



2003

For Immediate Release

Press Release: PABD and Community Partners Promote Dark Sky Conservation in Melilas

Text and Photographs by the Astronomical Society of Brunei Darussalam (PABD)
18 May 2026

Bandar Seri Begawan - More than 50 participants joined the Dark Sky Melilas Adventure 2026 from 16 to 17 May, experiencing a remarkable celestial showcase under the pristine night skies of Kampong Melilas. The expedition was organised by the Astronomical Society of Brunei Darussalam (PABD) with the support of Mukim and Kampong Consultative Councils of Melilas (MPMK).

The programme began on the afternoon of May 16, with participants assembling at the Jerudong Park car park before departing in a 25 4x4WD vehicle line up. The convoy involved members of Brunei Overland and Expedition Group, BNSTYLE, and Jimny Brunei, who collaborated to support the journey into the rural interior.

Upon arrival shortly before sunset, the group was welcomed by Yang Mulia Haji Yassin bin Abdul Rahim Sap, the head representative of Rumah Panjang Julangan Titah Melilas. A safety briefing and programme overview were delivered, after which participants proceeded to set up their tents for the overnight stay.

During the evening stargazing session, participants learned to identify constellations and observed the planet Jupiter along with its largest moons before cloud cover temporarily obscured the sky. As conditions improved in the early hours of the morning, around 3 am, the clouds parted to reveal a striking view of the Milky Way arching across the horizon. Present during the observation were Yang Mulia Shahronizam bin Haji Md Noh, Penghulu Mukim Sukang, together with local villagers who joined the session.

With the Moon nearing its old phase, the rural landscape of Melilas - one of Brunei's rare sanctuaries with a Bortle Class 2 Typical Truly Dark Sky rating - offered exceptional conditions for stargazing. Under these pristine skies, participants clearly observed the bright core of the Milky Way with the naked eye and captured astrophotography images with the guidance of 15 PABD members. The natural darkness of Melilas revealed the Milky Way in intricate, marbled detail, visible unaided in a way seldom experienced elsewhere in the country.

Muhammad Arif bin Ismail, Programme Coordinator for Dark Sky Melilas Adventure 2026, expressed PABD's aspirations for the initiative, noting that the association aims "to increase public interest and knowledge, especially among the younger generation in rural areas, in the field of astronomy; to create greater awareness about preserving the natural environment from light pollution; and to make this expedition a catalyst for efforts to preserve dark sky areas in the country." He also underscored the importance of strengthening collaboration with government agencies and local communities to expand access to astronomy and *falak syarie* educational activities, particularly in rural regions.

Beyond astronomy activities, the programme also featured a community outreach component led by the participants. Donations of food supplies and essential items were distributed to 14 families residing at the Rumah Panjang, while colouring books were presented to children in the village. PABD additionally contributed a dark sky awareness poster to the head representative of the long house as part of ongoing efforts to promote the protection of natural night skies.

The programme concluded with a closing speech by Hazarry bin Haji Ali Ahmad, PABD Secretary-General, followed by the recital of Doa Selamat. Participants then commenced their journey back to the Jerudong checkpoint, marking the successful and memorable conclusion of Dark Sky Melilas Adventure 2026.



Photo: Final safety briefing and group photo with participants before hitting the road to Melilas.



Photo: Convoy en route to Kampung Melilas, Ulu Belait.

