

Malaysia Looking At Singapore's Model to Promote National Unity, Religious Harmony - Kurup
Bernama
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SINGAPORE, March 4 (Bernama) -- Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Joseph Kurup says Malaysia is looking at Singapore's model to further promote national unity and religious harmony among its citizens.

"Overall, our national unity and religious harmony is quite good. Every religious festivity such as Chinese New Year, Hari Raya, Christmas, Pesta Keamatan in Sabah, Hari Gawai in Sarawak, the leaders open their houses for the people to visit," he told Bernama at VIP Complex, Changi Airport.

Kurup was here on a three-day working visit beginning Sunday to see and understand national unity and religious harmony among Singaporeans.

"We are here to study Singapore's way of managing community centres and how Singaporeans, permanent residents and foreigners alike integrate themselves via various activities at community centres.

Apart from officials from the Department of National Unity and Integration, Prime Minister's Department, his delegation include 30 top religious leaders of all faiths from Malaysia.

"We will do some analysis on this (community centres). I will forward this to the government for consideration if it is something that will promote national unity, understanding, peace and and promote harmony," he said.

Among places visited, by Kurup was Anchorvale Community Centre, an integrated complex in Sengkang West Constituency Office.

He was received by Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Culture Community and Youth, Sam Tan and Member of Parliament for Ang Mo Kio Group Representative Constituency, Dr Lam Pin Min.

At the centre, Kurup said: "I can see the elderly and the young integrating themselves at the centre.

'I was told that that is a centre for them to mingle around and to promote the national unity. That is one component in the process towards promoting national unity.

"I also made a courtesy call on Acting Minister of Culture, Community and Youth, Lawrence Wong and we talked about the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act.

On Monday, Kurup visited Tampines and met with Masagos Zulkifli, the Senior Minister of State, and Ministry of Home Affairs.

"There I learnt something. He brought me to his service centre where he provide a lot of services to all communities. It is not only to unite the people but also to maintain relationships," he said.

On Tuesday, Kurup said he visited Harmonis Centre initiated by Muslim groups and "I can see that it is accepted by all."

"The centre is a place for them for interfaith dialogue to make people understand, appreciate, and respect about the religion so that they do not hurt each other."

Kurup also visited Onepeople.sg Centre and met with Member of Parliament Zainudin Nordin.

He said the centre's concept is similar to 1Malaysia - People First where you need to integrate to establish the national identity.

Kurup said his visit together with religious leaders were to familiarise them with what Singapore is doing in promoting national unity and religious harmony.

"From the feedback that I received, they are very happy and overall our visit has been very fruitful," he said thanking all those involved, particularly the MPs and the minister concerned who were so kind to give us all the information.

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