



Embargoed Release  
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**SPEECH ORIGINALLY DELIVERED IN MALAY AND ENGLISH**

**SPEECH BY MS RAHAYU MAHZAM, MP FOR JURONG GRC, MEMBER OF THE MALAY LANGUAGE COUNCIL, SINGAPORE AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE BULAN BAHASA COMMITTEE, AT THE LAUNCH OF THE MALAY LANGUAGE MONTH (BULAN BAHASA) 2016, ON SATURDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER, AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE.**

[SPEECH COMMENCES IN MALAY]

Guest of Honour

Mr Ng Chee Meng, Acting Minister for Education (Schools) and Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Transport

Mr Masagos Zulkifli Bin Masagos Mohamad, Minister for the Environment and Water Resources

Associate Professor Dr Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Chairman of the Malay Language Council of Singapore

Parliamentary Colleagues

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Welcome to the Launch Ceremony of Bulan Bahasa 2016.

1. Thank you for taking the time to join us at this eventful ceremony.
2. For those who are not able to join us here at the Glass Atrium, Berita Mediacorp is currently recording this ceremony so that they will be able to join us in celebrating the launch of Bulan Bahasa through [berita.sg](http://berita.sg).
3. We are gathered here this afternoon to celebrate and mark the launch of Bulan Bahasa 2016.



4. At the same time, I feel that it is important to commemorate those who have made big contributions in our community.
5. Singapore has just experienced a great loss with the passing of our former President, Mr S.R. Nathan, known to many of us as a warm, approachable and knowledgeable leader, who inspired many to triumph over circumstance.
6. He is also cherished as one who dedicated his life to serving Singapore, and will always be remembered for the concern that he had, especially for the progress of the Malay-Muslim community. The late Founding Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew called him an “indispensable man for all seasons, one who never said no when called to serve”. There is much to learn from him, and even more for us to miss.
7. Within the Malay community, we have experienced much loss, too. Last year, as Singapore celebrated SG50, we mourned the passing of our much respected teacher, Allahyarham Cikgu Mohd Naim Daipi.
8. This year, we lost literary giants and language experts Allahyarham Cikgu Muhammad Ariff Ahmad, Cikgu Aliman Hassan and Dr Liaw Yock Fang.
9. With the passing of these culture and literary figures, the responsibility of ensuring the continued usage and love of the Malay language, now falls squarely on the shoulders of the next generation. I am grateful that our community still has the guidance of other leaders and figures such as Minister Masagos Zulkifli, Assoc Prof Dr Hadijah Rahmat, Pak Suratman Markasa, Cikgu Yusnor Ef and many others.
10. The efforts in guiding and supporting the next generation needs to be continued and the love for the Malay language should be instilled in the whole community. This responsibility is shared by all of us, not just leaders and language experts but also educators, parents and students.



11. I am very sure this sense of responsibility resonates well with fellow Duta Bahasa, as we also welcome today, three more language ambassadors to the family. On behalf of all Duta Bahasa, welcome Siti Khalijah, Megat Muhammad Firdaus and Ustazah Nurul 'Izzah Khamsani.
12. Ladies and gentlemen, the Bulan Bahasa organizing committee recognizes the need for efforts in preserving and bringing life to our language to start from a young age. Hence, we invite our appointed Rakan Bahasa to join us in these efforts. I am personally encouraged by the enthusiasm displayed by our 118 Rakan Bahasa students appointed in May this year from 60 schools. They have worked hard, journeying along with us in our preparations for Bulan Bahasa.
13. Many of the Rakan Bahasa that have been appointed are here today, and they will be bringing visitors on a tour of the exhibitions in the Singapore History Gallery. I am eager to experience the beauty of the Malay language through the stories that they have to share later.
14. It is through language that we build kinship and connection to our roots, values, heritage and culture, preserving it for the young and for generations to come.
15. Helming this important initiative to promote the Malay language for the Malay Language Council, Singapore (MLCS), is a mammoth task, and for the opportunity to steer it, I thank Assoc Prof Dr Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim and the MLCS for entrusting Bulan Bahasa to my care.
16. Bulan Bahasa's former chairman, Mr Zaqy Mohd, who helmed the committee for the past 3 years, has dreamt big and bold, and thanks to him, Bulan Bahasa now sits on solid foundations. I am grateful for his continuous support and guidance.
17. This year, as I lead Bulan Bahasa as Chairperson for the first time, I am excited and energized by the talent, ideas and efforts I see in our partners and the community, as we come together to keep our Mother Tongue alive and promote *Bahasa Ilmu*, *Bahasa Budaya*, *Bahasa Mesra*.



