

NEW STRAITS TIMES

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Dialogue between police, religious reps a success

SEREMBAN: More than 60 religious heads and representatives from mosques and churches held a two-hour dialogue with police yesterday on steps to safeguard their places of worship.

District police chief Assistant Commissioner Saiful Azly Kamaruddin said representatives from 17 mosques and 21 churches turned up for the dialogue at the district police headquarters.

"We are happy with the response and support shown by members of the two faiths to iron out issues concerning the safety at places of worship."

He also hoped these dialogue sessions would foster good relationship between religious bodies and the police.

"We advised them to step up safety measures in their premises while we assured them that more patrols will be conducted."

Among the issues and sug-

gestions raised were to ensure the surroundings at places of worship were well-lit and fitted with closed-circuit television cameras.

The religious bodies also called for community patrolling similar to the Rukun Tetangga concept.

Tan Foong Luen, a leader of the Methodist Church in Anglo-Chinese School (ACS), here, said the dialogue was meaningful and should be held often to maintain peace.

"We are thankful to police for initiating the dialogue as it gave us the right avenue to channel our opinions."

Representative from the state Islamic Affairs Department (mosque and surau division) Mohd Shahrizan Ibrahim, also echoed Tan's sentiments.

"The church and mosque should also have similar dialogues to overcome and diffuse the situation."