

BRUNEI TODAY

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Cover

Bandar Seri Begawan at night, showing the Omar Ali Saifuddin Mosque in the background and a firework display in progress.

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The magnificent Throne Room of the Istana Nurul Iman, where the obeisance ceremony was held this year as the Lapau was undergoing renovation.

His Majesty inspecting a guard-of-honour mounted by officers and men of the security forces.

JULY 15

One of Brunei Darussalam's most joyous occasions



JULY 15 is one of Brunei Darussalam's most important festivals. It was on that day in 1946 that the present Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanah Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, was born at the Istana (Palace) Darussalam in the capital, Brunei Town (now Bandar Seri Begawan).

His Majesty, who is the 29th of his line that dates



His Majesty during a speech from the Throne. On HM's right and left are respectively Her Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha and Her Royal Highness Pengiran Isteri Hajjah Mariam.

back to the fourteenth century, became Crown Prince in 1961 and ascended the throne on 5th October, 1967 following the voluntary abdication the previous day of his father Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien Saadul Khairi Waddien.

The Sultan was crowned on 1st August, 1968 in pomp and pageantry, befitting Brunei's ancient customs and traditions.

Sandhurst

His Majesty received his early education at the Istana Darul Hana and attended top institutions in both Brunei and Malaya (Peninsular Malaysia) before furthering his studies in the United Kingdom where he later qualified for admission as an officer cadet at the Sandhurst Royal Military Academy and was commissioned a captain in 1967. He left Sandhurst in October of the same year to succeed to the throne.

Caring

Besides being Sultan and Ruler, His Majesty is

concurrently Prime Minister and Defence Minister. Being a working monarch, he is involved in the conduct of state affairs, internally as well as internationally.

His Majesty being mobbed by his subjects during a visit to a village in the Belait District.



Like his illustrious father, who is fondly remembered as the Architect of Modern Brunei, His Majesty is a caring monarch and tirelessly works for the continued well-being of his people. In addition to the usual day-to-day administration of the government and giving audiences to foreign dignitaries, His Majesty is constantly on the move, visiting government departments and related institutions, security forces on military manouevres and villages, including those in remote parts of the State.

The promotion and strengthening of relations with the outside world also receive top priority from His Majesty, who has travelled widely in Southeast and East Asia, West Asia, Europe and the United States.

The Sultan takes a great interest in sports including polo in which he has distinguished himself in matches against international sides both inside and outside the State.

His Majesty is married to Her Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha and Her Royal Highness Pengiran Isteri Hajjah Mariam. He has nine children — three princes and six princesses.

Reverence

The celebrations to mark His Majesty's birthday, which begin on July 15 and last at least a week in each of the country's four districts, are an expression of the people's love and reverence for His Majesty and his family.

Every year Bandar Seri Begawan and the other towns are spruced up for the occasion weeks in advance.



His Majesty with President Corazon Aquino of the Philippines at the Istana Nurul Iman during her official visit to Brunei Darussalam last August.





The Sultan in action during a polo match at the Jerudong Park Polo Ground.



His Majesty receives a tumultuous welcome from his subjects on his return from Mecca after performing the Haj in 1987.



His Majesty graciously consented to grant the US Secretary of State, Mr. George Shultz, an audience at the Istana Nurul Iman during the latter's visit in 1986.



His Majesty discussing a military exercise strategy with the Chief of the Armed Forces Staff, Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Dewa Major General Dato Seri Pahlawan Haji Mohamed (facing camera).



His Majesty examining an ashtray made of coconut shell during a visit to a village in the Brunei Muara District.



Bandar Seri Begawan at night.

Decorative wooden arches stand at various places, while flags and pendants adorn streets as well as public and private buildings. At night, a multitude of coloured lights temporarily turn each town into a fairy land.

Loyalty

The celebrations, which at times stretch over a period of several weeks, usually start in the capital with a big birthday parade by members of the security forces and other uniformed movements.

This is followed by an obeisance ceremony at the Lapau (Royal Ceremonial Hall) where representatives of dignitaries, the Government, communities, youth associations and other voluntary organisations present scrolls pledging their undivided loyalty to His Majesty. Later in the ceremony His Majesty presents the awards to those in the Year's Honours List.