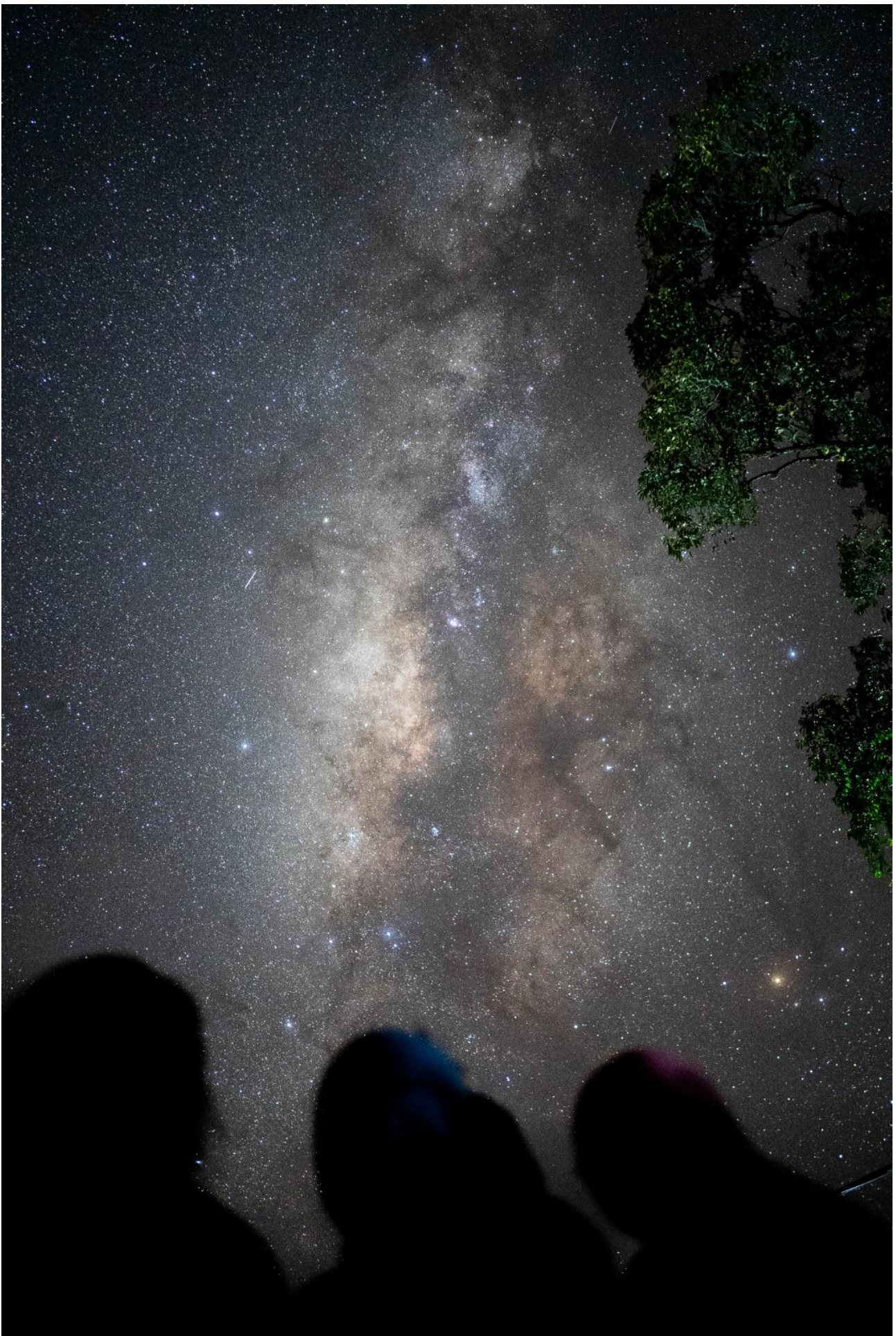


Photo: The magnificent Milky Way core glowing vividly against the dark sky canopy of Melilas (Photo by Ak Muhd Adi Zulhilmi Bin Pg Yakub, member of the Astronomical Society of Brunei Darussalam)



Photo: Local villagers with Yang Mulia Shahronizam bin Hj Md Noh, Penghulu Mukim Sukang, at the stargazing session.



Photo: A participant presenting colouring book donations to children in the local village.



Photo: Participants alongside Melilas village hosts before the return journey.

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For more information, visit www.bruneiastronomy.org.
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**Siaran Akhbar:
PABD dan Rakan Komuniti
Galakkan Melindungi Langit Gelap di Melilas**
Teks dan Gambar oleh Persatuan Astronomi Brunei Darussalam (PABD)
18 Mei 2026

Bandar Seri Begawan - Lebih 50 peserta telah menyertai ekspedisi Dark Sky Melilas Adventure 2026 pada 16 hingga 17 Mei, menyaksikan paparan cakerawala yang menakjubkan di bawah langit gelap yang masih terpelihara di Kampung Melilas, Ulu Belait. Program ini dianjurkan oleh Persatuan Astronomi Brunei Darussalam (PABD) dengan sokongan Majlis Perundingan Mukim dan Kampung Melilas (MPMK).

