Heirs of the Menteri Besar Terengganu Appointed by the Traditional Political System (1925 - 1959)*

No	Chief Minister	Respondent
1.	Y.A.B. Dato' Seri Amar Di Raja Haji Ngah Muhammad bin Yusof (21.4.1925 - 28.6.1940)	Dato' Aria Pura Haji Abdul Rahman Bin Muhammad (Son)
2.	Y.B.M. Tengku Seri Maharaja Tengku Omar bin Othman (15.7.1940 - 9.12.1941)	Dato' Tengku Abdul Jalil bin Tengku Omar (Son)
3.	Y.A.B. Dato' Jaya Perkasa Da Omar bin Mahmud (10.12.1941- 1.12.1947)	Puan Zaleha binti Ismail (Grand child)
4.	Y.A.M. Tengku Panglima Perang Tengku Muhammad Ibni Al Marhum Sultan Ahmad (2.12.1947 - 26.12.1949)	Dato' Tengku Omar bin Tengku Salleh (Grand child)
5.	Y.A.B. Dato' Perdana Menteri Di Raja Dato Seri Setia Di Raja Haji Kamaruddin bin Haji Idris (27.12.1949 - 28.6.1959)	Dato' Haji Suhaimi bin Haji Kamaruddin (Son)

### Research Design

The method used in the research of this paper is qualitative research which is Unstructured Interview through the snowball technique. The method of data collection used is the "Face-to-Face Interview Method" which is conducted by the researcher on the respondents who are the heirs of the figures (children or grandchildren) and is compiled using a qualitative method manually. The medium used is a face-to-face interview arranged through a telephone call. Interview sessions will be recorded using a voice recorder and transcribed. The information obtained will be coded according to the themes that have been scheduled.

### Research Findings

*Research Findings (Menteri Besar Terengganu Appointed by the Traditional Political System First Menteri Besar : YAB Dato' Seri Amar Diraja Haji Ngah Muhammad Bin Yusof, C.B.E (21.04.1925- 28.06.1940) - Family*

YAB Dato' Seri Amar Di Raja Haji Ngah Muhammad bin Yusof or Haji Ngah@Muhammad bin Che Yusof. He was born on 19 Zulhijjah, year of Hijrah corresponding to 14 December 1878 in Kampung Tualang, Manir, Terengganu. Haji Ngah Muhammad is the son of Che Yusuf bin Dato' Muhamad through his marriage with Cik Teh. Haji Ngah Muhammad has seven children from two marriages. The first marriage was with Che Teh Fatimah had five children which is Haji Da Mohd Salleh, Haji Su Mahmud, Haji Hitam Hamid, Hajah Embat Khatijah and the second marriage with Hajjah Wook Idris was blessed with two children, Ahmad Said and Haji Abdul Rahman (Dato' Aria Pura). The genealogy of Haji Ngah Muhammad comes from the nobility whose previous generations played an important role in Terengganu State Government. Based on the genealogy, he is descended from a noble bloodline from his ancestor, Che Buang. Che Buang was the son of the Orang Kaya Seri Wangsa Johor who was also a major official who held an important position in the administration of the State of Johor Riau Pahang and its Subjugated Colonies at that time. Che Buang once held the position of Minister during the reign of Sultan Zainal Abidin I which is the same position as Bendahara. His grandfather Dato' Muhamad was a state governor when King Omar ruled Terengganu with the title of Seri Nara Wangsa while his uncle Che Yunus bin Muhamad held the position of Minister with the title of Dato' Bentara Ratna (Awang, 1992). Haji Ngah Muhammad not only received attention and



education from both his parents but also received care and undivided love from his uncle Che Yunus who at that time was a Minister to Sultan Zainal Abidin III. Haji Ngah Muhammad often followed Che Yunus to the palace causing him to receive education, administrative knowledge, religious knowledge and customs which ultimately helped to shape his morals, soul and character. Che Yunus attaches great importance to religious education in his daily life. Accordingly, Haji Ngah Muhammad was taught to write and read in Jawi script. Besides, during that time, the teaching of Islam was very strong in Terengganu. In the report of Hugh Clifford's expedition to Terengganu in 1895 stated that

*"In addition to being peaceful traders and agriculturists, the people of Trengganu are the most zealous Muhammadans in Peninsula, and since religious teaching among the Malays is the beginning of all learning, the standard of culture is comparatively high" (Clifford, 1961).*

Therefore, with the foundation of knowledge given by his uncle, Haji Ngah Muhammad has sought knowledge from prominent religious scholars and teachers at that time. This interest and love for religious knowledge was honed since he was a teenager when he, himself followed Sultan Zainal Abidin III rowing *sampan* from the Palace to Pulau Duyong to study the religious book with the most famous scholar at the time, Haji Wan Muhamad bin Abdullah (known as Tok Sheikh Duyong). Seeing his seriousness in seeking religious knowledge, his uncle sent him to the Holy Land of Mecca to deepen his knowledge of the religion in the land of the prophets. The scholars who once guided him were Sheikh Omar Bajunid and Sheikh Mukhtar bin Attar (Javanese Scholars) in the Haram Mosque, Mecca (Ghazali, 1996). Haji Ngah Muhammad also learned from several scholars including:

- a) Engku Syed Tuan Dalam (Syed Mustafa Al-Idrus)
- b) Tokku Paloh (Syed Abdul Rahman bin Muhammad Al-Idrus)
- c) Tuan Kadhi Sungai Rengas (Haji Mohamad bin Abdul Malik)
- d) Haji Wan Musa (Kelantan Scholar).
- e) Sheikh Said Yamani
- f) Sheikh Salmin
- g) Syed Sheikh Mohamad Al-Azhari (Egyptian Scholar)
- h) Habib Omar

### **Struggle 1 - Services Before and After Appointed as of Menteri Besar**

The exposure to religious education from prominent religious scholars and skill in the intricacies of the king's government and customs have given him an advantage for the socio-economic and religious development of the Terengganu community. A deep understanding of the religion also has helped Haji Ngah Muhammad hugely in practicing an administrative system based on Islamic teachings. Upon his return from Mecca, Haji Ngah Muhammad was requested by Che Yunus to be his assistant. Around the year 1893 until 1900 he was given a position as a Clerk Trainee in the Government Confidential Secretary's Department. For all his efforts and his good and meticulous way of working has pleased the heart of Sultan Zainal Abidin III. Therefore, after the death of his uncle, Che Yunus, Haji Ngah Muhammad was given the mandate to replace his uncle since he had been given exposure and had the skills to handle administrative tasks. In 1903 to 1917, he was appointed as the Government's Confidential Secretary as well as a member of the Government's Council of Ministers.

