



*Embargoed Release
4.00pm, Saturday, 7 September 2019
(Please check against delivery)*
SPEECH ORIGINALLY DELIVERED IN MALAY

**SPEECH BY MDM RAHAYU MAHZAM,
CHAIRMAN, BULAN BAHASA 2019 COMMITTEE
AT THE LAUNCH OF BULAN BAHASA 2019,
7 SEPTEMBER 2019,
AT THE ASIAN CIVILISATIONS MUSEUM**

Guest of Honour, President Halimah Yacob

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

Parliamentary colleagues

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Welcome to the Launch of Bulan Bahasa 2019, and thank you, President Halimah Yacob, and fellow guests, for joining us at the Asian Civilisations Museum this afternoon.
2. This year is yet another important milestone for *Bulan Bahasa*, as we launch a new theme, 'Cita. Cinta. Citra. Bahasa Kita.'. It is both a theme, and an invitation to everyone to celebrate our Malay language in every way possible.



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3. Developed by the Bulan Bahasa Committee, this theme, is introduced to depict the versatility of the Malay language. Our language is soft, graceful, rich, vibrant, and full of meaning. ‘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, as a window to knowledge and vehicle of communication. ‘Cinta’ emphasises the need to cultivate the love and appreciation for the Malay language.
4. To convey this visually, Bulan Bahasa’s creative identity this year features five carefully selected illustrations to represent different ideals and aspirations for the community. These illustrations, which are familiar to the Malay community, bring out the strong values and aspirations we hold dear for our young generation.
5. The palari represents the interconnectedness of our Malay community. It is more than a means of transportation for goods and people in the 19th century, as it also anchors us to our rich history and heritage. It symbolises the exchange of ideas, and therefore the strong kinship of the Malay community, which we would like our young to continue maintaining and to continue building strong relationships, through language.
6. The musical heritage of our Malay community is rich. Our collection of songs and lyrics through the ages tells the stories of folk and family, hope and



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aspirations. The choice of a guitar represents our hope that our young ones would continue to explore different means of expressing themselves, through the arts.

7. Innovation and intelligence as represented by the rocket and the mouse deer, will spur our quest for new ideas and innovative ways, as we enhance our language foundation and find more innovative ways to promote the Malay language, to everyone.
8. As a community, we have much to be proud of and our future generation must continue to bravely champion our language and culture. Just as the lion represents courage, this is now a symbol of the will and resilience of our community as we remain steadfast as users, custodians and champions of the Malay language.
9. To promote the Malay language requires commitment, passion and love, and this has always been exemplified by our Duta Bahasa. We hope that the Duta Bahasa appointed today, Mr Aqmal Noor, Ms Nabillah Jalal and Mr Zhulkarnain Abdul Rahim will continue to inspire our young, and the community. Congratulations, and I thank you for your commitment to our Malay language, and to our cause in promoting it. We welcome you to our family of Duta Bahasa who support a unique role and responsibility, as we share with the community our passion for the Malay language.



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10. We also place similar hopes for our young ambassadors, Rakan-rakan Bahasa to complement the work done by our Duta Bahasa in spreading the love for the language. These students are the future generation who would inherit the Malay language and culture, and perhaps they too may become Duta Bahasa in the future. Whilst there is already much done during official school hours, interest in the Malay language is also cultivated beyond the classroom. This was evident as we witnessed the enthusiasm from both teachers and students as they took part in Pertandingan Newsmaker, Penterjemah Pintar and museum guide training sessions, this year. We thank our Malay language teachers for the time, dedication and commitment to nurture our students interest in the Malay language.
11. Our Rakan Bahasa have worked and trained hard especially for today, as they become museum guides for all our visitors. They have studied the museum's artefacts from the Malay world, written their own scripts in Malay, and practised hard with the Asian Civilisations Museum's staff, docents, and their Malay Language teachers, who have taken much time to get them ready for today. So please take your time to join our Rakan Bahasa in the galleries, to talk to them and listen to their stories, as they guide you in the museum.
12. Just as we expect or hope for our young to appreciate our history and understand our culture to keep our Malay language alive, we should also keep



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up with the technologically savvy younger generation, as they navigate a fast-changing world.