Ekspedisi bermula pada petang 16 Mei, dengan para peserta berkumpul di tempat letak kereta Jerudong Park sebelum berlepas dalam barisan 25 kenderaan pacuan empat roda (4x4WD) bergerak beriringan. Konvoi tersebut turut disertai oleh ahli-ahli kumpulan Brunei Overland and Expedition Group, BNSTYLE dan Jimmy Brunei, yang bekerjasama bagi menyokong perjalanan ke kawasan pedalaman.

Setibanya di lokasi sebelum senja, rombongan disambut oleh Haji Yassin bin Abdul Rahim Sap, wakil ketua Rumah Panjang Julangan Titah Melilas. Taklimat keselamatan dan penerangan program diberikan sebelum peserta meneruskan persiapan mendirikan khemah bagi penginapan semalaman.

Semasa sesi pencerapan malam, peserta mempelajari cara mengenal pasti buruj dan memerhati planet Musytari bersama bulan-bulan utamanya sebelum awan menutupi langit buat sementara waktu. Apabila keadaan kembali cerah pada awal pagi sekitar jam 3 pagi, awan beransur hilang dan menampilkan pemandangan jalur galaksi Bima Sakti yang melengkung indah di kaki langit. Turut hadir semasa sesi pencerapan ialah Yang Mulia Shahronizam bin Haji Md Noh, Penghulu Mukim Sukang, bersama penduduk kampung yang turut serta.

Dengan fasa bulan menghampiri usia tuanya, landskap pedalaman menjadi kawasan langit gelap bebas dari pencemaran cahaya dengan taraf Bortle Kelas 2 yang telah menawarkan keadaan terbaik untuk aktiviti pencerapan astronomi. Di bawah langit yang begitu gelap, para peserta dapat melihat teras Bima Sakti melalui mata kasar secara langsung serta merakam imej astrofotografi dengan bimbingan ahli PABD seramai 15 orang. Kegelapan langit malam semula jadi tanpa dipengaruhi oleh sumber cahaya tiruan menjadikan objek samawi seperti galaksi Bima Sakti terlihat jelas berjalur dengan taburan bintang yang banyak, satu pengalaman yang jarang diperoleh di tempat lain dalam negara.

Muhammad Arif bin Ismail, Penyelaras Program Dark Sky Melilas Adventure 2026, menyatakan aspirasi PABD terhadap inisiatif ini, bahawa persatuan berhasrat "untuk meningkatkan minat dan pengetahuan masyarakat, khususnya generasi muda di kawasan luar bandar, dalam bidang astronomi; untuk meningkatkan kesedaran mengenai pemeliharaan alam sekitar daripada pencemaran cahaya; dan menjadikan ekspedisi ini sebagai pemangkin kepada usaha memelihara kawasan langit gelap di negara ini." Beliau turut menekankan kepentingan memperkukuh kerjasama dengan agensi kerajaan dan komuniti setempat bagi memperluas akses kepada aktiviti pendidikan astronomi dan falak syarie, khususnya di kawasan pedalaman.

Selain aktiviti astronomi, program ini turut merangkumi komponen khidmat masyarakat oleh para peserta. Sumbangan berupa bekalan makanan dan barangan keperluan asas diagihkan kepada 14 ketua keluarga yang menetap di Rumah Panjang, manakala buku mewarna disampaikan kepada kanak-kanak di kampung tersebut. PABD turut menyumbangkan poster tentang kesedaran langit gelap kepada wakil ketua rumah panjang sebagai sebahagian daripada usaha berterusan mempromosikan kepentingan memelihara langit malam semula jadi.

Program diakhiri dengan ucapan penutup oleh Hazarry bin Haji Ali Ahmad, Setiausaha Agung PABD, diikuti bacaan Doa Selamat. Para peserta kemudian memulakan perjalanan pulang menuju Jerudong.



Foto: Sesi taklimat keselamatan dan sesi bergambar bersama peserta sebelum memulakan perjalanan ke Melilas.



Photo: Konvoi semasa dalam perjalanan menuju ke Kampung Melilas, Ulu Belait.