In 1917, Dato' Seri Amar Di Raja was allowed by the Yang Dipertuan Muda Terengganu Tengku Muhammad Ibni Sultan Zainal Abidin III to hold the position of Naib Menteri Besar in accordance with the Constitution of the Terengganu Government (Clause 30). He has successfully defeated Tengku Chik Ahmad bin Abdul Rahman through voting by local officials. The appointment to this position was held by Haji Ngah Muhammad taking into account that he has a close relationship with Sultan Zainal Abidin III as well as the factor of extensive experience in the field of administration. Due to his profound religious knowledge and morals, DYMM Sultan Sulaiman Badrul Alam Syah conferred the title of Dato' Seri Amar Di Raja to Haji Ngah Muhammad on May 20, 1920 on the day of His Highness enthronement ceremony as Sultan of Terengganu replacing Sultan Muhammad. In 1925, during the reign of Sultan Sulaiman Badrul Alam Syah, Haji Ngah Muhammad was officially appointed under the Terengganu Government Act 1911 as the first Menteri Besar in Terengganu (Ghazali, 1996). His appointment as Menteri Besar Terengganu encouraged him to serve with diligence, trustworthiness and responsibility for the peace and prosperity of Terengganu.

### **Struggle 2 - Services and Contribution**

As the first Menteri Besar in the era of Modern Terengganu, he had his own vision and direction in leading Terengganu which at that time began to face the intervention of the great colonial power, the British Empire. The British at that time were the strongest European imperialists in the world by successfully colonizing not only large imperial countries such as Turkey, China and India but also a large part of the Malay realm (the archipelago). Terengganu is the last state that needs to be colonized to complete the '*jigsaw puzzle*' of the British Empire or British Malaya. As someone who strongly adheres to religious teachings, Haji Ngah Muhammad tried his best to delay the entry of British power in Terengganu. Nevertheless, the leadership of a Menteri Besar was tested when Terengganu was hit by a major flood known as the "Red Flood" which paralyzed the state's economic activities in 1926 including the suffering experienced by the people. While recovering from this situation was difficult, the government under his leadership was tested once again when the Land Law 1921 came into force. The enforcement of the Land Law 1921 brought complaints from the people until it was known by the government. Therefore, he has taken the initiative by personally meet the people to listen to their grievances and difficulties faced, and then take appropriate action to solve the issues. However, due to the misunderstanding of the implementation of this law among the folk, it has led to the outbreak of a 'Peasant Rebellion' in Padang Kachung, Kuala Telemong, Hulu Terengganu on May 23, 1928 which caused 12 deaths. In addition, he was also tested by the cunning British Advisor who was constantly trying to find a way to intervene more widely in the Terengganu state administration. His views and thoroughness with the intrigue of every British plan succeeded in protecting the sovereignty of the state of Terengganu. Among them, he vehemently rejected any proposal to build a church in Terengganu, did not accept the Governor's suggestion to close the Terengganu Customs Department, rejected the deployment of British troops in Terengganu and rejected British nationals as Judges in the Terengganu High Court because he considered Terengganu as a sovereign Islamic state and had been practicing Islamic law for a long time. Hence, judges from Europe cannot ever judge the case of Muslims, nor can western laws be enforced on Muslims (Ghazali, 1996).

Facing these challenges and the experience of managing the state under the rule of three Sultans which are Abidin III (1881-1918); Muhammad II (1918-1920); Syah (1920-1940)

became a guide for him to contribute a great service to the people of Terengganu. Among the services and changes he has contributed are

- i) Drafting of Itqan Al-Muluk Bii'tadil As-Suluk (Law for the Government of Terengganu 1911).
- ii) One of the founders that establish the modern Madrasah and Religious School in Terengganu.
- iii) Introducing Court Order Law No. (4) for the year 1340H (1921)
- iv) Introducing Terengganu Government Official Salary Regulation No. 7 1343H (July 21, 1925).
- v) Officially opening the iron ore mine at Bukit Besi (1928).
- vi) Introducing Salary Regulations for positions in the Department of Religion No. (4) for the year 1347H (8 June 1929).
- vii) Introducing Khadi Court Regulation No. (2) for the year 1348H (January 1, 1930).
- viii) Build the road from Terengganu to Kelantan as well as inter-district roads which were officially opened on 19.4.1932.
- ix) Introducing the Law to register marriage and divorce for Muslim (October 30, 1937).
- x) Introducing Order of the Mosque Officers on Friday (July 27, 1939).

He also held several important positions in the state such as Terengganu Religious Affairs Commissioner (1932 - 1940), Judge and as Acting Sultan for several times. While serving as Commissioner of Religion and Justice, he made changes in the administrative structure of the Terengganu Religious Office in 1932. His Majesty the Sultan's trust in Haji Ngah Muhammad was so high that he was appointed as regent for three times, from 16 September 1937 to 1 October 1937, 10 February 1938 to 28 February 1938 and 7 January 1939 to 22 March 1939. His leadership and devotional service in Terengganu administration was needed until the end of his life when he died on Friday 28 June 1940 corresponding to 22 Jamadilawal 1359H due to a heart attack. At that time he was still holding the position of Menteri Besar of Terengganu. The body of the deceased was buried at the Sheikh Ibrahim Cemetery, Jalan Pusara, Kuala Terengganu.

### **Second Menteri Besar : YBM Tengku Seri Setia Raja Tengku Omar Bin Tengku Othman, O.B.E. (16.07. 1940- 9.12.1941) - Family**

YBM Tengku Seri Setia Raja Tengku Omar bin Tengku Muda Othman bin Tengku Abdul Jalil Ibni Almarhum Sultan Hussain Muazzam Shah, is the second Menteri Besar Terengganu. He is a close relative of His Majesty Sultan as he is the great-grandson of the last Sultan of Singapore, Almarhum Sultan Hussain Muazzam Shah Ibni Almarhum Sultan Mahmud Shah Alam, which also a relative of the Sultans of Johor, Riau Lingga, Pahang and their subordinate colonies, Sultan Mahmud Shah III (1761- 1834) as well as descendants of the 19th Bendahara of Johor named Bendahara Tun Habib Abdul Majid. Tengku Seri Setia Raja was born on 17 December 1884 at the palace of the Singapore Sultanate. Tengku Omar married three times, first with YM Tengku Badariah binti Tengku Chik Bakar, secondly in 1927 with YM Raja Zainab binti Raja Alang and thirdly with Hajah Nik Maimunah binti Shaik Nik Abdullah on 9 October 1933. From the marriages, he was blessed with four a prince and four princesses. His daughter with Raja Zainab, Tengku Intan Zaharah, married the 14th Sultan of Terengganu, His Majesty Sultan Ismail Nasirudin Shah, and ascended the throne in 1945 as the Sultanah of Terengganu and became known as Her Majesty Tengku Ampuan Besar Terengganu. He was appointed during traditional politics by His Majesty the Sultan of Terengganu, Sultan Sulaiman Badrul



Alam Shah on 16 July 1940. However, he resigned from the main service of the state government on 9 December 1942 due to health reasons. On April 26, 1944, when the whole of Malaya was still under Japanese occupation during the Second World War, he was 60 years old and due to his deteriorating health, YBM Tengku Seri Setia Raja Tengku Omar died and was buried at the Sheikh Ibrahim Cemetery, Jalan Pusara, Kuala Terengganu.

