



Embargoed Press Release

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BULAN BAHASA - REVISITING OUR ROOTS

The Malay Language Council, Singapore (MLCS) celebrates ***Bulan Bahasa*** from 15 August to 15 October 2017. This year, *Bulan Bahasa* marks its launch on Saturday 9 September at the Malay Heritage Centre in Kampong Gelam, a place of steep significance for many generations of Singapore's Malay community.

As a hub with a rich historical past at the Istana Kampong Gelam (now the Malay Heritage Centre), the now thriving conservation district of Kampong Gelam bears testimony to the Malay community's prominence, and social economic status in modern Singapore. While many know Kampong Gelam as the Malay community's place of trades, commerce and philanthropy, it was also a centre for publications, dealing with Malay literature and education.

As *Bulan Bahasa* sharpens its focus on *Ilmu* (Knowledge), *Budaya* (Culture) and *Mesra* (Relationships) in its efforts to preserve the use of the Malay language, its return to the precinct also signifies the importance of the community's cultural and kinship ties, and heritage values.

Ms Rahayu Mahzam, Chairman of the *Bulan Bahasa* 2017 Committee, says, "Our legacy, stories and values can survive the test of time only if we make the effort to preserve our appreciation of the Malay language. Our mastery of the language can only enrich our understanding of our Malay identity. It is important to perpetuate this in the younger generation so we can continue to flourish as one community."

During the *Bulan Bahasa* press conference, Ms Rahayu Mahzam also unveiled the new creative and visual identity for this year. The contemporary design features an original typography inspired by the traditional art of textile weaving, and a colour palette inspired by batik. These elements fuse to express the knit of the community through the use of the Malay language. As old infuses with the new, the community remains a strong network, connected and evolving with the times yet holding fast to the beauty of the Malay culture and its timeless traditions, preserving treasured aspects of *Ilmu*, *Budaya*, and *Mesra*.



A Day of Fun and Festivity at the Malay Heritage Centre

On Saturday 9 September 2017, *Bulan Bahasa* will be celebrated throughout the day on the sprawling lawn at the Malay Heritage Centre, as partners and schools come together to present programmes and activities featuring the Malay language, culture and heritage.

Visitors to the Malay Heritage Centre's Permanent Gallery housed at the original Istana Kampong Gelam can experience the history of Kampong Gelam come alive, as presented by **Rakan Bahasa** (students appointed as Friends of the Language). Listen to their stories of the port town and its trades, and be enthralled by the tales of royalty and the communities that lived in this location, which was once a travel hub and a cultural melting pot. Their soapbox tours will also take visitors through the Malay world, and touch on precious artefacts and Malay culture and traditions.

Join **Nek Selampit** for a fun-filled programme of games, music and stories! Listen to storyteller and newly appointed *Duta Bahasa* **Jumaini Ariff** as she regales visitors with familiar legends and fables in her unique, lively and interactive style accompanied by music from a gamelan troupe. The audience could also get up close and personal with the gamelan musicians after the performance.

Out on the courtyard, **Hazwork** presents **Gotong Royong**, a live batik drawing session conducted together with the community. Each batik art piece will feature a *pantun*, *puisi*, or *syair* in artistic *jawi* calligraphy. Explanations to the art of batik painting and its techniques will also be shared with participants in *Bahasa Melayu*.

For theatre aficionados, join **TEATRO** at the auditorium for **Hikayat Malim Dewa**, a stage presentation of the classical folklore based on the story of Malim Dewa, son of Tuan Puteri Lindungan Bulan and an impressive and intelligent young man, who once ruled Bandar Muar.

For food lovers, **Mamanda Restaurant** presents **Jejak Warisan Makanan**, a showcase presenting Malay traditional cooking. Explore the ingredients, dishes, tools and methods used in food preparation, and understand the significance and meanings behind communal eating and dining in the Malay culture.



Visitors and participants can also test their knowledge on the Malay language, culture and heritage while they play games at booths organised by students from **Admiralty Primary School, Orchid Park Primary School** and **Yusof Ishak Secondary School**.

Duta Bahasa (Language Ambassadors) 2017

Duta Bahasa are appointed by the Malay Language Council Singapore, as champions and role models of the Malay Language. This year, three ambassadors have been identified based on their mastery of and affinity for the Malay language.

1. Ms Jumaini Ariff – Founder, Author & Storyteller, Storyscribblers
2. Ustaz Muhammad Zahid Bin Mohd Zin – CEO, Muslim Youth Forum
3. Mr Dzar Bin Ismail – Radio Presenter with Mediacorp, RIA987FM

Strong support for *Semarak* activities and *Bulan Bahasa* in the heartlands

Bulan Bahasa will continue to be celebrated in the heartlands this year, with unwavering support provided by Tampines, Jurong, Choa Chu Kang, Nee Soon and Sembawang.

In addition, the Malay Activity Executive Committees (MAECs) and community partners will also continue to organise *Semarak* (fringe) activities island-wide, to celebrate the Malay language, culture and heritage.

Programmes such as these are made possible only by the Malay community's shared passion for the language as everyone makes the effort to share their knowledge, expertise and experience to encourage and promote the use of the Malay language.



About *Bulan Bahasa*

The Malay Language Month (Bulan Bahasa) was first launched in 1988 by the Malay Language Council, Singapore, as an initiative and a biennial event to encourage the Malay community to embrace the Malay language and culture in their daily lives. Since 2011, it has become an annual signature celebration that continues to attract community participation and support, at national as well as grassroots level. Bulan Bahasa remains focused on cultivating greater confidence in the use and mastery of the Malay language, instilling a deeper appreciation for and promoting the preservation of the rich Malay culture and heritage.

