

MEDIA RELEASE

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CELEBRATING THE TAMIL LANGUAGE FESTIVAL IN SINGAPORE

The Tamil Language Council is pleased to anchor this year's celebrations of the Tamil Language Festival (TLF) with a strong presentation of 52 programmes by 45 partners and four schools, as the community unites to promote and preserve the Tamil language in Singapore.

Tamil Language Festival 2017

Highlight presentations for this year's festival will feature prominently, two universally acclaimed Tamil literary pieces performed for the first time in Singapore by renowned overseas groups, underscoring the present day stature of the festival and its growth through the years.

Kalki's popular novel *Ponniyin Selvan* will be staged by Arte Compass at the Esplanade from 28 to 30 April 2017. This Tamil theatre production will also present subtitles in English, so that non-Tamil speaking theatre goers may also appreciate this enactment of a great historical novel.

In addition to this full length stage presentation for the Tamil Language Festival, Arte Compass also conducted school workshops so students may further appreciate the story of *Ponniyin Selvan*, and acting techniques required to stage this production.

"Arte Compass is privileged to be a part of the Tamil Language Festival this year. Together with SS International, we hope to reignite the interest in Tamil literature, arts and traditions amongst the local community and especially amongst the younger generation," says Mrs Akila Iyengar, Director of Arte Compass Pte Ltd.

SYAMA, a new partner to the festival, is also extremely delighted to support the Tamil Language Festival's commitment to the development of the Tamil language in Singapore. The traditional epic *Sivakamiyin Sabatham* will be brought to life for the audience, using classical Indian music and dance. Led by a predominantly Sri Lankan cast, Singapore's talents in Tamil drama and dance will also play significant roles in this high calibre production.

Traditional Music of Tanjore is also a new partner to the festival. The performance *Thamizh Isai* will celebrate and present Tamil poems and writing through music.

Other prominent partners this year will include the Indian Heritage Centre (IHC), the National Library Board (NLB), the National Book Development Council of Singapore (NBDCS), and the Ministry of Education's Tamil Language Learning and Promotion Committee (TLLPC) and Umar Pulavar Tamil Language Centre (UPTLC), and more.

This year's festival will take place from 1 to 30 April 2017 and the community can participate in the range of literary, oratorical and cultural events that will encourage everyone to "Love Tamil, Speak Tamil", embrace their mother tongue and use the language in their daily lives.

The Tamil Language Festival 2017 will officially launch at the MES Theatre, Mediacorp, with the ceremony and programme broadcast "live" on Vasantham at 6.30pm on Sunday 2 April 2017.

"The success of the Tamil Language Festival would not have been possible if not for our many programme partners that have supported us for so many years. We welcome ten new partners this year and are particularly heartened by new collaborations with overseas participants from Sri Lanka and Chennai who will be dramatizing critically acclaimed literary works for the local Tamil community."

“We are also grateful to our literary pioneers as champions of the Tamil language, and we remain hopeful that the next generation will continue to take pride in the rich Tamil language that will continue to be ours to preserve. Our generous donors have enabled our progress in promoting and preserving our Mother Tongue, and the Tamil Language Council looks forward to presenting even more Tamil language programmes beyond the festival month in future,” says Mr R Rajaram, Chairman of the Tamil Language Council.

A Festival For Everyone

The Tamil Language Festival has over the years, cultivated a youth following and this year enjoys the continued support of several youth organisations, especially those from the tertiary institutions.

National University of Singapore Tamil Language Society (NUS TLS) remains an active partner of the Tamil Language Festival, and will host Yutham 2017. This is a Tamil vocabulary competition for secondary and pre-university students. Yutham 2017 aims to encourage students to explore Tamil vocabulary in a fun and light-hearted manner and expose them to words known to Singapore context.

Nanyang Technology University of Singapore Tamil Literary Society (NTU TLS) is a new partner for the festival. They will present a quiz and play based on the epic *Mahabharatham* and will target youths and students.

Tertiary students may also be interested in a session on short-film production, organized by the festival's new partner, Vasagar Vattam. The session aims to boost capability in Tamil scriptwriting, and trainers will also provide participants with the opportunity to discuss and learn technical skills related to the art of production.

The festival will also widen its reach through bilingual sessions and programmes presented in English by key partners this year.

The Indian Heritage Centre will present “An Evolution of the Tamil Script: An Archaeological Perspective”, a workshop with Dr K Rajan. Dr Rajan will discuss the evolution of the Tamil script from Brahmi to Vattaluttu, to the script as we know it today. This workshop will be followed by a customized tour of the institution's collection and display that traces early contact between South and Southeast Asia. The Indian Heritage Centre will present two sessions of the workshop and tour, one in Tamil and one in English, on 14 and 15 April, respectively.

IM.PROF will conduct an interactive talk and presentation in both Tamil and English, titled “Survival Instinct and Evolution of Tamil Language in the Last Century”. This multi-media session will present Tamil's rise from the Dravidian era, and discuss Tamil's evolution as a language that remains in use today.

Living Language, Living Heritage

As a continuing collaboration between the National Heritage Board and the Umar Pulavar Tamil Language Centre, a third edition of the “Living Language, Living Heritage” notebooks will also be produced and distributed to students and the public this year. This year's edition will feature a selection of Tamil couplets.

Outreach for TLF 2017

In an effort to promote this year's festival, all our programme partners will also come together for an Outreach and Publicity Drive at Little India on Sunday, 26 March 2017. This effort is supported by the Little India Shopkeepers & Heritage Association (LISHA). The festival's

calendar of events and posters will be distributed to the public and the business community to invite their support towards the month-long Tamil Language Festival.

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About Tamil Language Council and the Tamil Language Festival

The Tamil Language Festival is spearheaded by the Tamil Language Council which was formed in 2000 under the auspices of MICA. The Council comprises representatives from the education sector, major community organisations, arts groups and the media.

The Council has organised the festival since 2007 with partner organisations, marking it as a major event in their calendar. The festival has also enjoyed a strong and growing number of partners over the years.

A key partner for the Tamil Language Festival is MOE's Tamil Language and Learning Promotion Committee (TLLPC). Set up in 2006. TLLPC's strategic focus is to promote the speaking and learning of Tamil among students.