

Christians pledge to respect Islam's position, says Najib
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Najib Abdul Razak said leaders of Christianity in the country have pledged that they respect the position of Islam as official religion and have no intention of challenging the provision enshrined in the Federal Constitution.

The prime minister said the group had also given their undertaking to cooperate in nurturing peace and harmony between the various faiths so that Malaysia would continue to be a peaceful and prosperous nation.

"I am glad to inform that Christian leaders have given two very important and meaningful undertakings (today)," he told reporters after attending a luncheon with the Christian leaders at his office in Putrajaya today.

Among those present were two ministers in the Prime Minister's Department, Koh Tsu Koon and Idris Jala, as well as the chairperson of the Malaysian Christian Federation, Bishop Ng Moon Hing.

At the meeting, Najib also emphasised to the Christian leaders that the government needed time to study several views presented and problems faced by them.

"It's not the intention of both parties, whether the government or the Christian leaders, to highlight these matters openly until they have been amicably resolved.

"Once a decision is made and the matter resolved amicably, only then will we say something openly," he said.

Asked what the problems were, the prime minister said: "Once it is settled, we will make a statement openly."

He said similar dialogues could also be held from time to time with other religious groups in future because he had already held a meeting with Islamic leaders and intellectuals yesterday.

Asked when the dialogue with the Christian leaders had been planned Najib said his office had planned the meeting two weeks ago although he had intended to have it much earlier.

Uneasy over 'Christian plot' reports

Asked on the reaction of the religious group on the issue over Christianity recently, Najib said the Christian leaders felt uneasy over the news as published by the media.

"They have accepted my advice that we remain calm on the matter and not to do anything that will increase tension among the community," he said.

Utusan Malaysia on May 7 reported on its front page that a gathering of priests from all over the country in Penang discussed an agenda to make Christianity the official religion of the country.

"That's why we have to be careful in this matter so that any issue that can cause uneasiness and tension in the country should be avoided and that we must use wisdom in tackling and managing these issues," he said.

Meanwhile, the prime minister said he was still waiting for the outcome of the police investigation on the issue concerning Christianity.

"Let the police investigate first and when the time comes, we find the best way to resolve it with wisdom before making a decision," he said.

Najib said that as a whole, he was satisfied because the government's efforts in holding the dialogue had been appreciated by the Christian leaders.

"Hopefully through this approach, we can demonstrate the government's determination to cooperate in efforts towards national peace and prosperity desired by the majority of Malaysians," he added.

- Bernama

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