For more information about the Malay Language Council, Singapore, and Bulan Bahasa, please visit mbms.sg and facebook.com/majlisbahasa.



Annex 1

Duta Bahasa 2017



Jumaini Ariff is a published author who has sold over 12,000 children's picture books both in Singapore and around Asia. She is also a prominent storyteller in Singapore's literary scene. Her uniquely crafted personas such as '*Aunty Ju*' and '*Nek Selampit*' have been a part of numerous national campaigns since 2014.

She founded 'STORYSCRIBBLERS' in 2015- a literary based company which provides high quality, fun and engaging language programmes based on books she authored. A strong advocate for professional development, Jumaini conducts storytelling skills training workshops for educators which is accredited by Early Childhood Development Authority (ECDA) and SkillsFuture Singapore.

Jumaini is a former preschool educator and special needs officer with the Ministry of Education, and holds different Diplomas in Early Childhood Education, Autism Studies and Special Education. She is currently pursuing a degree in Malay Language and Literature as well as a Specialist Diploma in Arts Education.

As *Duta Bahasa*, Jumaini would like to share her love for the Malay language with children and youths. She hopes to enrich their language appreciation as she ignites their imagination through the beauty and vibrancy of the Malay language used in her stories and productions.



Annex 1

Duta Bahasa 2017



Ustaz Muhammad Zahid Bin Mohd Zin is Chief Executive Officer for the Muslim Youth Forum. Prior to this, he was Executive Imam of Muhajirin Mosque and Head of Bapa Relief with Badan Agama dan Pelajaran Radin Mas.

Ustaz Zahid is a language enthusiast, with keen interest in Malay, Arabic and English. He was once a member of the debates team at Madrasah Aljunied and a champion debater with BAHAS 4PM. In his career, he has delivered more than 400 talks in English and Malay, and is a popular speaker with various programs on television and radio programmes. He conducts weekly talk sessions and his candid approach to public speaking attracts a strong audience of approximately 500 per session.

Ustaz Zahid is also a wedding solemniser at the Registry of Muslim Marriages (ROMM), and his wealth of experience contributes well as content for the programme '*Kisah Tok Kadî*', an award winning drama-comedy series which was recently celebrated as the most popular show on Mediacorp's SURIA for 2016

Second of five siblings, Ustaz Zahid is happily married with two young children. He reads widely and particularly enjoys reading autobiographies and watching documentaries and foreign films.



As *Duta Bahasa*, Ustaz Zahid hopes to encourage the younger generation to appreciate Malay virtues and values, through the power of the Malay language.



Annex 1

Duta Bahasa 2016



Dzar Bin Ismail is a popular radio presenter with Mediacorp RIA897FM. He helms the afternoon 2pm-6pm belt on air, featuring *Singamaxima* and *Rembat Pendapat*. Dzar won the 2014 Singapore Radio Awards for the Best Trailer category and was also a shortlisted nominee in the Best New Presenter category, at the annual Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union Radio Awards 2015.

Dzar was formerly a teacher, and has a strong grasp of both the Malay and English languages. He is an active contributor towards Digital Media in Mediacorp, and is known to generate strong online results for the station's radio campaigns.

He is also an active scriptwriter and is currently writing for episodes 3 and 6 of *Kisah Tok Kadi*, Season Two, produced by Thinkplate Pte Ltd.

As Duta Bahasa, Dzar is keen to impress upon youths and younger listeners, the importance of using Malay and opportunities that may be presented with the mastery of the language. With his popularity and youth following, he is also keen on harnessing the power of social media to promote this cause and to encourage the appreciation of the Malay language within his audience.



Annex 2

Photos of programmes that will be featured during the launch weekend of *Bulan Bahasa* 2017

Juara Si Cilik



Rakan Bahasa – museum guides



Legends and Fables by Nek Selampit with Live Gamelan Accompaniment



Silatku – Sejarah Dan Warisan Bangsaku





Annex 3

Themes for *Bulan Bahasa* 2017

Ilmu, Budaya, Mesra (Knowledge, Culture, Relationships)

The Malay Language Month invites us to use the Malay Language as a means of acquiring and sharing *knowledge*, of communicating and preserving *culture*, and of strengthening our social ties and *relationships*.

Language as Knowledge

Our appreciation and understanding of the Malay language is strengthened when we use it in our pursuit of knowledge. Regardless of its use in developing a scholarly understanding of the language, in deepening or acquiring religious knowledge or simply in using it as a means of communication in our daily lives, the Malay language continues to be an important medium for discovering and expanding the knowledge of our community.

Language as Culture

The grace and artistic nature of the Malay culture is further enriched with meaning through the Malay language, as it communicates the heart and soul of the Malay people. It is through the language that we recognise and appreciate the richness and significance of our heritage and culture.

Language builds Relationships

The Malay language strengthens the ties and relationships among its users. Regardless of its use through *pantun* or poetry in more solemn ceremonies, or conversations in the company of family and friends, the language creates a warm sense of kinship that cultivates closer ties.

The Malay language as '*Ilmu, Budaya, Mesra*' reflects its importance throughout all layers of society. When we use the Malay language, we are able to preserve knowledge and culture, as well as foster ties that matter. Our language will also be kept alive through its continuous use, allowing us to pass it on to the generations after us.