### **Struggle 1 - Services Before and After Appointed as of Menteri Besar**

Before appointed as Chief Minister of Terengganu, Tengku Seri Setia Diraja was a Post Office Officer on 1 January 1911. From 30 November 1913 to 26 September 1919 he was also appointed as Acting Manager, Terengganu Post Office. After that, on 29 September 1919, Tengku Seri Setia Diraja was entrusted to hold two positions simultaneously as Assistant and Deputy Secretary of Government and at the same time he was also appointed to the position of Acting Terengganu State Secretary (SUK Terengganu) on 2 October 1920 to 4 October 1921 (Secretary of the Terengganu State Government, 1921)<sup>1</sup>. On 23 August 1922, he was appointed to hold the position as the third Terengganu State Secretary and a member of the Government Council and was appointed as a Wazir and Minister. Apart from his position as Terengganu State Secretary, he was also appointed as regent in 1930 and 1937, *Pemangku Khazanah Besar* in 1934, Head of State Ceremonies starting on January 1, 1935, and also a Judge at the Court of Appeal from 1935 to 1940. After holding various positions including being trusted by the Sultan as regent several times in 1928, 1930, 1935, 1936 and 1937, he was finally appointed as the second Chief Minister of Terengganu on 15 July 1940 (Terengganu Government's High Department, 1940<sup>2</sup>) to replace YAB Dato' Seri Amar DiRaja Haji Ngah @ Muhammad bin Yusof who has died. While administering Terengganu when it was still under British rule, he was awarded the Order of the British Empire (O.B.E) by His Majesty King George VI, Emperor of Great Britain on January 1, 1941. The title of Tengku Seri Setia Raja was also awarded by DYMM Sultan Sulaiman Badrul Alam Shah on February 22, 1921. Due to health factors, he applied to retire on December 9, 1941.

### **Struggle 2- Services and Contribution**

When Tengku Seri Setia Raja Tengku Omar held the position of Menteri Besar, Terengganu was still under British rule. Many historic buildings and roads, especially the East Coast route that connects the state of Terengganu with Kelantan and Pahang, were built during his administration. In addition, he also played a role in appointing Sheikh Hassan bin Said Yamani as mufti of the Terengganu State Government on September 9, 1940. He also strengthened the management of the State Mosque (Masjid Abidin) by appointing a total of three imams and three bilals on duty. All imams and bilals were instructed to read the Quran and '*berzanji*' every Monday and Friday night. This implementation was followed by the next Menteri Besar. Tengku Omar was an administrator who able to manage the state of Terengganu wisely during the British occupation. Although there were some changes during the British occupation, he

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<sup>1</sup>Credential Letter of Appointment as Secretary of the Terengganu State Government dated 31 December 1921 corresponding to 2 Jamadil Awal 1340H.

<sup>2</sup>Following a letter of recommendation for his appointment as Menteri Besar by GAC de Maubray (MCS), Terengganu's British Advisor dated 8 July 1940 and a letter of approval for the appointment by Sultan Sulaiman Badrul Alam Shah dated 10 July 1940. The letter of appointment was issued by the Terengganu Government's High Department effective on July 15, 1940.

continued to govern the state of Terengganu well until he retired on 9.12.1941 due to health reasons when he was 57 years old, which was when the Second World War had just started.

### **Third Menteri Besar: YAB Dato'Jaya Perkasa Da'Omar bin Mahmud, CMG., M.B.E. (10.12.1941- 01.12.1947) - Family**

YAB Dato' Jaya Perkasa Da Omar bin Mahmud was born in Kampung Keling, Kuala Terengganu in 1891 corresponding to 1309 H. The current location of the village is in front of Pasar Kedai Payang up to Kampung Tanjung, near of Bukit Puteri, Kuala Terengganu City. He got his early education at Kampung Keling Malay School, Kuala Terengganu. He has a blood relationship that is second cousin to Dato' Seri Amar Di Raja Haji Ngah Muhammad Yusof, the first Menteri Besar of Terengganu and his family tree is from the same line which is from the sixth generation of Bendahara Che Buang, the son of Orang Kaya Seri Wangsa Johor. Che Buang held the position of Bendahara, Treasurer and Menteri Besar during Sultan Zainal Abidin I where his grave is next to the Sultan's tomb at Bukit Keledang Royal Tomb, Kuala Terengganu. Da Omar has been married twice, first to Wan Wook Mariam binti Haji Mohd Ali and second to Che Teh binti Lembek. As a result of sharing life with Wan Wook Mariam binti Haji Mohd Ali was blessed with four children namely Che Embong @ Ali (Dato' Setia Jaya), Che Abdul Rahman, Che Su and Che Mariah.

### **Struggle 1 - Services Before and After Appointed as of Menteri Besar**

He started his service in the government as the Terengganu Court Clerk on 14 February 1907 corresponding to 1325H, Court Registrar in 1908 corresponding to 1326H, Chief Clerk of Police and Magistrate in 1912 corresponding to 1331H and Chief Clerk of Police and Prosecutor on 9 November 1915 corresponding to 1334H. Later, he served as Acting Commissioner of Paka on 8 June 1917 corresponding to 1335H, Acting Commissioner of Kertih in 1920 corresponding to 1339H and Commissioner of the Three Colonies and Deputy Kadi on 24 August 1922 corresponding to 1341H. In 1924, he was transferred to Kemaman with the position of Eastern Commissioner until 1933. During his tenure as Eastern Commissioner of Kemaman, he was entrusted with the position of Kemaman Special Court Judge in 1924 and was appointed as a member of the State Executive Council from 1927. In 1933 he changed to the position Head of Syahbandar Customs until 1939 and held several other positions such as *Pemangku Sementara Khazanah Besar* (1933, 1934 and 1937), Town Council Committee (1935), Judge at Court of Appeal (1937) and Acting Head of Education (1938). He then held the position of Fish Officer in 1939. On July 15, 1940, he was appointed as State Secretary (SUK) until 1943. While serving as State Secretary, he was also appointed to the Cabinet on September 16, 1940 and held several important positions such as Court of Appeal Judge on 19 November 1941. He was also entrusted to be Acting Chief Minister on 30 January 1941 until 28 April 1941 and 20 July 1941 until 30 November 1941 and a regent on 31 March 1941 until 27 April 1941, 27 October 1941 until 19 November 1941, 5 April 1942, 7 times in 1946 and the lastly on 7 December 1947. On 10 December 1941, he was then appointed as the third Chief Minister to replace YBM Tengku Seri Setia Raja Tengku Omar bin Othman who retired due to health reasons when the Second World War had just started.

