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A new five-year national movement is encouraging Singaporeans to pick up a book for at least 15 minutes a day as part of efforts to strengthen the country's reading culture.

They can track their daily reading time and earn virtual rewards as part of a challenge under the ReadSG movement launched by the National Library Board (NLB) on Sept 6.

The ReadSG Challenge, which runs on government citizen engagement platform CrowdTask SG, includes features such as personal goal-setting, reading streaks, experience points and redeemable virtual coins.

It is being piloted from Sept 6 to Dec 31, with new features and enhancements to be introduced based on feedback.

Another initiative under ReadSG is Get It Now, which will make a popular title available to all Libby users on the first Friday of each month until March 2027 with no waiting time required.

ReadSG's launch marks the start of National Reading Month, to be held every September with activities for people of all ages at libraries islandwide.

President Tharman Shanmugaratnam, patron of ReadSG, officiated at its launch at the National Library Building in Bugis.

When asked by the emcee about his decision to be a patron for ReadSG for the next five years, he said: "If we are thinking of having an impact with the broad span of the population – the young, the middle-aged and the older – we should be willing to be patient because habits are formed slowly."

NLB said ReadSG aims to help Singaporeans develop sustainable reading habits through small and achievable steps, beginning with 15 minutes of reading each day.

Its chief executive, Melissa Tam, said the movement comes at a time when people have access to an abundance of content and information, but may spend less time engaging deeply with what they read.

But she said regular long-form reading helps develop skills such

NLB launches movement to get S'poreans to read at least 15 minutes a day

5-year programme includes challenge that tracks reading time to earn virtual rewards



At the launch of ReadSG on Sept 6, guests spent 15 minutes reading a book. They included President Tharman Shanmugaratnam and his spouse, Jane Ittogi Shanmugaratnam, flanked by Minister for Digital Development and Information Josephine Teo and Minister of State for Digital Development and Information Rahayu Mahzam, along with (second row, from centre left) People's Association CEO Jimmy Toh and SPH Media CEO Chan Yeng Kit. ST PHOTO: NG SOR LUAN

as critical thinking, imagination, empathy and attention. "We know that habits are built through small, consistent actions. So, we are starting with a simple goal – just read for 15 minutes a day. On the bus, before bed or over lunch."

NLB aims to attract 150,000 users to the challenge by September

2027. Participants can collect bonus rewards, including limited-edition library charms, by attending selected NLB and partner events between September and November.

The Saturday Book Club founder Lee Jia Li told The Straits Times that 15 minutes a day is a

good start to get people to realise that reading can be easy.

She pointed to how other countries are trying to boost their national reading cultures, such as in South Korea, where areas in parks and near rivers are transformed into reading sites in good weather.

"There is so much potential to

go further from here, and I hope we eventually land on a tradition of our own in Singapore."

Reading done under the challenge in September will also count towards Read for Good, NLB's annual charity reading drive.

Previously known as Read for Books, the initiative is targeting

7.5 million reading minutes in 2026 to raise up to \$150,000 for less privileged communities.

From Sept 6 to Oct 7, every 15 minutes of reading logged each day will contribute to the fund-raising effort.

Tam said NLB hopes the charity drive will benefit 10,000 individuals.

The funds will support kids-READ, MINDS and Preschool Market by providing reading and learning aids, in addition to book donations from sponsors.

ReadSG is supported by more than 40 partners and advocates, including the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA), Ministry of Education, Agency for Integrated Care, National Arts Council, People's Association, Singapore Book Publishers Association, SPH Media and MediaCorp.

ECDA chief executive Ku Geok Boon said reading regularly from a young age helps children develop attention, curiosity and imagination.

The movement will also reach out to older Singaporeans. Agency for Integrated Care chief executive Tan Chee Wee said it hopes to encourage more seniors to make reading a daily habit through its network of Active Ageing Centres.

SPH Media chief executive Chan Yeng Kit said that the national news company's multi-language coverage in English, Chinese Malay, and Tamil allows it to connect with communities across every generation.

"We are proud to join hands with NLB and other partners for ReadSG to champion critical thinking, celebrate storytelling and nurture a lifelong love for reading across Singapore."

Other ReadSG initiatives include Readers Assemble: A Marvel Festival, the Time of Your Life Celebration and A Book A Day.

Tam said: "This is a multi-year national reading movement, and we are thinking long term. Not just about the first book someone picks up, but about what it looks like five years from now, when reading has become a natural and meaningful part of everyday life for more of us."

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