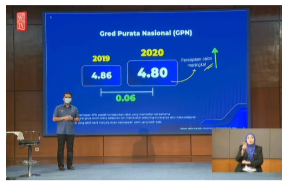


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New chapter for publishing house



By [Nor Ain Mohamed Radhi](#) - June 11, 2017 @ 11:28am



Managing director of Oxford Fajar, Sharmini Nagulan, showing the earliest books published by the brand in Shah Alam. Pix by Syarafiq Abd Samad

Oxford Fajar Sdn Bhd, one of the oldest and largest publishing houses in the country, is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year.

Its presence in Malaysia began with the establishment of an Oxford University Press (OUP) branch here, shortly after the country's independence in 1957.

"Initially, OUP only imported and sold OUP titles from the United Kingdom.

"The first book published locally was *Crocodile Dies Twice* by Shamus Fraser, which was later translated into Bahasa Malaysia in 1958 titled, *Buaya Mati Dua Kali*," said Oxford Fajar managing director Sharmini Nagulan in an interview with the *New Sunday Times* recently.

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In 1969, OUP launched Penerbit Fajar Bakti, a local publishing arm to cater to the national school curriculum.

"The set-up was to support the change in the schools' medium of instruction from English to Malay at that time."



Sharmini said besides catering to the national curriculum, Fajar Bakti also published school textbooks for various class standards.

"These included *Human and Economic Geography* by Goh Cheng Leong and Gillian C. Morgan, that was sold overseas; and *Certificate Physical and Human Geography*, also by Goh."

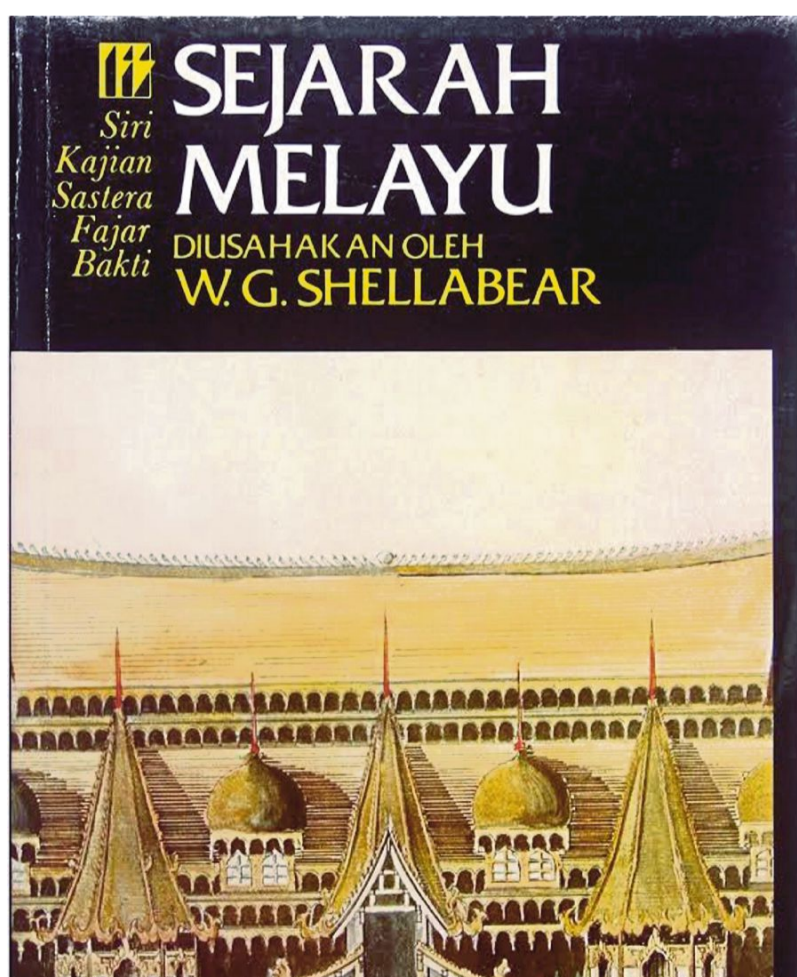
To preserve the rich cultural diversity of the region for posterity, Penerbit Fajar Bakti also published a series on the history, heritage and culture of Southeast Asia, namely Indonesia and Thailand.

Among the titles were *The Art and Culture of Bali*, *The History of Sumatra*, *The Raffles Drawings and Papers on Malay Subjects*.

"These titles helped introduce the region to the world," she said.

The publishing house also collaborated with renowned local authors such as Usman Awang, A Samad Said, Shahnun Ahmad and Dr Kamaludin Muhammad (Keris Mas), to promote Malay literature.

"Among the titles were *Sejarah Melayu*, *Hang Tuah*, *Hikayat Malim Deman* and *Iakah Salmah?*"



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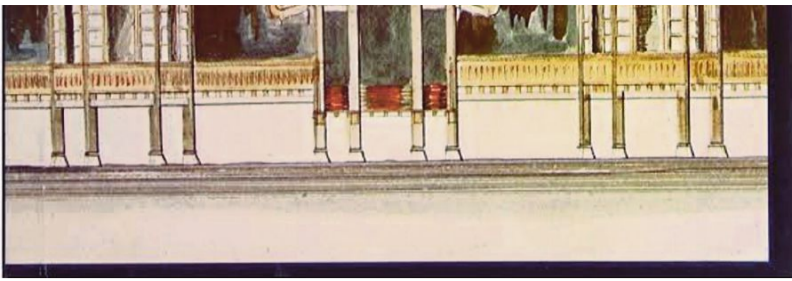
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“Among the titles were Sejarah Melayu, Hang Tuah, Hikayat Malim Deman and Iakah Salmah?”

