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Mohamed-religions

RADIO AIR TIME AND TV SLOTS FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 4 (Bernama) -- Radio and Television Malaysia (RTM) is setting aside special radio and television slots for talks by local leaders of the various religious faiths to help in efforts to fight social ills.

Information minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, who announced this today, said the idea was for them to help inculcate good values but not for propagation of religion.

He told reporters this after hour-long discussions with nine representatives on the Malaysian Consultative Council for Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism at his office here.

Mohamed said during the meeting he explained to the representatives that the government media was for the propagation of Islam only and they appreciated this decision.

He said they were only seeking to play a role in expounding virtues taught by the respective religions in dealing with the country's social ills which transcended racial and religious boundaries.

"We'll get the council involved in RTM programmes promoting virtues that can help alleviate social and other problems," he said.

Mohamed said he had given the council a month to come with proposals for special programmes for RTM to consider broadcasting over radio or television.

He said RTM has been accommodating in allowing wide coverage of religious festivities because it regarded them as national celebrations which merited broadcasting.

"This is to impress upon the people that they should join the rejoicing as part of our efforts to nurture goodwill and unity," he said.

This was in line with the promotion of religious harmony and understanding in Malaysia and with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's aspiration that the government itself practise moderation in maintaining racial and religious co-existence.

"What worries us now is if there are people out to exploit and politicise religion. This is really dangerous," Mohamed said.

The government would not allow religions to be exploited and politicised by certain people for selfish ends, he said.

Mohamed hinted that the proposed radio and television programmes featuring the religious leaders may be in the format of talk-shows discussing social ills and ways to resolve them using the approach of religion.

He hoped the proposed programmes would bring about awareness among multi-religious Malaysians of the need to uphold high moral values and the preachings of their respective faith in order to preserve national prosperity.

Meanwhile, vice president of the consultative council, A Vaithlingam when contacted said it did not foresee any problems in coming up with proposals for the special and radio programmes.

Vaithlingam, who led the council's delegation, said it was looking forward to having another meeting with Mohamed in a month's time for more specific discussions. -- BERNAMA

AFY ARA rn