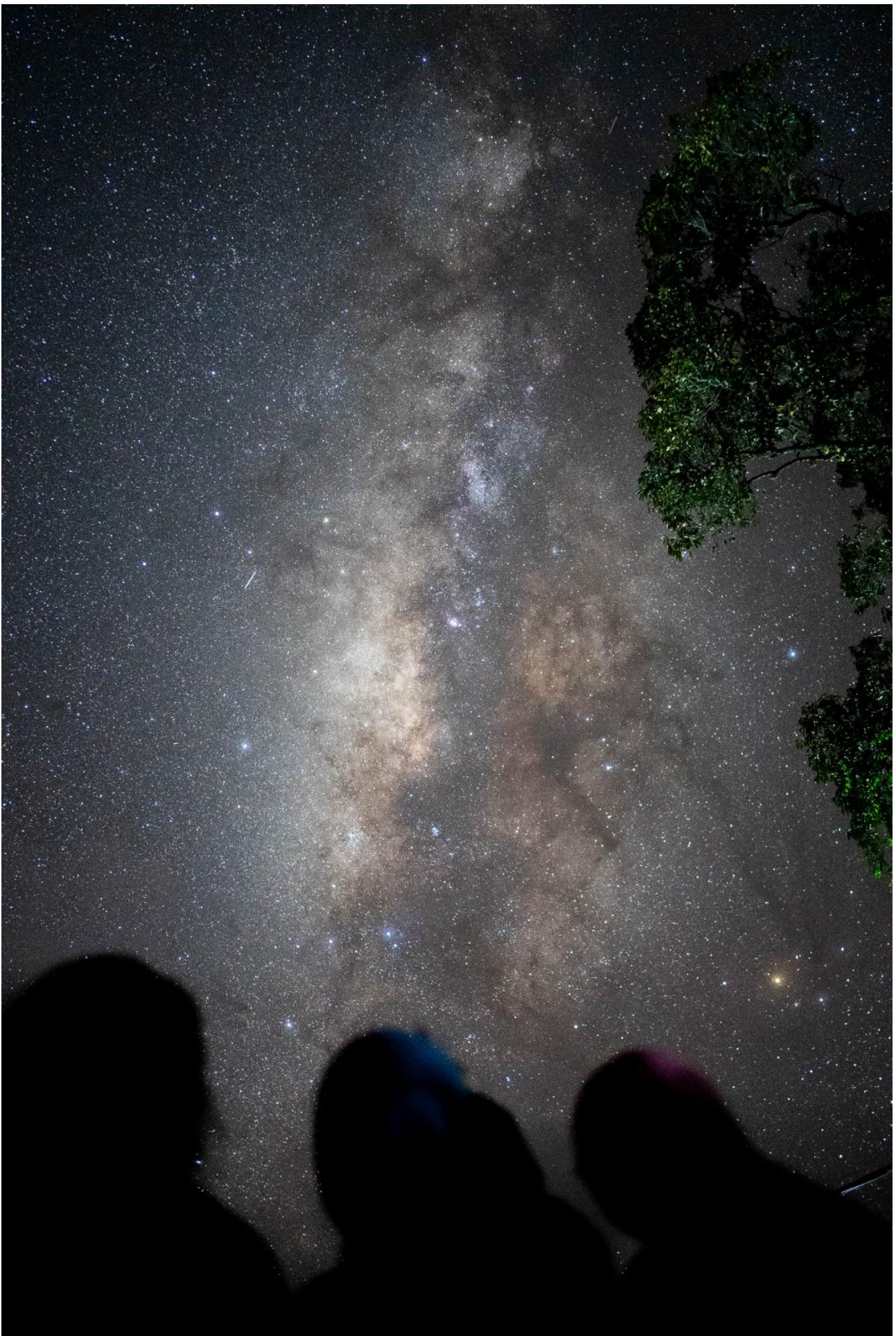


Foto: Teras Jalur Bima Sakti yang menakjubkan bersinar terang dengan jelas dari langit gelap Melilas. (Foto oleh Ak Muhd Adi Zulhilmi bin Pg Yakub, ahli Persatuan Astronomi Brunei Darussalam)



Foto: Penduduk kampung bersama Yang Mulia Shahronizam bin Haji Md Noh, Penghulu Mukim Sukang, semasa sesi pencerapan bintang.



Foto: Seorang peserta menyampaikan sumbangan buku mewarna kepada kanak-kanak di kampung tersebut.



Foto: Para peserta bersama penduduk Kampung Melilas bergambar ramai sebelum memulakan perjalanan pulang.

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