

# \$3.87million raised for Yusof Ishak professorship

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This is close to two-thirds of target, Yaacob says of efforts to honour first S'pore president

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**Nur Asyiqin Mohamad Salleh**

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The fund-raising committee for a professorship to honour Singapore's first president Yusof Ishak has raised close to two-thirds of its \$6 million target.

It has raised \$3.87 million for the Yusof Ishak Professorship in Social Sciences at the National University of Singapore (NUS), and will continue to drive more fund-raising campaigns till the end of the year.

Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs Yaacob Ibrahim gave this update at a Hari Raya lunch he hosted yesterday for senior Malay/Muslim public servants and professionals. NUS, he said, has formed a committee for the professorship and will make an appointment soon.

The professorship, which aims to enhance research in areas like ethnicity and multi-culturalism, was announced by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the National Day Rally last year as one of three initiatives to honour Mr Yusof, who died in office in 1970.

Also, the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (Iseas) will be renamed the Iseas-Yusof Ishak Institute on Aug 12, and a Yusof Ishak Mosque is being built in Woodlands. It will be ready by end-2016.

The fund-raising is spearheaded by the Malay/Muslim community as one of the activities of the SG50 Kita Committee, which coordinates efforts to give back to society as part of the Golden Jubilee.

Committee chairman Sallim Abdul Kadir said the fund-raising for

the professorship was a way to honour Mr Yusof as a staunch champion of multiracialism.

The professorial appointee will contribute cutting-edge research and intellectual leadership in areas such as multiculturalism and religious diversity, said Dr Yaacob, who is also Communications and Information Minister.

Dr Yaacob said many from outside the Muslim community have contributed funds, including the Lee Foundation and companies like M1. "This shows that the professorship we hope to set up is not just for our community but for the nation," he told reporters.

"They do remember the contributions of the late Encik Yusof Ishak to Singapore as one of the first pioneers who worked together with the Government for the progress of the nation 50 years ago."

In a speech yesterday, Dr Yaacob spoke about the community's steadfastness and grit in overcoming challenges over the years, reiterating his message at an annual Hari Raya dinner last Friday.

In the community's efforts to find solutions, it set up self-help group Mendaki and the Association of Muslim Professionals, he later told reporters.

"This shows we have the capability to find a way, and this is an important foundation for us, to think about how our community can progress in the 50 years to come," he said. "With the resources, experiences, and values we have, we can progress even further."

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asyiqins@sph.com.sg