### **Struggle 2 - Services and Contributions**

Serving as Menteri Besar Terengganu around 1941 to 1947 was one of the challenging years as during this period there was Japanese occupation, chaos due to the tyranny of the Japanese army, the protection of Siamese power, the transition period of the *Bintang Tiga*

which shows rampant communist brutality, the return of the British Military Administration and the controversial replacement of His Majesty the Sultan of Terengganu. All these events require wisdom and thoroughness in every action and decision taken to protect the sensitivity of the state's interests. On December 22, 1941, which was the 12th day Da Omar became Chief Minister, the Japanese imperialist army began to occupy and colonize Terengganu. The entry of Japan into Terengganu has greatly changed the administrative landscape of the state which has been under the British administrative pattern (Ghazali, 1996). This includes his role as Menteri Besar Terengganu which is of course subject to the Japanese military administration system. The Japanese administration in Terengganu is based on five main offices as follows:

- i. *Cuji Keimu-nu* Office (Special Office for Mr. Syuciji Terengganu)
- ii. *Somu-bu* Office (General Office)
- iii. *Zaimu-bu* Office (Treasury Office)
- iv. *Sangyo-bu* Office (Business Office)
- v. *Kotsu-bu* Office (Transportation Office)

The Japanese army has changed almost the entire administrative system and functions of the existing state government offices (Ghazali, 1996). The duties and roles of the State Secretary Office and the Chief Minister Office have been abolished and replaced by the *Syngishitsu* Office and the *Syomuka* Office while the Cabinet of Ministers and State Assembly systems have been dissolved. For the administration of each district in the state of Terengganu such as Kuala Terengganu is under the control of *Syucij* (Governor) while other districts are administered by the Japanese Colonial Commissioner. In each colony, a Malay leader called *Gunco* was placed. Meanwhile, the sultan's authority is still maintained but only in matters related to religious affairs, customs and the Malays. Although Terengganu was under Japanese administration, Terengganu during his leadership still managed to maintain tin production as a source of state income. In 1941, Terengganu managed to obtain RM1,014,362.00 from tin ore production from the four largest areas which is Bandi, Tebak, Sungai Ayam and Kajang in Kemaman district. On October 18, 1943, the Terengganu state administration changed again as a result of the Thai-Nippon Agreement, where the Japanese army handed over the administration of Terengganu to Siam because it was indebted to Siam during the beginning of the Second World War<sup>3</sup>.

Despite being under the patronage of Siam, Terengganu has been able to manage its own administration because Siam does not practice the *Rathaniyon* policy or cultural policy in Terengganu. Siam, on the other hand, handed over state administration affairs to the Sultan, Chief Minister and the State Council known as *Montri Sapha*. Hence, during the Siamese administration, the Chief Minister institution was able to served its purpose once again unlike during the Japanese military administration. At that time, Terengganu was facing basic food supply crisis and economic inflation in which the price of goods increase extremely as a result of the Second World War's crisis. As Terengganu was under the auspices of the Siamese administration, Terengganu received allocations from the Thai High Commissioner, P. Ratanakich on December 14, 1943. As soon as the State Council functioned again after almost

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<sup>3</sup>From 1942 to 1943 Terengganu was administered by the Japanese Army while from 1943 to 1945 Terengganu along with Kelantan, Kedah and Perlis were administered by the Siamese Army administration. This is due to the alliance between Japan and Siam in 1938 which is before the Japanese army launched an attack on Malaya on 8 December 1941.

2 years of being abolished by the Japanese government, Da Omar took drastic measures to reduce the people's burden due to inflation by utilising all the allocations obtained which amount to RM5000 are distributed directly to the poor in each district to buy basic food such as rice and cassava. The difficulties faced at that time caused Da Omar to take measures to impose rations on the purchase of rice. Because of his concern and actions, the people of Terengganu were able to face the inflation of rising prices, especially the rice shortage crisis compared to other states. The Japanese army surrendered to the Allies on August 15, 1945. The presence of a new adversary, the Bintang Tiga communists, who started to impose violence and oppression between 1945 and 1948, prevented the prosperity that was anticipated. However, the most acute communist violence in Terengganu only occurred in 1948. Under the administration of Da Omar, Terengganu was also temporarily governed by the British Military Administration that had returned to colonize Terengganu (Ghazali, 1996). December 1945 considered as the starting point for the awakening of the people of Malaya when Sir Harold Mac Micheal was assigned to request the signatures of the Malay Kings to approve the establishment of the Malayan Union. Open opposition, including from the Terengganu government represented by Sultan Ismail along with the Malay rulers and the people, rejected the formation of the Malayan Union on April 1, 1946. The opposition failed to block the Malayan Union, which continued from April 1, 1946 (Ghazali, 1996).

Throughout his service in Terengganu administration, he has received various awards including the title of Dato' Jaya Perkasa in 1923 corresponding to 1342H in conjunction with the Birthday of His Majesty Sultan Sulaiman Badrul Alam Shah, Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) on 11 May 1937 and Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG) on 1 January 1947 from His Majesty King George VI, Emperor of Great Britain. In memory of his services and sacrifices to Terengganu, the state administration has immortalized his name on a road in the town of Chukai, Kemaman with the name Jalan Da Omar. On March 17, 1953 at the age of 62, he died and was buried at the Abidin Mosque Royal Tomb Complex, Kuala Terengganu.

#### **Fourth Menteri Besar : YAM Tengku Panglima Perang Tengku Muhammad ibni Al Marhum Sultan Ahmad (01.02. 1948-31.01.1950) - Family**

Tengku Muhammad ibni Almarhum Sultan Ahmad is the youngest son of the late Sultan Ahmad (Sultan of Pahang) and his mother Enche Timah binti Haji Talib. He is the only son of his mother. On Sunday 4 Jamadilawal 1319, which corresponds to 18 August 1901, he was crowned at Istana Bandar Pekan, Pahang. His early education started at Pekan Malay School and on 12 October 1913 he was sent by his father to continue his education at Kuala Kangsar Malay College, Perak. He was the first son of Sultan Ahmad to be selected to continue his studies at the most prestigious Malay College at that time. Tengku Muhammad married twice. The first marriage with Raja Nur Akmal, the royal family of Perak was blessed with three children including Tengku Indera, Tengku Ismail and Tengku Nur Akmal. The second marriage with Tengku Mandak Aishah binti Tengku Mustaffa was blessed with nine daughters and one son including Tengku Hasnah (Tengku Asmak), Tengku Zainon, Tengku Afzan (The Queen of Sultan Ahmad Syah Pahang), Tengku Zainab, Tengku Ibrahim, Tengku Atikah, Tengku Hashimah, Tengku Hasniza, Tengku Adlah and Tengku Lat Fatimah.

