

Regrettably, President Discusses Draft Law on Yogyakarta Special Status Amidst Grief in Yogyakarta

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YOGYAKARTA - Senior historian, Prof. Dr. Taufik Abdullah, regretted the manner of President Yudhoyono and his ministers who mentioned that the monarchy is against democracy in response to the Specialty Bill of Yogyakarta. According to Taufik, it is not appropriate for the President to propose the statement to the community of Yogyakarta who just suffered from the Merapi eruption disaster. "The timing was just not right. The President seemed to contrast the monarchy and democracy. The ministers also participated to question it. Subsequently, the atmosphere is damaged. As if we could no longer see a better future," said Taufik to the reporters while attending a plenary session of the Universitas Gadjah Mada Alumni Association (Kagama) on Friday (17/12).

The Former LIPI Chairman conveyed that the discussion about Yogyakarta's specialty bill can actually be done in a more decent manner by seeing at the problem comprehensively, not rashly while the community are still grieved due to Merapi eruption. "This authoritarian tradition is still running. The specialty should have been discussed after the disaster is over," he said.

Mentioned by Taufik, Yogyakarta Specialty should be viewed from historical perspective that began in 1945 related to the role of Sri Sultan HB IX, both as a king, governor, and national figure. "The history of how Sri Sultan HB IX became a vice president is very important," he added.

Taufik regretted the differences between the manners towards the concept of Specialty, especially which is shown by the president and ministers. In fact, members of community outside the province who once attended school and college in this province have expressed support to the specialty. "Even the outsiders who once attended school in Yogya want to retain the Specialty," he said.

Taufik explained that history is not part of legitimacy, but part of building a future concept.



Responding to a difference of opinion between the government and the insistence of community about the proposition of appointment or election for the position of governor and deputy governor of Yogyakarta, Taufik supports the appointment option. "Because (conducive atmosphere) has been destroyed prior to the statement of the President and his ministers, my support goes to the decision of the Yogyakarta Local DPRD" said the Professor of UGM.

In a separate occasion, Sri Sultan HB X insisted he would wait for the discussion of the draft that the government submitted to House of Representatives. "We'll wait and see the discussion of the House of Representatives," Sultan said simply.

Answering reporters' questions related to the draft proposed by the government which is more likely to choose the election option, Sultan firmly replied that it was not a problem for him and handed the matter over completely to the House of Representatives. "It's okay, there will be a discussion in the Parliament," he said.

According to Sultan, the House of Representatives will form a special committee to discuss the draft law. Of course, the member of the House of Representatives will seek advice and opinions from the people of Yogyakarta. "There are stages of forming the special committee, after that they will go to Yogyakarta to engage in the dialogue," he concluded.

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