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It's French Week in KL!

Activities include guided tours in the language at National Museum

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BONJOUR! The 13th French Language Week was launched by the French Ambassador to Malaysia Alain du Boispean recently.

The event, from April 1 to 6, is aimed at promoting the various French-speaking countries (Francophonie) represented in Malaysia as well as the French language.

It is organised by 23 diplomatic missions in Kuala Lumpur, which are members of the International Organisation of Francophonie (OIF).

According to the patron of the French Language Week Nor Zihan Hussin, French is the most popular European language after English in Malaysia.

"It is now taught in 38 secondary schools (residential and day schools), universities, colleges, international schools and the Alliance Francaise of Kuala Lumpur and Penang.

"There are more than 12,000 Malaysians studying the language in the country," she said.

Nor Zihan is also the officer in charge of French language education in secondary schools at the Curriculum Development Centre under the Education Ministry.

In conjunction with the event, the French-language contest "French, a

key to open the world" was also held on March 13 and winners were presented with their prizes at the launch.

First prize winner Lily See, 23, a second-year Bachelors of Arts student from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), who is specialising in the French language, was still in shock even after receiving her prize.

"It seems impossible that I've won and it's my birthday today, too. I have to keep telling myself that this is real.

"At first it was hard for me to learn the language but now I am used to it," she said.

See won a return air ticket to Paris, France, plus one week accommodation.

Second prize winner Nurazini Abdul Aziz, 21, also a UPM student pursuing French, just tried her luck by entering the contest.

"I never thought that I would have a chance of winning but I am very

happy.

"My interest in learning the language came from my sister, who has taken the language in college.

"I hope to become a language lecturer in the future," she said.

Nurazini won a trip to Port Louis, Mauritius, while third prize winner Syafiq Zikri Salleh, 19, won a trip to Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam.

Among the programmes planned for the event are guided tours in

French at the National Museum from April 1 to 5 and talks on Francophonie in universities by representatives of diplomatic missions which are members of the International French-speaking countries like Belgium, France, Romania, Switzerland and Vietnam.

Catch them at Universiti Teknologi Mara, Shah Alam, (Belgium, France & Romania) today and at Univeristi Kuala Lumpur and Malaysia-France Institute (Belgium, France & Switzerland) on Sunday.

On the last day, the Buffet de la Francophonie featuring a rendezvous will be held in the garden of the Alliance Francaise of Kuala Lumpur.

»French is the most popular European language after English in Malaysia«

NOR ZIHAN HUSSIN

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Joyful day: du Boispean (second from left) with the winners of the French language contest (from left) Syafiq Zikri, Lily See and Nurazini.



Lily See: 'At first it was hard for me to learn the language but now I'm used to it.'