

**SPEECH BY DR YAACOB IBRAHIM
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AT THE MUIS AWARDS AND PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE
CHEQUE PRESENTATION CEREMONY 2015
SATURDAY, 5 SEPT 2015**

Presiden Tony Tan Keng Yam

Anggota Majlis Tertinggi Muis

Tuan-Tuan & Puan-Puan sekalian

Assalamualaikum wr wb

Saya berbesar hati dapat bersama-sama anda di Majlis Anugerah Muis serta Majlis Penyampaian Cek kepada Dana Cabaran Presiden 2015 pada petang ini.

2. Sebagai badan yang bertanggungjawab atas ehwal masyarakat Islam Singapura, peranan Muis tidak akan dapat dilaksanakan sepenuhnya tanpa sokongan para relawan. Pada tahun 1990, Muis memulakan tradisi meraikan sumbangan tenaga relawan khusus kepada pembangunan masjid dan diluaskan kepada institusi-institusi sosio-agama seperti madrasah dan badan-badan Melayu/Islam. Sebentar lagi 9 individu cemerlang akan menerima Anugerah Jasa Bakti dan Jasa Cemerlang Muis. Mereka adalah insan mithali yang telah menabur bakti dan menjadi contoh kepada kita semua. Semoga segala amal jariah dan pengorbanan mereka diberkati Allah (swt).

3. Tahun ini adalah tahun yang istimewa kerana kita menyambut ulang tahun ke 50 negara kita yang tercinta ini. Pada kesempatan ini Muis ingin mengiktiraf sumbangan dan jasa para perintis Muis yang membina wawasan membangunkan negara dan masyarakat Islam Singapura. Baik dari segi membangunkan aset masyarakat Islam, mahupun meningkatkan taraf pendidikan Islam bagi anak-anak kita, para perintis Muis telah banyak memberi sumbangan dari segi pengalaman dan kepakaran mereka demi kesejahteraan masyarakat. Sukacita saya memaklumkan bahawa kami akan meraikan sebelas individu dengan Anugerah Muis SG50 pada hari ini.

4. Pada petang ini, Muis juga akan menyerahkan cek hasil sumbangan umat Islam Singapura kepada Dana Cabaran Presiden. Sumbangan ini mencerminkan nilai masyarakat Islam sebagai Rahmatan Lil Alamin, penyebar rahmat untuk semua.

5. Adalah mustahil untuk membalas jasa mereka, namun majlis penghargaan ini sedikit-sebanyak merakamkan penghargaan kami kepada para pemimpin dan relawan kita yang telah banyak menabur bakti dan bekerjasama dengan Muis untuk memakmurkan masyarakat Islam Singapura.

6. Saya berharap anak muda kita akan terpanggil untuk meneruskan perjuangan agar masyarakat Islam kekal maju ke hadapan.

Kini izinkan saya melanjutkan ucapan saya dalam bahasa Inggeris.

Ladies & Gentlemen

1. Allow me to thank His Excellency, President Tony Tan Keng Yam, for gracing our Muis Awards Ceremony, held at the Istana for the first time. This year is the 25th anniversary of the Muis Awards and today, Muis will present the Jasa Cemerlang and Jasa Bakti to outstanding individuals who have made invaluable contributions to the socio-religious life of Singaporean Muslims, in particular through the mosque sector and other socio-religious institutions in the community including our madrasah and Malay/Muslim organisations.

Jasa Cemerlang & Jasa Bakti Recipients

2. This year's Jasa Cemerlang recipient is Hj Izzuddin Taherally, the President of Malay Youth Literacy Association or 4PM (*"pronounced Empat PM"*). This award recognises Hj Izzuddin's service to the community for over three decades, not only at 4PM but also in the mosque sector and Yayasan MENDAKI. Besides serving the needs of youth from less privileged families, 4PM creates opportunities for youth to serve in the spirit of self-help or gotong royong, such as the Resilient Youth Programme and the Ramadan on Wheels project. Hj Izzuddin was also one of the pioneers in MENDAKI as they built up their focus on Education and Youth. Beyond the Muslim community, he has also served on the national stage as Council Member of the National Youth Achievement Award. Hj Izzuddin continues to serve the community and makes it a point to share his wealth of experience with the torch bearers of tomorrow.

3. The eight Jasa Bakti recipients we are honouring this afternoon come from many backgrounds and have served in various capacities. Yet, they all share a way of life that is shaped by a sense of purpose in serving others. I am truly humbled by their spirit of service and I hope that they will continue their good work in serving the community. Thank you Hj Izzudin and all our recipients!