**Struggle 1 - Services Before Appointed as of Menteri Besar**

On September 1, 1918, the Pahang state government appointed him as a Malay Officer Trainee in Pahang when he had not finished his studies at the Malay College Kuala Kangsar. On 10 November 1920, he was promoted to Assistant Police Commissioner of the Federated Malay State Government located in Kuala Lumpur. On 23 March 1924, the Government of the Federated Malay States added an honorary position by appointing him as Special Entourage to His Excellency the British High Commissioner in Terengganu. On 16 March 1925, he was promoted to Assistant Police Commissioner of Terengganu. He was posted to Terengganu because at that time, the Terengganu state government required a Malay officer to fill the position of Assistant Commissioner of Police, which is the same position as the Terengganu State Police Chief today. Based on his qualifications and experience, the Federal government has sent Tengku Muhammad to fill the position. After serving the Terengganu government for more than eight years, he was temporarily assigned to Kuala Lumpur for eight months. Then, His Majesty the Sultan of Pahang agreed that his son, Tengku Muhammad be by his side. So he resigned from the position of Assistant Police Commissioner of Terengganu on May 1, 1934 and returned to Pahang to serve in his own state. While in Pahang, various positions held by Tengku Muhammad. He was appointed as the Malay Secretary to replace the position vacated by His Highness Tengku Arif Temenggong Pahang. While in that position in 1937, the Pahang government appointed him as a Member of the Pahang State Assembly. In April 1937, he became an unofficial Malay Member representing the state of Pahang in the Federal Council Meeting, taking the seat vacated by His Highness the Tengku Besar of Pahang. While serving in Pahang, he was also appointed as chairman of sub-committees in various state administration affairs and once accompanied the departure of His Majesty the Sultan of Pahang to England to attend the coronation ceremony of His Majesty King George VI, Emperor of Great Britain in 1937. He was given the title of Tengku Panglima Perang upon the death of his brother, Tengku Panglima Perang Tengku Jusoh ibni Almarhum Sultan Ahmad. His Majesty the Sultan of Pahang bestowed the title in a ceremony held at Balairung Seri Istana on 28 May 1940.

Around 1940, the Malays throughout the Malay Peninsula began to rise up in Malay national unity. In Pahang, he together with his friend Handai and the public agreed to establish an association for the Malays in Pahang named the Pahang Malay Association with the appointment of Tengku Muhammad as the First President. He held the position for two years. In April 1946, he moved to Terengganu and held the position of Head of the Industry and Business Office for a year and later held the position of Head of the Town Office. After seven months in that position, he continued to lead the people of Terengganu and became the Chairman of the Terengganu Malay Association.

**Struggle 2 - Services and Contributions**

Throughout the service, he circulated between the states of Pahang, Terengganu and Kuala Lumpur. He was among the first Malays to rise up in fighting up for the homeland to defend the fate of the nation and the sovereignty of the Malay kings as recorded in the national history leading to the independence of Malaya. This is proven by his appointment as the Chairman of the Malay Association in Pahang and Terengganu. The voice of the people in Malaya was acknowledged when they were able to reject the Malayan Union Agreement in 1946 which led to the establishment of the Federation of Malaya. This unification has brought



a blessing to the states in Malaya especially to him who at that time served as Menteri Besar Terengganu on February 1, 1948 (Secretary of the Terengganu State Government, 1948<sup>4</sup>).

His contribution before becoming Menteri Besar was also very large and thus justifying his appointment as Menteri Besar Terengganu even though he was not a local native. This is due to the local population at that time did not have skills and experience comparable to his. Throughout his service as Assistant Police Commissioner of Terengganu, he showed satisfactory performance in compiling police regulations for the state of Terengganu. This was proven when he managed to organize a movement as an effort to detect and break the rebellion that occurred in 1927 before it got out of hand (Hamzah, 1977). The disciplined service and the quality of the work done by him has attracted the attention of the British government administration. To appreciate and recognize the services he has done, His Majesty King George VI, the Emperor of the United Kingdom awarded him a C.M.G. star on January 1, 1934. On 26.12.1949 he resigned as Chief Minister of Terengganu for personal reasons. On February 1, 1951 His Majesty the Sultan of Pahang appointed him as Chief Minister of Pahang and remained in that position until January 8, 1957. Tengku Muhammad passed away at the Pahang Government Meeting Hall, Kuantan, Pahang at about 9.20 am when he is expected to lead a meeting to discuss matters related to the celebration of the Silver Jubilee of His Majesty the Sultan of Pahang.

#### **Fifth Menteri Besar : Dato' Perdana Menteri Di Raja Dato Seri Setia Di Raja Haji Kamarudin bin Haji Idris, MBE, P.P.T, P.J.K. (18.12.1950- 28.06.1959) - Family**

YAB Dato' Perdana Menteri Di Raja Dato' Seri Setia Di Raja Haji Kamaruddin bin Haji Idris (hereinafter referred to as Kamaruddin) was born on 31 May 1904 in Kampung Sungai Besi, Selangor. Kamaruddin's father, Haji Idris bin Abdul Ghani Harahap, and his mother Siti binti Sheikh Ahmad @ Marah Hukum came from the royal family of the Sultanate of Mendailing, Sumatra, Indonesia. Haji Idris ibni Sutan Abdul Ghani Harahap ibni Sutan Kali Selamat Boru Soti Gunung Tua Mandailing is a local ruler (called Sutan) for a region in Sumatra along with loyal followers who fought to the death in the struggle against Dutch colonialism through the Dutch East India Company or known as *Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC) but they have lost. This is because the local government in the surrounding region has conspired with the Dutch Company causing them to run to save themselves. If caught, they would be sentenced to death because they were considered rebels or traitorous enemies who did not support the administration of the Dutch company. The pull factor at that time caused many of them to migrate to the state of Selangor. The state of Selangor at that time was one of the largest tin ore producers in the world and was an easy source of sustenance for the Malays of Sumatra because they had expertise in mining activities in Sumatra which was indeed rich in gold, silver, tin and iron ore. At the same time in the state of Selangor there was chaos and political unrest as a result of the endless civil war between the Sultan of Selangor and his close relatives<sup>5</sup>. The Sultan of Selangor at that time had asked for help from the leader of the Sumatran Malays (Mendailing) namely Haji Idris (father of Kamarudin) and Haji Abdul Jalil (also

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<sup>4</sup>Certificate of appointment of YAM Tengku Panglima Perang Tengku Muhammad as Menteri Besar of Terengganu by DYMM Sultan Ismail Nasiruddin Shah through letter SUK Tr Bil 19/48 dated 1 February 1948.

<sup>5</sup> The Kelang War is a Civil War in Selangor that occurred due to the rulers quarrelling and fighting each other to control the Tin Mining area.

a descendant of Sumatran Sultan) to defeat his enemy. This civil war was finally won by the Sultan of Selangor. As a reward and in return for their services, both were appointed as Penghulu. Haji Idris (Kamarudin's father) was appointed as Penghulu in Petaling Area while Haji Abdul Jalil Nasution (Kamarudin's father-in-law) became Penghulu in Ulu Langat Area. At that time, Penghulu in Selangor had the same power as a Governor in an area as large as a district today. As a sign of friendship, Kamarudin was betrothed to Penghulu Ulu Langat's daughter so that the bond of friendship would become a lasting brotherhood. Kamaruddin had married Aminah binti Abdul Jalil Nasution who was 16 years old at the time. As a result of their life sharing, they were blessed with seven children namely Zulkifli (Dato'), Zumanah, Zauwiah, Azmi (Tan Sri), Azizah, Mariah and Suhaimi (Dato').

