

**MAJLIS BANDARAYA SHAH ALAM  
(BAHAGIAN KORPORAT DAN PERHUBUNGAN AWAM)**

AKHBAR : THE STAR  
TARIKH : 20 JULAI 2016

# Filipino choir wins mayor's award

Group from Pangasinan province also bags two other titles at inaugural Shah Alam festival

SINGING their way to the top, Balon Dagupan children's choir from the Philippines claimed the Shah Alam Mayor's Award during the inaugural Malaysian International Children's Choral Festival 2016.

Along with the coveted award, the children aged between nine and 13 years old took home the Gold Diploma Award and the title of Most Promising Overseas Choir Group.

Balon Dagupan choir conductor Virginia Llamas Mendosa, 45, said the group did not expect to make a clean sweep of the prizes.

"We are a very young choir group which was only formed in June last year. Our group only started practising at the end of April and this is only our second competition.

"The children in this choir are from 15 different schools around Pangasinan province in the Philippines. They didn't actually know each other until they came together to sing.

"But they sing wonderfully together now and I am so proud of all that we have achieved here," she said during the finale at the Shah Alam Royal Theatre.

Balon Dagupan choir singer Mary Krystal Nicole Llamas, 11, was teary eyed as she spoke about her team's winning streak.

"We are so blessed to have won. Singing together is happiness to me and my choir is family," she said.

On the home front, the Most Promising Malaysian Choir award was bagged by SJK (C) Chong Cheng from Penang and the Best Conductor Award went to Amylea Azizan from SK Bukit Damansara, Kuala Lumpur.

Organised by SK Section 13, Shah Alam with support from the Shah Alam City Council, 15 schools from seven states across Malaysia and four countries – Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam and India – competed in the inaugural festival.

Shah Alam mayor Datuk Ahmad Zaharin Mohd Saad said the festival served as a valuable platform to create students who excel-

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Ahmad Zaharin

led in both academic and the arts.

"Through this festival, we are able to build stronger ties with our neighbouring countries.

"I also believe this programme will provide room for shared knowledge of music among all the schools in the region and encourage more choirs to take part in future," he said.

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Filipino choir group Balon Dagupan celebrating their victory after bagging three awards at the Malaysia International Children's Choral Festival 2016 at the Shah Alam Royal Theatre. — Photos: MOHAMAD SHAHRIL/The Star



(From second left) SK Seksyen 13, Shah Alam headmistress Anis Ibrahim and Ahmad Zaharin presenting the grand Gold Diploma Award to Mendosa.