



Embargoed Press Release

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BULAN BAHASA – THE NEXT CHAPTER

The Malay Language Council, Singapore (MLCS), will continue to celebrate the versatility of the Malay language, culture and heritage through its revitalised line-up of programmes and activities for *Bulan Bahasa*, which will take place from 15 August to 15 October 2016.

Presented for the first time at the **National Museum of Singapore**, Bulan Bahasa 2016 will rally partners and present through its programmes, the beauty, vibrancy and essence of *Bahasa Ilmu* (Knowledge), *Budaya* (Culture) and *Mesra* (Relationships), as well as the importance of preserving the Malay language.

Ms Rahayu Mahzam, Chairman of the *Bulan Bahasa* 2016 Committee, says, “We have come together to present the next chapter for *Bulan Bahasa*, which has already grown from strength to strength. This year, we have the increased support of new committee members, new partners in the community and at the heartlands, and youths and students, to power the momentum behind Bulan Bahasa. Our aim is to propagate the appreciation of the Malay language, culture and heritage and we would like to include everyone in this experience.”

During the *Bulan Bahasa* press conference, Ms Rahayu Mahzam also unveiled the new creative and visual identity for this year.

Inspired by the artistic curves and fluidity of the traditional written script, as well as the floral and decorative patterns of the *tekat* embroidery, the visual for *Bulan Bahasa* 2016 embodies the continuity of long-standing Malay traditions. The calligraphic script represents *Bahasa Ilmu* and *Bahasa Mesra*, symbolising written communication used to strengthen ties and relationships. The delicate threading of the *tekat* embroidery forms a decorative art that represents *Bahasa Budaya*, for all the values passed down from one generation to the next in the Malay community. Together, these elements fuse to express the woven ties of the Malay language as the cradle of community, preserving treasured aspects of *Ilmu*, *Budaya*, and *Mesra*.



A Festive Two-day Launch Weekend at the National Museum of Singapore

On the weekend of 3 and 4 September 2016, *Bulan Bahasa* programmes will be presented at various locations throughout the National Museum of Singapore, as the entire venue is turned into an immersive and presentation space for the Malay language, culture and heritage.

Visitors and participants can explore the history and stories of the captivating artefacts from Malay pioneers and community in the History Gallery, with the help of **Rakan Bahasa** (Friends of the Language) who will be conducting soapbox tours in both Malay and English.

Members of the public can be entertained by **TEATRO**'s staging of Noor Effendy Ibrahim's iconic play entitled '*Bilik*', which brings the Malay language and its different nuances to life. Trained by *Duta Bahasa*, Aidli Alin Mosbit, TEATRO students from Temasek Polytechnic will present this production, making it a *Bulan Bahasa* highlight not to be missed.

The community can also participate in '*Peti Tari*', a Malay dance trail organised by **Sriwana**. Performers will enthral the audience with a stunning showcase of traditional dance performances, with origins dating as far back as the 70s. The significance behind the expressive dance moves originally created in the olden days by distinguished individuals such as Mdm Som Said, Mdm Idayu Somad, Mdm Ah Choon, Md Ayu Samad, Nongchik Ghani and others, will also be told to viewers.

Interested members of the public can also learn the Malay language by participating in '*Karang Sekarang*', a live variety game show presented by **Big Tree Pictures**. Pair up with well-known Malay celebrities, have some fun and win the language game by answering questions on *Bahasa Melayu* while playing *Gerak Bahasa* (charades), *Serumpun* (pyramid game) and *Roda Impian* (wheel of fortune).

Families can also test their knowledge on the Malay language, culture and heritage while they play games organised by students from **Yumin Primary School**, or participate in a shadow puppetry and Malay Literature quiz organised by **Yusof Ishak Secondary School**.

The launch celebration on 3 September will culminate in an **evening concert** featuring music performances by Koprata, Rausyanfikir and Singaporean bands set against the beautiful



cultural and architectural landmark of the National Museum. Bring along your floor mats and picnic baskets and be treated to an evening of music under the stars.

Duta Bahasa (Language Ambassadors) 2016

The Malay Language Council Singapore appoints *Duta Bahasa* as champions and role models of the Malay Language. This year, three ambassadors have been identified based on their passion for the Malay language, culture and heritage.

1. Ms Siti Khalijah Zainal – Young Artist Award Recipient and Actress
2. Mr Megat Muhammad Firdaus – Founder and Conductor of Orkestra Sri Temasek
3. Ustazah Nurul 'Izzah Khamsani – Executive Officer at the Jamiyah Ar-Rabitah Mosque in Education and *Dakwah*

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

For the first time this year, *Bulan Bahasa* will also be presented in the Sembawang heartlands, extending *Bulan Bahasa*'s heartland outreach in addition to efforts by Nee Soon, Jurong, Choa Chu Kang and Tampines.