### **Struggle 1 - Services Before and After Appointed as of Chief Minister**

Kamarudin received his early education at the Victoria Institution, Kuala Lumpur and later continued his studies at Malay College Kuala Kangsar, Perak. He had served in the British civil service as a Probationary Officer of the Administration Branch of Malay College Kuala Kangsar, Perak on 22 June 1920. Then, on 1 March 1923, he was appointed as an Acting Officer of the Selangor State Secretariat. In 1926, he held the position of Acting Assistant District Officer of Sabak Bernam, Selangor. In the following year, 1927, he was promoted to fill the vacant position of Deputy Assistant District Officer of Kuala Kangsar, Perak. He was then transferred to Kuala Selangor with the position of Acting Assistant District Officer of Kuala Selangor in 1929. On 1 March 1935, he was promoted to the position of Malayan Civil Service (MCS)<sup>6</sup>. This position is equivalent to the current Administrative and Diplomatic Officer and is a key position in the British civil service. He is one of the first three Malays to hold the position of MCS. In 1937 he was again transferred to the state of Perak to fill the position as Acting Assistant District Officer of Ipoh, Perak. He was later promoted to District Officer of Kuala Kubu Bharu, Selangor. It turns out that his early service records were based between the states of Selangor and Perak only. This is because he is from Selangor and continued his college studies in the state of Perak, which is at Malay College Kuala Kangsar.

During the Japanese occupation of Malaya around 1941, he served as District Officer of Kuala Kubu Bharu, Selangor. Due to his strong nationalist nature and dislike for colonialists, he was deliberately found to have refused to sing the Japanese national anthem 'Kimigayo' during a gathering with staff in his office compound. This act came to the knowledge of the Japanese military administration causing him to be found guilty and imprisoned in Pudu Prison, Kuala Lumpur for three years. During the period of detention, he firsthand witnessed the brutality of the Japanese army against the prisoners in Pudu Prison with various kinds of inhumane torture that changed his character and personality after that. The position of his prison cell is in the middle corner of the prison so he can clearly see every punishment carried out. Among the punishments he remembers is the incident of a prisoner being tied up, stripped and placed in an insect nest (fire ants and weaver ants). The prisoner's cries for help traumatized him for the rest of his life. The conditions in the prison at that time were very bad. Many prisoners have starved to death due to lack of food. Nevertheless, Kamarudin is

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<sup>6</sup> The first MCS to appoint Malay officials consisted of three people namely Raja Tun Uda Al Haj bin Raja Muhamed, Dato' Panglima Bukit Gantang Dato' Seri Haji Abdul Wahab bin Toh Muda Abdul Aziz and Dato' Perdana Menteri Diraja Haji Kamarudin bin Haji Idris (Encyclopedia of Malay History and Culture published by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, p. 2034)

still considered lucky because during his imprisonment, his wife took a drastic step by moving from Kuala Kubu Bharu to Kampung Baharu, Kuala Lumpur which is close to Pudu Prison. With the ingenuity of his wife, food supplies could be sent through the Pudu Prison Guard who sympathized with Kamarudin. The Prison Guard had brought in *nasi himpit* (compressed rice) tied neatly to the calf and secretly gave it to Kamarudin. It was only with the supply of *nasi himpit* that Kamaruddin was able to survive in the custody of the Japanese army until the World War ended and the Imperialist Japanese army surrendered to the Allied forces on 15 August 1945.

After the Second World War ended, Kamaruddin was released from Pudu Prison. Malaya was reoccupied by the British colonialists. Since he was the most educated prisoner and had held the position of District Officer during the British administration, the British administration<sup>7</sup> at that time appointed him as the Superintendent of Pudu Prison. The highest officers of the Japanese army and Japanese Prison Officers who have surrendered are now prisoners of their custody in Pudu Prison. This situation indeed allowed him to retaliate against all forms of cruelty committed by the Japanese army in the past. Although he had the power to retaliate against the brutality that the Japanese military officers had done to him, the opposite happened. He never once came across doing such an act and treated Japanese military officers fairly and appropriately as prisoners of war. He has shown a high humanitarian attitude and did not retaliate against all the cruelty that was done to him by the Japanese army. The Japanese military officers were very surprised and even admired the character and noble values of the Malays.

On April 1, 1946, the British government was trying to implement the idea of "Malayan Union"<sup>8</sup> in Malaya. The plan to form the Malayan Union was made when the Labour Party became the ruling party in Britain in August 1945 (Ghazali, 1996). On 10 October 1945, the Malayan Union Plan was debated in the British Parliament and approved. Therefore, on 11 October 1945 the British press published the speech of the Secretary of State for the British Colonies. The Malayan Union is a federation of Malay states consisting of the Federated Malay States, the Unfederated Malay States and the Straits Settlements (except Singapore). This idea has awakened the nationalist spirit of the Malays in an extraordinary way to stand up united against the idea. Kamaruddin understood very well the principle applied by the British to civil servants which was to support the "government of the day". This principle is contrary to Kamaruddin's stance as a Malay nationalist. He thinks it is inevitable, Malaya should be governed by the Malays. Therefore, Kamaruddin decided to oppose the establishment of Malayan Union with all his efforts. In order to express opposition to the idea of Malayan Union, a letter of protest was issued and a giant gathering known as Kongres Melayu Sa-Malaya (Sa-Malaya Malay Congress) was organized by the Selangor Malay Association at Padang Kelab Sultan Sulaiman, Kampung Baharu, Selangor (now Kuala Lumpur) from 1 to 4 March, 1946. A total of 41 Malay Organizations throughout Malaya have sent representatives to voice strong objections to the Malayan Union. Raja Tun Uda, one of the Malay MCS officials,

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<sup>7</sup>The British Military Army Administration or BMA was a temporary administration after the Second World War for British colonies including the Malay Peninsula.

<sup>8</sup>The Malayan Union was implemented by the British administration from 1.4.1946 until 31.1.1948 but it did not last long because it received many objections and insistence from the Malays and British officials who had served in Malaya.

was initially given the responsibility to read the official protest declaration, but for unknown reasons, he was found to be absent during the last day of the rally. This situation forced the organizers of the Congress to ask Kamaruddin as a Malay official of the same status as Raja Tun Uda to read a declaration of objection to the idea of Malayan Union.

