



Embargoed Press Release

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BULAN BAHASA – CELEBRATING 32 YEARS OF LANGUAGE PROMOTION

Majlis Bahasa Melayu Singapura (MBMS or Malay Language Council, Singapore) invites everyone in the community to celebrate 32 years of Bulan Bahasa this year, from 15 August to 11 October 2020. This year, the official launch ceremony of Bulan Bahasa will be broadcast at 8.30pm, on Saturday, 5 September 2020, on Mediacorp Suria.

“We may find ourselves in an extraordinary situation presently, but this does not stop our effort to continuously promote and celebrate the Malay language. On the contrary, we find ways to do it differently and perhaps in the course of experimentation, our Malay language can then enjoy new and renewed levels of meaning, connection and relevance. Although Bulan Bahasa will be going digital, its purpose in engaging the community to celebrate the beauty of Malay language, literature and culture remains,” says Mdm Rahayu Mahzam, Chairman of the Bulan Bahasa Committee. “Many years of love and labour have been invested into keeping up our love for the Malay language. It is not just an intrinsic conduit that connects us to our culture. It is a dynamic language where with deeper appreciation and use, can be used in many contexts and settings – at home, in school and even the workplace as it opens many opportunities for us. I also hope all parents can fulfil important roles in helping their children learn and use our Malay language, for it will be up to our future generations to build upon all our collective efforts in keeping our language alive.”

Digital Programmes for All

Despite an environment highly regulated by safety measures aimed at containing Covid-19, the community will still get a chance to experience the versatility of the Malay language through the various virtual programmes presented by Bulan Bahasa partners from 15 August to 11 October 2020. The range of programmes will suit different interests like the visual arts and culture, and segments in the community, including the young and old.

Learn the Malay language with your children by participating in **Kreatif Bahasa Bersama...** presented by **Elements Pictures**. In this workshop, parents and children will paint the Malay dish of their choice, and the ingredients that go into making the food.



Acquaint your children with financial terms in Malay through **Fast Family Finance** presented by **Bio Dew Management Institute (BDMI)**. This programme aims to inculcate financial literacy in the young so that they can better understand financial management and Malay vocabulary related to the economy.

Form a band of three to four members and work your creative music muscle through **Braddell Heights CC MAEC's Busking Competition**. In this virtual busking competition, participants are to perform originally written Malay songs. Bands with the best songs and performances will stand to win trophies.

Official Launch Ceremony and Programme Broadcast on Suria – 5 September 2020

Everyone is invited to the launch of Bulan Bahasa 2020, as we present a programme rich with literary and cultural goodness to celebrate our Malay language. Tune in to Mediacorp Suria at 8.30pm, on Saturday, 5 September 2020, for the official launch of Bulan Bahasa 2020. Viewers can expect an array of exciting performances by Duta Bahasa (Language Ambassadors) featuring Asnida Daud, Zaibaktian, Aqmal Noor and Nurfarhana M Noor, Rakan Bahasa (Friends of the Language) and more.

Duta Bahasa (Language Ambassadors) 2020

Duta Bahasa are appointed by MBMS, as champions and avid users of the Malay language. This year, three more ambassadors have been identified based on their expertise in, passion for and affinity to the Malay language and culture, and their involvement with the community.

1. Dr Nur Farhan Alami – Geriatrician
2. Dr Norshahril Saat – Senior Fellow
3. Mr Sujimy Mohamad – TV Producer and Social Media Content Creator

For more details, please refer to [Annex 1](#).



Creative Identity for Bulan Bahasa 2020

The creative identity for Bulan Bahasa 2020 takes inspiration from last year's well-received visual, featuring five illustrations (*palari*, mouse deer, lion, rocket and guitar) that represents different ideals and aspirations for the community.

These five illustrations are retained in this year's creative identity, and are reinterpreted as motifs on *songket*, a type of traditional Malay hand-woven fabric that features intricate patterns made from gold or silver threads. The art and act of *songket* weaving reflect the strong will and character of the community, and symbolise the journey in creating their own language identity. These motifs are building blocks of what makes a dynamic language landscape.

Please refer to [Annex 2](#) for Bulan Bahasa 2020's creative identity and details on the five illustrations.



Bulan Bahasa 2020 Notebooks

Anugerah Guru Arif Budiman (AGAB) award-winning Malay Language teachers continue to contribute content for notebooks produced in conjunction with Bulan Bahasa. This year, the Malay language notebooks contain writings and tips that cover many aspects, such as culture, history and diversity in expressions. Topics of notebooks for this year and names of content contributors are as follows.

Notebook Topic	Contributed by
<i>Jadilah Pengengaruh yang Peka Bahasa</i> Tips for Influencers: Being Sensitive to Language Use	Cikgu Arfah Buang
<i>Tip Memupuk Penggunaan Bahasa Melayu pada Usia Muda</i> Tips for the Young: Cultivating the Learning and Use of the Malay Language	Cikgu Azhar Abdul Rashid
<i>Rasa Apa?</i> Explained: The Sense of Taste	Cikgu Muhammad Andi Zulkepli
<i>Nama-nama Kawasan di Singapura</i> Names of Places in Singapore	Cikgu Norasiken Mohamed Noor
<i>Sajian-sajian Khas Majlis Keramaian Orang Melayu</i> Special Dishes Served in Malay Communal Gatherings	Cikgu Nurhafaesa Hanem

Copies of these notebooks will be distributed to all schools and Bulan Bahasa programme partners.



Rakan Bahasa 2020

The Rakan Bahasa (Friends of the Language) continue to produce NewsMaker videos using the NewsMaker application sponsored by TeeVers. These videos are created based on themes set by the Bulan Bahasa Committee, or any other theme of their choice. To view some of these videos produced by the Rakan Bahasa, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/RB2020pl>.