Muis SG50 Award

4. Less than a month ago, we celebrated our nation's 50th birthday. Our leaders and pioneers made tremendous sacrifices to change the odds in our favour and build

the Singapore we know today. This afternoon, Muis would also like to honour and recognise Muis Council members who have contributed significantly towards nation building, both for and beyond the Muslim community. Despite challenges of the past, our Muis Council members were steadfast and contributed great ideas to help uplift the community, be it in developing assets for community development and enhancing Islamic education for our children. To give them due recognition, Muis introduced a special Muis SG50 award this year.

5. Let me highlight two examples.

6. Serving in the Muis Council for the past 29 years, Hj Shafawi Ahmad, fondly known to many as Cikgu Shafawi, has been contributing actively to policy formulation on key areas of the community's religious life such as in education, mosque management, social assistance, and more.

7. Beyond Muis, Cikgu Shafawi was one of the founding members of Yayasan MENDAKI and also served as President of 4PM. He also served at the national level, contributing to the: (i) Presidential Council for Minority Rights; (ii) National Committee Against Drug Abuse; (iii) Advisory Council for the Aged; as well as (iv) Community Chest. In many ways, Cikgu Shafawi has dedicated his life by giving exemplary service to the community and nation.

8. Another outstanding recipient is Allahyarham Hj Ebrahim Marican, who was known to many as a passionate and devoted man who always had the Muslim community's interest at heart. As a Muis Council member, he contributed his expertise on how to maximise the potential of wakaf. He also served in Appeal Board and contributed to the development of Muslim family law in Singapore. Additionally, he served in various capacities in the Federation of Indian Muslims, Bencoolen Mosque Management Board and Yayasan MENDAKI. His passing is a great loss to us and may Allah SWT accept his deeds and place him among the righteous.

Spirit of Giving in the Community

9. Beyond these individuals, the support from the community has enabled Muis to continue serving our people.

10. The community has collectively contributed \$184M¹ to the Mosque Building Fund since its inception in 1975, which enabled Muis to build 24 modern and well-equipped mosques in the HDB heartlands. In addition, the community's generous contributions have enabled our older mosques to be upgraded and rejuvenated.

11. It is this spirit of generosity and empathy by the community that has also enabled Muis to extend more zakat assistance and empowerment schemes to the poor

¹ This is the portion for MBF only, excluding Mendaki and Religious Education. Total amount raised under MBMF from 1975-2014 was \$298M.

and needy. From last year onwards, Muis was able to extend zakat assistance to over 1,000 more people, on top of our existing beneficiaries.

12. Another invaluable community resource is our wakaf properties. In April this year, I was privileged to launch the Wakaf Heritage Trail, which highlighted to our young the legacy, piety, and generosity of our far-sighted *wakif*, or benefactors. I am glad that this spirit of philanthropy is strong in our community today. In the spirit of our early philanthropists who believed in “paying it forward”, I understand that our eleven recipients of the Muis SG50 Awards have chosen to donate their cash award to their chosen charitable institutions. Muis will match their generosity with a matching grant to that institution. I am happy to report that through this initiative, nine institutions will be receiving a total of \$55,000.

13. In addition, the community has also been manifesting its spirit of blessings to all, in national initiatives such as the President’s Challenge. Later, Muis will be handing over a cheque of \$100,000 for the President’s Challenge.

Honouring the Pioneer Generation

14. As we celebrate the 25th Year of Muis Awards, and 50 Years of nationhood, Muis - together with MENDAKI- is happy to support the Pioneer Generation Joint Committee (PGJC) headed by Speaker of Parliament, Madam Halimah Yaacob and Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Transport, Associate Professor Faishal Ibrahim.

15. I am pleased to note that the PGJC will be publishing a book to honour 50 pioneer Muslim individuals from various fields that have contributed to the nation’s success. This effort to document our legacy aims to serve as a reminder of the struggles and sacrifices of our forefathers.

16. In closing, let me take this opportunity to express my appreciation once again to our award recipients for their foresight, dedication, compassion and generosity. We may never get to repay our pioneers and volunteers, hence today’s appreciation ceremony is a little token in their honour. They have gone out of their way and worked closely with Muis to ensure a strong foundation for the Muslim community to forge ahead. I hope the younger generation will be inspired to carry on this legacy for the community’s continued success.

17. Thank you.