Kamarudin's act of reading the declaration of official objection to the proposed establishment of the idea of 'Malayan Union' has been known by his leader, causing him to be sentenced to disciplinary action as he is a senior official in the British government administration. Based on the charges, his offense was so serious that it could have caused him to be terminated immediately but the Chief Secretary of the British Colonies, Sir Alec Newbould used his discretion in sentencing him. The leader was very impressed by Kamaruddin's actions because he had the soul of a nationalist who dared to take any action just to defend the motherland. He said the support would do the same if he were in Kamaruddin's place. However, he still needs to impose a minimal sentence to appease the anger of the British government. He was ordered to transfer with immediate effect to the Besut district, Terengganu which was nicknamed "Siberia Malaya" at that time by the British officials. He will replace Bernard. Within 24 hours, he prepared goods to move by riding a lorry to take his wife and children to a destination he had never known or tracked, namely Besut district, Terengganu. His journey with his family traveled through seven islands where each island required the trip to be stopped to unload the cargo on the ferry and transfer the cargo to another truck. It was very tiring because the geographical factor of Terengganu at that time had many islands and no bridges. This challenging trip took three days and two nights to travel so tiring before reaching the destination in Kampung Raja, Besut, Terengganu. He reported as the eleventh Besut District Officer replacing Mr. S. Born Bernard. The situation in Besut is one hundred percent different than in Selangor due to the lack of basic necessities such as electricity, water and so on, but all of that has never discouraged him from continuing his sincere service to the nation and the country. While in Besut, his status as a British government official did not prevent him from trying to establish the first UMNO in Besut in 1947 which was also the first UMNO in Terengganu. At that time, UMNO was the only political party that was not banned by the British. His wife, Aminah also participated in establishing Kaum Ibu (now known as Wanita UMNO). This matter finally reached the British administration and has caused the dissatisfaction of the British towards the nationalist attitude shown by him. He was immediately transferred again to Kemaman district, Terengganu on 28 April 1947. Kamaruddin was also subjected to disciplinary action with a reduction in the salary scale to a lower payment. This caused him to receive a much lower salary than MCS junior officers at that time. However, the punishment still failed to encourage him to become a nationalist fighter in his own way against British colonialism. He once again established the Kemaman Division of UMNO and the British once again did not hesitate to impose disciplinary measures along with a reduction in the salary scale to him. This time he was transferred to the Kuala Terengganu district as an Administrator of Land and Mine on November 16, 1947. Although he was subjected three times to a salary reduction action in addition to disciplinary action and even being transferred to a remote place, he never succeeded in extinguishing his spirit to become a passionate nationalist thick Kamaruddin has rejected his own interests and his only wish is to see Malaya completely free from the grip of foreign colonialism.

While in Besut and Kemaman districts again, he personally got to know DYMM Sultan Ismail Nasiruddin Shah. Sultan Ismail Nasiruddin Shah is known as a 'Sultan with the soul of

the people' who likes to visit remote areas to closely monitor all the problems of the people and be friendly with civil servants who are carrying out their duties. That's when Kamaruddin as the District Officer got to know His Majesty the Sultan more intimately. He was later appointed as the Secretary of the Terengganu Government on February 1, 1948. During his tenure as the Secretary of the Terengganu Government, Kamaruddin was entrusted with enacting the Itqan al-Muluk bi Ta' dil al-Suluk or the Law for the Self-Government of Terengganu (Chapter Two) in 1948. He always put the Sultan as his leader and not the British Advisor. This greatly satisfied His Majesty Tuanku Sultan and finally he was appointed as Chief Minister on 18 December 1950 replacing YBM Tengku Panglima Perang Tengku Muhamad Al-Marhum Sultan Ahmad Syah (Pahang)<sup>9</sup>. His appointment as Menteri Besar Terengganu that year was the last appointment by His Majesty the Sultan of Terengganu as the position of Menteri Besar was later appointed by a contemporary political appointment through the General Election which was held for the first time on 20.6.1959.

He has always believed that one day, local children will take over the leadership of Terengganu. Therefore, he appointed, educated and encouraged two local Malays who had the characteristics of leadership, namely Ibrahim 'Fikri' bin Mohamad and Nik Hassan bin Wan Abdul Rahman, who at that time were young men in their early 20s. Encouragement and guidance in the field of administration can provide early exposure to them to become successful administrators in the future. Ibrahim 'Fikri' bin Mohamad was appointed as Speech Text Writer (equivalent to the current position of Press Secretary) while Nik Hassan bin Wan Abd Rahman was appointed as Confidential Secretary to help with his administrative work. Thanks to his upbringing Ibrahim bin Mohamad also known as Ibrahim Fikri, later became the seventh Chief Minister of Terengganu while Nik Hassan bin Wan Abd Rahman became the ninth Menteri Besar Terengganu.

## **Struggle 2 - Services and Contributions**

Throughout his leadership period from 18.12.1950 to 28.6.1959, various historical events have occurred in Malaya and Terengganu in particular. The period of his administration was the transition of power from the Malayan Union to the establishment of the Federation of Malaya Independence. That period was a difficult time in the history of the state and the country because the consciousness of the Malays for independence was burning and it was a period of transition from the British colonial system to the Westminster-style parliamentary democratic system. Among other important events are the independence of Malaya on 31 August 1957 and the first General Election on 20.6.1959. There were also difficult events that tested his leadership as a Menteri Besar in Terengganu. Around 1949 until the beginning of 1952, the activities of communist elements were rampant and often launched ambushes against security personnel who were concentrated on communication roads such as Air Putih, Kemasek, Bukit Bandi, Jerangau and Jabor. A new system was introduced at that time which was the establishment of the village control team or "Home Guards" to overcome the safety and order problems of the villagers. In addition, the establishment of a collection area and resettlement of Kampung Baharu was also carried out to curb the movement of communist

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<sup>9</sup>The SUK Tr file dated 7 January 1951 entitled the list of officers holding the position of Terengganu Menteri Besar recorded Dato Perdana Menteri DiRaja Kamarudin as Acting Menteri Besar from 1 February 1950 to 17 December 1950 and was appointed as Menteri Besar on 18 December 1950.



terrorists in Terengganu (Ghazali, 1996). Several regulations were also passed under the Emergency Law 1948 including

- Food Area control directive 1951

The purpose is to impose rationing on the population's food so that no surplus food ends up in the hands of communist terrorists in the jungle.

- Terengganu Area Control Directive 1952

The purpose is to impose a curfew at certain times in the control area.

Changes in the education system for Terengganu as a state under the 1948 Federation of Malaya Agreement took place in 1957 when the Federal Ministry of Education of Malaya distributed a circular letter to the State Head of Education for the establishment of several education committees at the state level. Therefore, the syllabus and co-curriculum of schools in Terengganu under his leadership are becoming more organized and organized with the existence of committees including:

- i. Local Board of Education
- ii. Board of School Inspectors
- iii. Board of Managers and School Managers

He found that the state of Terengganu has a lot of history that needs to be preserved for future generations to see. Accordingly, he established a Committee to collect historical items in 1955. This is because at that time, Terengganu did not have its own State Museum but had some very valuable historical artifacts in some external museums such as the Singapore and Kuala Lumpur Museums (Awang, 1992). The committee appointed for the purpose of collecting Terengganu state historical materials is:

- i. Engku Pengiran Anom
- ii. Dato' Setia Jasa Haji Muhammad Salleh Bin Haji Awang
- iii. Muhammad Akil bin Atan
- iv. Haji Wan Endut bin Othman