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## **About Bulan Bahasa by the Majlis Bahasa Melayu Singapura**

Bulan Bahasa (Malay Language Month) was first launched as a biennial event in 1988 by Majlis Bahasa Melayu Singapura (MBMS or the Malay Language Council, Singapore). Since 2011, it has become an annual celebration that continues to attract community interest, participation and support.

As a signature initiative of the MBMS, Bulan Bahasa is focused on encouraging the community to embrace and use the Malay language in their daily lives. It also aims to instil a deeper appreciation for the Malay culture, and promote the preservation of the community's rich heritage.

For more information about MBMS and Bulan Bahasa, please visit [mbms.sg](http://mbms.sg) and [facebook.com/majlisbahasa](https://facebook.com/majlisbahasa).

## **Theme of Bulan Bahasa**

'Cita. Citra. Cinta. Bahasa Kita.' reflects the dynamism of the Malay language as we move towards a new era. 'Cita' encapsulates the aspiration of the community to maintain the relevance of the Malay language. 'Citra' underscores the diversity in the usage and adaptation of the language. It also represents the potential of the Malay language as a window to knowledge and a means of communication. 'Cinta' emphasises the need to cultivate the love and appreciation towards the Malay language.



## Annex 1

### Duta Bahasa 2020



**Dr Nur Farhan Alami** is a geriatrician at Raffles Hospital. As a medical doctor focused on treating and caring for the elderly, she is active in promoting disease prevention and ageing well in the community. Her articles have been published in local newspapers and she has also appeared on local television, presenting public health talks to inspire positive health behaviour change in the community. She was the anchoring doctor in a health info-ed television series titled 'Check Up *Minggu Ini*' and she has also made appearances in other health-related programmes like '*Sihat Oh Sihat*' on Mediacorp Suria.

She is currently a member of the M<sup>3</sup> (a collaborative effort between Muis, MENDAKI and MESRA) workgroup of doctors. The workgroup's aim is to assess the unique needs and health issues for the Malay community. Their work also involves various outreach programmes to promote wellness in the Malay community.

A good grasp of the Malay language can promote a deeper understanding of health issues and promote behaviour change. As a Duta Bahasa, Dr Nur Farhan aspires to continuously use the Malay language to communicate with the community, to strongly promote health and wellness.



## Duta Bahasa 2020



**Dr Norshahril Saat** is Senior Fellow at the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute. He is also Chairman of the Malay Heritage Foundation (MHF). In 2015, he was awarded a PhD in International, Political and Strategic Studies by the Australian National University (ANU). He is a recipient of the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (Muis) Post-graduate Scholarship 2011. In 2015, he became the

first recipient of Syed Isa Semait Scholarship (SISS).

To date, he has authored four books, edited a number of volumes, and published several journal articles. His publications include 'Alternative Voices in Muslim Southeast Asia: Discourse and Struggles' and 'Yusof Ishak: Singapore's First President'. He has also published numerous Opinion and Editorial pieces in English and Malay in local newspapers such as The Straits Times, Berita Harian, Berita Mediacorp, and TODAY.

As a Duta Bahasa, Dr Norshahril wants to share how Malay literature has developed his love for the language. He seeks to inspire youths to write in Malay, and to develop critical thinking and discourse through engaging with Malay language materials.



## Duta Bahasa 2020



**Sujimy Mohamad** is the Managing Director of ScreenBox Pte Ltd, a digital content creating agency. With over 30 years of experience in content creation and his deep passion for storytelling, Sujimy has produced a wide range of digital content focusing on the Malay / Muslim community in Singapore.

Recognised for his vlogs that feature human-interest stories and social issues, he also has a strong digital footprint on social media. As a father, his stories also focus on the promotion of family and community values.

As a Duta Bahasa, Sujimy believes that social media is a platform to encourage his audience and the wider community to utilise the Malay language even more. His outreach in social media could spark conversations in the Malay language, and hopefully the love for the language will be ingrained in the generations to come.



## Annex 2

### Bulan Bahasa 2020 Creative Identity





The creative identity for Bulan Bahasa 2020 is inspired by *songket*, a type of traditional Malay hand-woven fabric that features intricate patterns made from gold or silver threads. The visual also retains five interesting illustrations (*palari*, mouse deer, lion, rocket and guitar) that represents different ideals and aspirations for the community.

### **Explanations on the Five Illustrations**

1. *Palari* – A *palari* is a sailing vessel originally built by the *Bugis* in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is a common symbol of trade which represents inter-connectedness within the Malay Archipelago (Nusantara). Likewise, the Malay language is a medium of communication for the people in the region, connecting people across different cultures and locations.
2. Mouse Deer – A mouse deer often appears as a protagonist in famous local fables, such as *Sang Kancil dan Buaya* (The Mouse Deer and the Crocodile). Its encounters with various animals, and how it engages with them, reflects its wittiness, adaptability and quick-thinking when faced with challenges. Similarly, one should emulate the mouse deer's wisdom and intellect when faced with difficulties.
3. Lion – The Malay Annals tell of how Singapore was named by Sang Nila Utama after a lion (*singa*), which is known for its pride, courage and strength. Just like the lion, one should be proud of his or her Malay identity and culture.
4. Rocket – The rocket symbolises change, innovation and dynamism. It represents our desire to promote the use and awareness of the Malay language, through exciting and innovative ways.
5. Guitar – The Nusantara features many musicians adept at producing both traditional and contemporary Malay music. Music ignites emotions, and encourages reflections, bonding and relationships. The guitar represents this connection between individuals. Music, like the Malay language, connects and has the ability to bring people together regardless of their backgrounds.