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

Programmes such as these are made possible only by a community's shared passion for the Malay Language as everyone comes forward to lend their expertise and experience to 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 2012, 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 2016



Siti Khalijah Zainal is an actress with more than ten years of experience in theatre. She made her debut as a full-time theatre actress after she attended the year-long Theatre for Youth Ensemble programme in 2003, organised by The Necessary Stage (TNS).

Since then, she has acted in a wide range of productions by local theatre companies such as Wild Rice, Cake Theatrical Productions, *Teater Ekamatra*, Dream Academy and The Presenting Company.

Some of her acting credits include *Nadirah*, *Gemuk Girls*, *Dan Tiga Dara Terbang Ke Bulan*, *Model Citizens*, *Hansel & Gretel* and *Happy Ever Laughter*.

She has also toured with theatre productions to Scotland, Australia and Russia. Her one-woman production, *Best Of*, at the George Town Festival 2013 in Penang, Malaysia was well received and the upcoming (and sold out) play *Rosnah* presented by TNS at Pesta Raya, will also see her in the titular role.

Siti won Best Actress for her role in *Model Citizens* at the LIFE! Theatre Awards 2011 and was awarded the Young Artist Award by the National Arts Council in 2014.

Siti is passionate about promoting the Malay language to youths. As *Duta Bahasa*, she hopes to heighten their language appreciation as she presents the beauty and vibrancy of the language in her Malay productions.



Annex 1

Duta Bahasa 2016



Megat Muhammad Firdaus Mohamad is founder and conductor of *Orkestra Sri Temasek*. A versatile instrumentalist who plays the accordion, flute and violin, he is also arranger and composer, as he writes music regularly for *Orkestra Sri Temasek*.

He has performed with various traditional Malay music ensembles which include the Singapore Malay Orchestra, Singapore Wind Symphony (Youth) and the NIE Symphonic Band.

Megat strongly believes that understanding the history and stories behind the Malay Orchestra and its instruments will enhance appreciation of both traditional Malay music and the Malay language. As such, he makes it a point to share with his audience, his intimate knowledge on Malay Orchestra during each performance in Malay, English and even Mandarin, as he is conversant in the language.

His passion for Malay orchestra motivates him to reach out to youths, as he conducts free Malay Orchestra courses for the community, hoping to ignite appreciation for beautiful traditional music in the younger generations. At the end of each course, participants are given the chance to be a part of *Orkestra Sri Temasek* and perform together with the ensemble.

As a *Duta Bahasa*, Megat believes in the power of Malay Orchestra to bring people together, so everyone can better appreciate the Malay language through poetic lyrics and songs.



Annex 1

Duta Bahasa 2016



Ustazah Nurul 'Izzah Khamsani graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Islamic Theology (Akidah & Falsafah) from Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt.

She currently serves as an Executive Officer at the Jamiyah Ar-Rabitah Mosque in Education and *Dakwah*. She is also an associate member of the *Fatwa* Committee.

From a young age, Ustazah Nurul 'Izzah's father encouraged her to participate in *ceramah* (talks) which sparked her interest in the Malay language. With her family's support, she began to participate in oratorical competitions such as 4PM debates and *pantun* contests.

She keeps her interest in *ceramah* and the Malay language alive as she actively delivers talks and organises Islamic learning and social development programmes for the Malay community.

As a *Duta Bahasa*, she is keen to share her *ceramah* skills with other lecturers and teachers as she continues to encourage members of the community to perfect presentation skills by strengthening their command of the Malay language.



Annex 2

Photos of programmes that will be featured during the launch weekend of *Bulan Bahasa* 2016

Bilik, by TEATRO, Temasek Polytechnic



Peti Tari by Sriwana



School Activity Booth by
Yumin Primary School



Shadow Puppetry and Malay Literature Quiz by
Yusof Ishak Secondary School





Annex 3

Themes for *Bulan Bahasa* 2016

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

The Malay Language Month invites us to use the Malay Language as a means of obtaining 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 graceful and artistic nature of the Malay culture is made even more meaningful through the stylistic qualities of the Malay language that 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 speakers. Regardless of its use through *pantun* or poetry in solemn ceremonies, or conversations in the company of family and friends, the language creates a warm environment 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 to foster ties that matter. Our language will also be conserved through its continued use, allowing us to pass it on to the generations after us.