The establishment of this historical materials committee is the 'foundation' for the establishment of the Terengganu State Museum Board. Throughout his 13 years of service in Terengganu and approaching 9 years as Chief Minister, he has certainly given many services and contributions to the state of Terengganu. Among them is the construction of 40 schools throughout the state and improving the infrastructure of the Kuala Terengganu Hospital including increasing its infrastructure and staffing. His other services include providing free fishing nets and *sampan* (small boat) to fishermen in need and sending several children from the state of Terengganu to study at a higher level in England. Just like other Malay States, Terengganu also received secular education from the British after the end of the Second World War. After finishing their studies and returning to their homeland, these students were appointed to key positions in the federal government and some of them ventured into politics. After the Municipal Elections in 1957, he decided to retire as a Malayan Civil Service. He applied for retirement from 10 March 1957, but because his services were still needed by the Terengganu state government, he decided to continue serving as Menteri Besar Terengganu on a contractual basis from 10 March 1957 until 29 June 1959, which is until the date of the first Federal General Election. According to his youngest son, Dato' Haji Suhaimi bin Dato' Perdana Menteri Kamarudin, when Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS) won the General Election in

1959, the top leadership of PAS came to persuade his father to become Chief Minister of Terengganu but the offer was rejected because he is not a politician and did not participate in the General Election 1959. He is also a nationalist without party affiliation because he supports all political parties as long as the party in question fights for the Malays and Islam.

Having fully retired as Menteri Besar Terengganu on 29 June 1959, his experience is still needed by the country, Malaysia that has just achieved independence from the British. The Prime Minister at the time, YAM Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj appointed him as the High Commissioner of the Federation of Malaya to Pakistan on 2 October 1959. In 1962, he was appointed as the High Commissioner of the Federation of Malaya to the Republic of Indonesia which at that time was hit by a crisis due to Indonesian President's dissatisfaction with the independence of the Federation of Malaysia. The events of the confrontation, the 'Ganyang Malaysia' campaign as well as several tense situations between the two countries at that time, caused Kamaruddin to personally have conflicts and quarrels with President Sukarno. For security reasons, he had to be called back to Kuala Lumpur within 24 hours. However, his service contribution is still needed by the country. The Prime Minister has once again appointed him to a more important position as the Malaysian Ambassador to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He accepted the offer with a happy heart likened to the Malay saying '*orang mengantuk disorongkan bantal*'. This is because he was able to serve the country he loved in the Holy Land of Makkah while being able to worship and increase charity at the end of his career. After completing his service as Ambassador in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Kamaruddin really enjoyed his old age by doing religious works. According to Dato Haji Suhaimi (his youngest son), he likes to build suraus and mosques secretly without anyone's knowledge. He also likes to endow his land to be used as a mosque so that he does not own any land.

Throughout his service, Kamaruddin was awarded the title of Dato' Prime Minister by His Majesty Sultan Ismail on 1 February 1950 while the title of Dato' Seri Setia Raja was awarded by His Majesty Sultan Ismail on 11 July 1959. He is the last Menteri Besar Terengganu to be awarded the title of Dato' Perdana Menteri because this title has been abolished according to Clause 28 of the Terengganu State Self-Government Law (Chapter II). The involvement of his wife, Hajjah Che' Aminah binti Haji Abdul Jalil, who is very active in the women's movement, Kaum Ibu, led to the awarding of Toh Puan Seri Nela by His Majesty Sultan Ismail on July 17, 1956. In recognition of his services to the state of Terengganu, a road has been named after him, Jalan Kamaruddin, near Kuala Terengganu City. On July 31, 1993 at the age of 89, Kamaruddin breathed his last. His body was buried in Kampung Batu Cemetery, Ulu Langat, Selangor.

## Second Research Finding

2.1. There are some differences in the appointment dates of Terengganu's Chief Minister 1 to 5 obtained from history books compared to the dates obtained from Terengganu Menteri Besar Service Record Book records as shown in Table 2:-

Table 2

*Differences Date of Appointment of the Menteri Besar Terengganu by Traditional Political System (1925 - 1959)*

No	Menteri Besar Terengganu & Date of Appointment (in History Books)	Due Date of Appointment (based on SUK Tr. Service Record Book)
1.	YAB Dato' Seri Amar Di Raja Haji Ngah Muhammad bin Yusof (21.4.1925 -28.6.1940)	( 21.4.1925 - 28.6.1940)
2.	YBM Tengku Seri Maharaja Tengku Omar bin Othman (15.7.1940 - 6.5.1941)	(15.7.1940 - 9.12.1941)
3.	YAB Dato' Jaya Perkasa Da Omar bin Mahmud (17.5.1941- 16.12.1945)	(10.12.1941- 1.12.1947)
4.	YAM Tengku War Commander Tengku Muhammad Ibni Al Marhum Sultan Ahmad (17.12.1945 - 26.12.1949)	(2.12.1947 - 26.12.1949)
5.	YAB Dato' Perdana Menteri Di Raja Dato' Seri Setia DiRaja Haji Kamaruddin bin Haji Idris (27.12.1949 -31.5.1957)	(27.12.1949 - 28.6.1959)

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the position of Menteri Besar Terengganu during the Traditional Political System is appointed by His Majesty Sultan and the line of advisers at Istana Badariah while the Contemporary Political System which is after the independence of the Federation of Malaya, is appointed by the President of the Political Party who wins in the Terengganu State General Election or by the Prime Minister of the Federation of Malaysia and is based at Wisma Negeri or now at Wisma Darul Iman. All candidates who were elected through traditional political appointments have shown integrity, perseverance, ingenuity and have sown services and contributions that are not small to all citizens of Terengganu in shaping the progress of the state of Terengganu as we can see it today.

The results of this study can contribute to the knowledge of the history of Terengganu state administration. The research findings refer to the original source of records which are the Chief Minister's Service Files and Records. In addition to being a historical source, it is hoped that this paper can be used as a source of inspiration for today's leadership by exploring the tenacity, enthusiasm, perseverance and sincerity of previous leaders. The journey and life experience of the figures should be used as a source of reference for the administrators to drive the progress and modernization of Terengganu state governance which will be more glorious in the future. It is also hoped that the results of this study can be used as a guide to the writing of History Books or help in the writing of papers related to meritorious figures of this kind that are carried out throughout Malaysia.

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## Appendices



Picture 1: YAB Dato' Seri Amar Di Raja Haji Ngah Muhammad bin Yusof,  
First Menteri Besar Terengganu (21.4.1925 - 28.6.1940)



Picture 2: Y.B.M. Tengku Seri Maharaja Tengku Omar bin Othman,  
Second Menteri Besar Terengganu (15.7.1940 - 9.12.1941)



Picture 3: YAB Dato' Jaya Perkasa Da Omar bin Mahmud,  
Third Menteri Besar Terengganu (10.12.1941- 1.12.1947)



Picture 4: YAM Tengku Panglima Perang Tengku Muhammad Ibni Al Marhum Sultan Ahmad, Fourth Menteri Besar Terengganu (2.12.1947 - 26.12.1949)



Picture 5: YAB Dato' Perdana Menteri Di Raja Dato Seri Setia Di Raja Haji Kamaruddin bin Haji Idris, Fifth Menteri Besar Terengganu (27.12.1949 - 28.6.1959)