After selling a 30 per cent stake to Koperasi Pendidikan Nasional Berhad (Kopenas), the publisher became a local entity and was renamed Penerbit Fajar Bakti Sdn Bhd in September 1986.

Kopenas vice-chairman Mohd Fadzlah Ahmad said the 30 per cent acquisition was a right move.

“The investment was to promote publishing, particularly in the Malay language,” said Fadzlah, who was also present during the interview.

Fajar Bakti catered to the Integrated Curriculum for Primary Schools (KBSR) and Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools (KBSM) until the early 2000s.

“At the same time, it also built a supplementary publishing list, such as revision guides, model tests, workbooks and atlases with over 300 titles annually.”

Among the first revision series were *Focus*, *Eksplorasi* and *Exploring*. It also produced the famous bilingual *Kamus Dwibahasa (English- Malay and Malay-English)* dictionary.

“To date, over seven million copies of the dictionaries have been sold and it is currently in its seventh edition. The same goes for *Kamus Bergambar (Malay-Jawi-Arabic-English)*. We have sold over two million copies and the pictorial dictionary is now in its seventh edition,” Sharmini said.



In July 2006, the company was rebranded as Oxford Fajar Sdn. Bhd. Among the products introduced are ‘Big Ideas’, ‘Amazing’ and ‘Memory Booster’. Pix by Syarafiq Abd Samad

She said in order to manage the increasing volume of business operations and customer relations, the company had invested in the Systems, Applications and Products (SAP) software solutions.

“It was not easy and it took us a year to implement them to better manage the data and business processes.”

In July 2006, the company was rebranded as Oxford Fajar Sdn Bhd

In July 2000, the company was rebranded as OXFORD FAJAR SRI BINA.

“The rebranding exercise was done to retain the strong brand value of high-quality local publishing established under the name of Penerbit Fajar Bakti, while reinforcing the authority and heritage of OUP.”

In line with the image makeover, the publishing house began developing stronger branding and design enhancements.

“We have been improving not only the content, but also the book covers and design layouts, to make studying more fun.”

Among the products introduced are *Big Ideas*, *Amazing* and *Memory Booster*.

Oxford Fajar began its higher education publishing in 2007, specifically to address the needs of the Malaysian higher education sector.

“Now, with more than 250 titles published in a wide range of disciplines, these Oxford Fajar titles are well received by both students and academics, with many being adopted as mandatory textbooks in local and regional education institutions.

“For example, our book on Islamic banking has been sold overseas,” Sharmini said, adding that the company had been encouraging local authors to write books as they had better grasp of the local syllabus.

Apart from publishing books, Oxford Fajar, through OUP, has also started training English teachers through its Oxford Teachers’ Academy.

“We have workshops on various areas, such as assessment, vocabulary building and classroom teaching, backed by specific products.”



Oxford Fajar’s old office in Loke Yew Building in Kuala Lumpur when it was Oxford University Press

In line with technology advancement, Oxford Fajar has started to blend print with digital resources as well as developing standalone digital resources.

“Oxford Fajar’s offering of digital content has steadily grown over the years, from CD-ROMS and online content to the introduction of interactive e-books (2013) and mobile apps (2016).

“Enriching the teaching and learning process is always the aim of OUP and Oxford Fajar’s approach. In doing this, we incorporate and use digital technology in our publishing materials.”

As it moves into the seventh decade and beyond, Sharmini said Oxford Fajar was now working towards being a total education solution provider.

“Not only will we produce up-to-date titles to support teaching and learning, we will also be focusing on professional development for teachers, through our Oxford Teachers’ Academy and customised programmes.

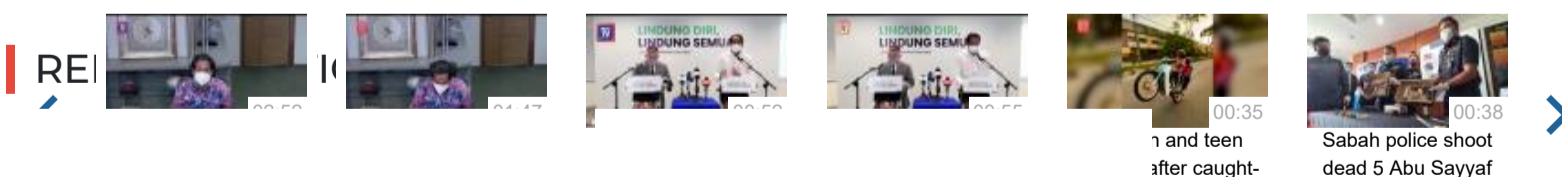
“Oxford Fajar is also looking at developing its human resources, particularly sales representatives, through global and regional training programmes.

“We want our sales representatives to become education consultants, and not simply sell books to schools and teachers.”

She said the company was hoping to expand to Southeast Asia, with Indonesia and the Philippines as its target.

“We are looking at publishing academic books that are customised to meet local needs. While we still have a long way to go, we believe we can do it.”

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