13. With us at today's launch, are many community and school partners such as Sriwana, Ilham Childcare, Orchid Park Secondary School and Perguruan Silat Seni Gayong Singapura, who have come together to present an array of programmes for all visitors, through board games, performances, competitions and many more interesting activities. Their efforts illustrate the innovation and new ideas which can bring the language to life in today's world, as we continue to appeal especially the young to pique their interest in the Malay language.
14. Bulan Bahasa as an annual signature festival for our community, has grown over the past 31 years. Its achievements would not have been possible if not for the strong commitment and support from the Malay Language Learning and Promotion Committee (MLLPC), Lee Kuan Yew Fund for Bilingualism (LKYFB) and the National Translation Committee (NTC).
15. Bulan Bahasa is also fortunate to receive continuous support from the following organisations. My sincerest appreciation also goes to the Cultural Matching Fund, Toteboard, Singapore Press Holdings Foundation, Hong Leong Foundation, Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple, MUIS, Shaw Foundation, Second Chance, and SBS Transit.



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16. I would also like to thank the Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre, Teevers, F&N, Auric Pacific, Rumah Makan Minang and The Malayan Council.
17. My gratitude also goes out to the Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM), the National Library Board (NLB), Malay Heritage Centre (MHC) and Wisma Geylang Serai (WGS) that have strongly supported us and our partners for our Bulan Bahasa programmes and celebrations that will take place all the way till 13 October 2019.
18. Promoting the language is not only confined to teachers and parents, but it is the community's responsibility. Bulan Bahasa has been fortunate to receive the very strong support of our community partners such as the People's Association (PA), MESRA and all the different Malay Activity Executive Committee (MAECs) that have enabled the groundswell of efforts by community organisations and community-at-large. There will also be more opportunities to experience activities and programmes related to the Malay language and culture in Raikan Ilmu, organised by MENDAKI, this October. It is very encouraging to see the various programmes that are organised for our community, and we hope that this collective effort in reaching out to the community will continue.
19. On behalf of the Bulan Bahasa Committee and the Malay Language Council, Singapore, I would like to thank each and every one of our funding and venue



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partners, donors, sponsors, and supporters, and we look forward to your continued partnership with us.

20. Everyone in the audience today would also have received the second edition of the 'Sekata Journal' which was re-launched by the Malay Language Council, Singapore last year. My deepest thanks to all contributors of this year's edition of 'Sekata' and our editors – Cikgu Suratman Markasan, Mr Mohd Raman Daud, Mr Jamal Ismail, Dr Noridah Kamari, Mr Tajudin Jaffar and Mr Juffri Supa'at.
21. Alongside 'Sekata' are the Bulan Bahasa notebooks, put together by the Anugerah Guru Arif Budiman (AGAB) award-winning teachers, Cikgu Nurhiza Mohamed, Cikgu Amirul Asri, Cikgu Norafizah Shariff, Cikgu Zareen Shariff and Cikgu Roslie Buang Sidik. May the community, especially students, benefit from this rich body of written works.
22. The preparation for Bulan Bahasa 2019 is again another concerted effort by the Bulan Bahasa Committee. My thanks to all Committee members, who have given much of their time and effort to make Bulan Bahasa celebrations colourful this year. May I invite everyone to join me in a round of applause for the Committee members please.
23. We are also well supported by the National Heritage Board (NHB), secretariat to the Malay Language Council, Singapore and the Bulan Bahasa Committee.



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For all the planning and hard work to make Bulan Bahasa 2019 possible, thank you.

24. The Malay language offers a window to the Malay community's wealth of knowledge, history and culture, and it is important for us to continue discovering its beauty. We hope that the community will continue to experiment and innovate with new ideas to attract people, especially the young to grow their interest in the Malay language.
25. Our continued use and appreciation of the Malay language and culture is dependent on us, and our efforts must continue. This responsibility towards the next generations must be shared by all of us.
26. May our Malay language continue to be relevant and may our young continue to keep our language alive.

Kalau setia kukuhkanlah cita,

Kalau bangga laungkanlah citra;

Kalau sayang semaikanlah cinta,

Bulan Bahasa milik kita semua.

27. Thank you.