

**Malaysia, Singapore Endeavour To Strengthen Cultural Programmes, Rais
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SINGAPORE, Oct 20 (Bernama) -- Information, Communications and Culture Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim said Malaysia and Singapore will continue to find ways to strengthen the performances of bilateral music and cultural programmes.

"Indeed, sometimes it is difficult to meld via other genres but through culture or music it is very easy for us to understand one another.

"So, we can pick culture or music as they are universal channels," he told reporters after witnessing the 7th Muzika Ekstravaganza, an annual multi-performance of artistes from Malaysia and Singapore, here, last night.

Rais and his Singapore counterpart, Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, were guests of honour. Among those present were Rais' wife, Datin Seri Maznah Rais, Malaysian High Commissioner to Singapore Datuk Md Hussin Nayan and MediaCorp Pte Ltd, chief executive officer, Shaun Seow.

Rais said: "Actually Singapore and Malaysia are neighbours which cannot be separated whether socially, culturally or in terms of commerce."

He said, for example, Malaysia and Singapore had published the book 'Causeway' which symbolised the firm friendship based on history.

"A such, we will seek other basis, for example, from writing or in terms of culture which we can mobilise together such as joget which is popular in Malaysia and in Singapore," he added.

Rais proposed that the Muzika Extravaganza programme be expanded to other communities.

"Other than Malay songs or those from films, it is appropriate for us to involve other communities so that the talents in Singapore and Malaysia can be blended and grafted together," he said.

Started in 2005 as Rampaisari, Muzika Ekstravaganza demonstrates the firm relationship and cooperation between officers, broadcasters and artistes of both nations.

The programme, jointly produced by MediaCorp Suria and Radio Television Malaysia (RTM), was aired live through the Suria channel owned by Mediacorp and through RTM TV 2 from 8.30pm to 10.30pm.

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