

Headline	Top notch speakers to share ideas		
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Top notch speakers to share ideas

THE impending 6th Johor English Language Conference is turning out to be a conference with a difference.

Some 350 English Language teachers and lecturers are expected to attend the three-day event in M Suites Hotel in Johor Baru starting on Oct 9.

The conference themed "New Challenges in English Language Teaching" is organised by the Johor English Language Teaching Association (Jelta).

M Suites Hotel is the main sponsor with Oxford Fajar, Better Malaysia Foundation and Pelangi Publications as co-sponsors.

The *New Straits Times* (NST) is the official newspaper of the conference.

This year, teachers from schools in the Kota Tinggi, Kulajaya, Pasir Gudang and Pontian districts are specially invited to attend the conference at no cost.

This will be the fourth time M Suites Hotel and Oxford Fajar are sponsoring the event.

This year's conference would also be officiated by Tunku Tun Aminah + Sultan Ibrahim, the daughter of Sultan of Johor.

New Straits Times Press group managing editor Datuk Abdul Jalil Hamid is scheduled to deliver the keynote address.

M Suites Hotel has fully sponsored the venue, the meals for the three days and accommodation for the speakers, as part of its corporate social responsibility commitment to support education.

M Suites Hotel's charity programmes have always centred

around education and its related fields.

Its executive director Datin Dr Maimunah Abdul Rahman is passionate about education and believes that learning is a lifelong process.

She said: "Education is not limited

only to students but also to the educators who should keep abreast of the latest teaching aids, strategies and technology."

Maimunah said the collaboration with Jelta and the state education department is aimed at improving the language proficiency of teachers and educators.

This year will also see a number of Form Six students from Johor Baru participating in the event.

Of particular interest will be the "Model United Nations Programme".

In this session, students will take on the roles of delegates from specific countries and debate on the conference theme.

Members from the floor can then give their views on points discussed during the debate.

This session will enable teachers and students to gain valuable insight into presentation skills, one of the biggest challenges lecturers and teachers claim are lacking among professionals.

Preparations of the conference began months ago with a team comprising Jelta committee members and five Upper Six students.

This is the first time students are engaged in the organising of the conference.

Jelta vice-chairman Parasakthi Chidambaram said the purpose of engaging students in the planning was to ensure that they gained confidence in organising such an event and in the process used their Higher Order Thinking (HOT) skills.

Parasakthi stressed that the students were being trained to boost their self-confidence, be independent and use their public-speaking skills.

She said the students were motivated to voice their opinions and express their ideas.

The Upper Six girls are elated and enthusiastic and are working round-the-clock to ensure there are no

glitches. Teachers attending the conference will be happy to know that there is a lineup of top notch speakers.

It will also be an opportunity for the teachers to meet and exchange ideas with the country's English Language experts.

The organisers are going to cover an extensive range of topics in English education and participants will

find their presentations enriching and insightful.

Topping the list will be Assoc Prof Dr Cynthia Yolanda Doss of Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), Shah Alam; Dr Hariharan Krishnasamy of University Utara Malaysia (UUM); Prof Dr Nesamalar Chitravelu, formerly of Universiti Malaya (UM); and Assoc Prof Khairi Izuan Abdullah, previously from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), Skudai.

Others on the list include Pearly Chua who played Emily Gan, the lead role in *Emily of Emerald Hill*; Dr Lee Su Kim, an illustrious writer cum literary and cultural activist; Adibah Kalid, a well-known principal and author of several academic books; and Jaib Singh, a renowned local dramatist and educator.

I am sure the presentations offered will have something for teachers of all levels. A number of papers highlighted critical thinking and creativity in English Language teaching and learning.

A number of educators say that this conference is the most eagerly anticipated one since Jelta began its drive to improve English Language proficiency in the state a decade ago.

English Language teaching and learning has always been undergoing changes and is full of challenges.

Yet, Jelta is looking for something new to present to the educators and the community.

And they plan to take the teaching and learning of English Language to a higher level.

Jelta hopes to spark a more pragmatic beginning and an effective approach to teaching and learning En-

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click with the conference

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The Jelita conference will cover an extensive range of topics in English education. Pix by Vincent D'Silva

M Suites Hotel is the venue for
the three-day Jelita conference.