18. I would also like to thank the Bulan Bahasa committee for their unwavering and unrelenting support, including Ms Julina Khusaini and Cikgu Tajudin Jaffar. Without them, we would not be able to share our successes today.

19. Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to continue my speech in English.

[SPEECH CONTINUES IN ENGLISH]

20. Ladies and gentlemen, this year, I am pleased to acknowledge the more than 50 partners who have come together to produce over 100 programmes for our community, so everyone can continue to enjoy Bahasa Melayu as a beautiful and dynamic language.

21. It is also encouraging to see youths and new partners like Hazworks, Big Tree Pictures and Nusantara Arts, just to name a few, step forward to present their interesting programmes for the community. Through them, we see how the Malay language remains dynamic and relevant in today's ever changing society.

22. Special effort has also been made to ensure that the Malay language and culture is appreciated by our non-Malay speaking friends. This weekend, do spend some time with our Rakan Bahasa students at the Singapore History Gallery for their special tours. Or, join us for Rentak Kita!, a Malay Traditional Orchestra performance with sharing sessions in both English and Malay, conducted by Orkestra Sri Temasek which was founded by Megat and Afi Hanafi.

23. In addition to the Tampines, Chua Chu Kang, Nee Soon and Jurong communities who have produced their own editions of Bulan Bahasa for several years now, we are pleased to announce that Sembawang too will join in the celebrations this year, to present Bulan Bahasa within its neighbourhood. I believe that these heartlands celebrations are great platforms for our non-Malay friends to also enjoy and celebrate our National Language. I would like to record my gratitude to all the Advisors for their support for the Bulan Bahasa Heartlands events and the Bulan Bahasa activities happening in their constituencies. A few of them are here today, including Mr Zainal Sapari dan Dr Tan Wu Meng [To confirm]. Thank you for your support and presence.

24. Bulan Bahasa has been fortunate to receive the strong support of the Lee Foundation, MUIS, Mr Mohamed Abdul Jaleel of MES, Toteboard, Comfort Delgro, Moo-O and Second Chance.



On behalf of the Bulan Bahasa and the Malay Language Council Singapore, please accept our sincere appreciation and we look forward to your continued patronage.

25. I would also like to recognise the support given by the Malay Language Learning and Promotion Committee. Our successful collaboration with the Committee has enabled us to put together a menu of programmes for the community. Thank you for your support all these years.
26. My sincere gratitude also to the secretariat team of the Malay Language Council from National Heritage Board, NHB led by Ms Trudy Loh. The team has been a pleasure to work with and this event would not have been possible without their hard work and coordination.
27. And last but in no way least, I would also like to thank the National Museum of Singapore, for sharing this magnificent space with us, and all our visitors to Bulan Bahasa, this year.
28. To everyone here today, thank you for being with us.

[SPEECH ENDS IN MALAY]

29. Ladies and gentlemen, just as what is entailed in our *pantun pusaka*: *Yang kurik itu kundi, Yang merah itu saga; Yang baik itu budi, Yang indah itu bahasa*. Let us work towards promoting Malay language and incorporating Bahasa Ilmu, Budaya and Mesra in our language for Bulan Bahasa 2016.
30. Thank you.