Forty-second

A similar parade and obeisance ceremony take

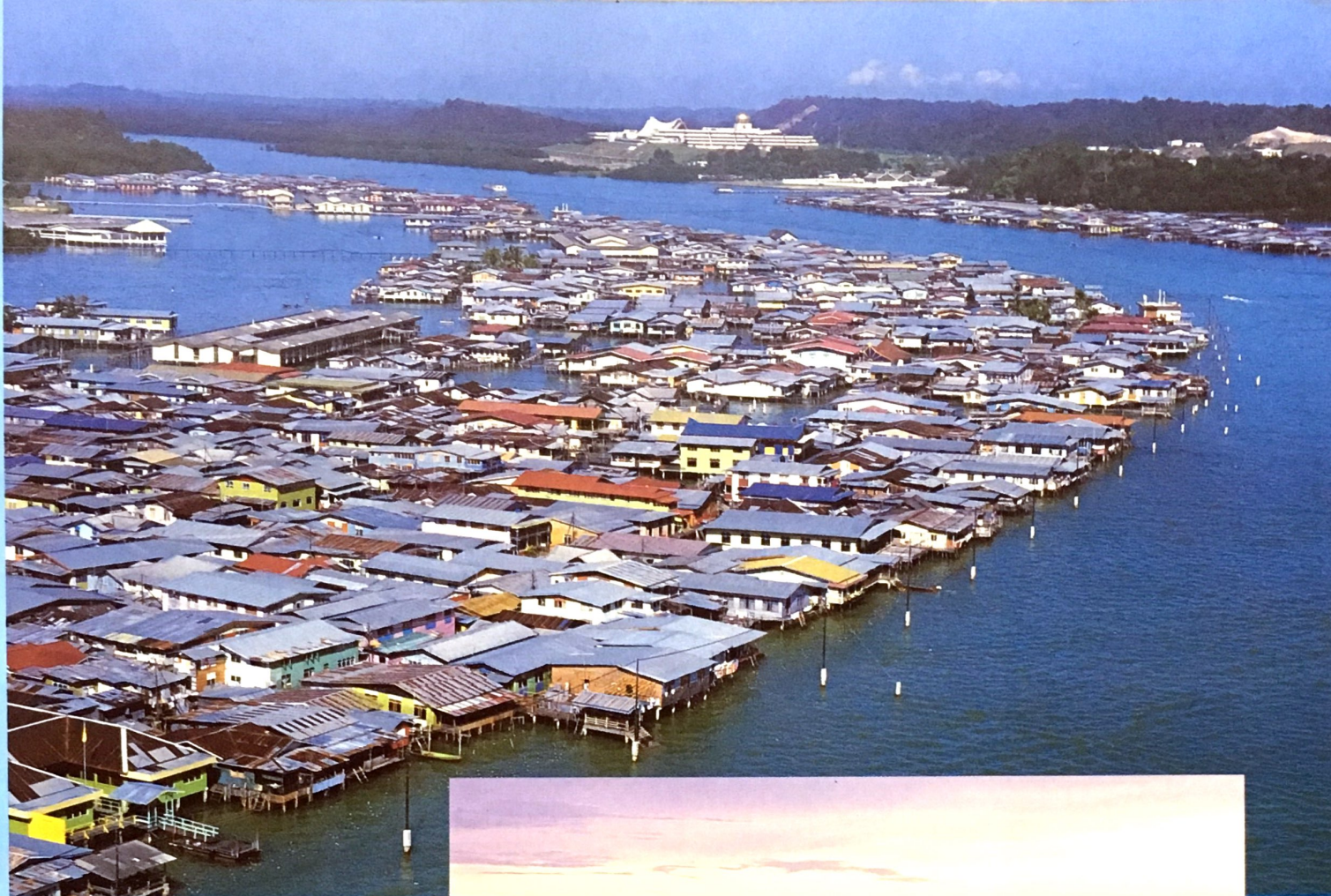
place in the main town of each district a few days later. The actual celebrations in the district concerned commence after the parade and ceremony.

As befits the royal birthday, the four districts draw up elaborate programmes that include land and riverine floats/lantern processions; regattas; sports meets; firework displays; and nightly shows by government departments, firms, schools, villages, youth associations and other groups.

Last July 15 was His Majesty's forty-second birthday, and already people are thinking what new events to add to the celebrations next year.

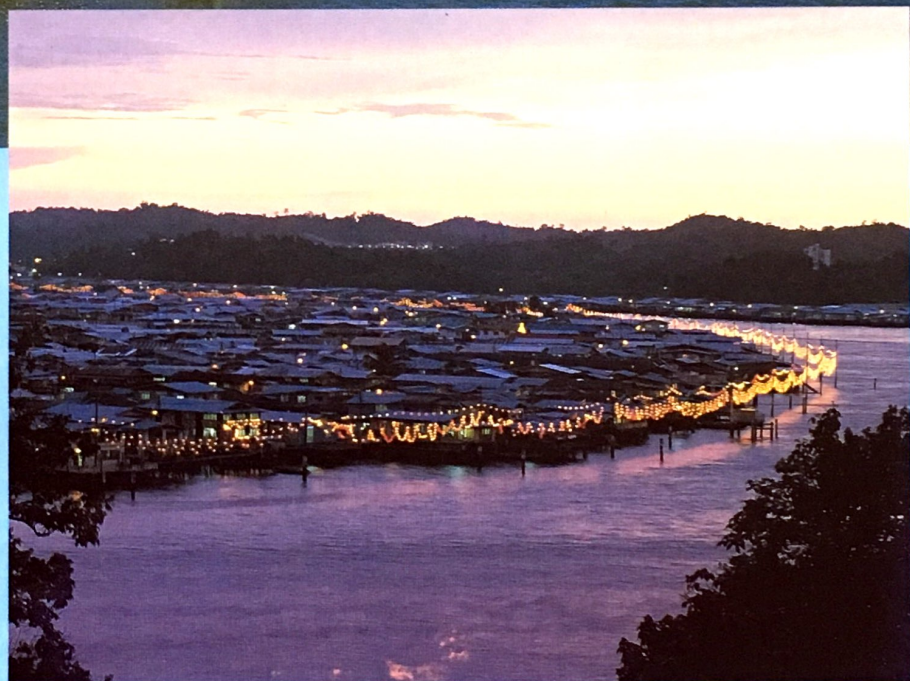


An ancient royal barge in the form of a decorated float is seen here during the float/lantern procession in the capital.



A section of Kampong Ayer, and the Water Village at night.

AN Italian traveller, who visited Brunei in the sixteenth century, wrote : "The city is entirely built in the salt water, the King's house and those of some of the Chieftains excepted. It contains 25,000 fires or families. The houses are all of wood, and stand on strong piles to keep them high from the ground. When the flood tides make, the women in boats go through the cities selling necessities. In front of the King's palace there is a rampart constructed of large bricks, with barbicans in the manner of a fortress, on which are mounted fifty-six brass and six long cannons. During the two days we passed in the city many of them were discharged".



CENTURIES-OLD KAMPONG AYER

**Brunei Darussalam's
unique heritage**

The traveller was Antonio Pigaffeta who sailed with Ferdinand Magellan and arrived in 1521, and the subject of his memorable account was Kampong Ayer (Water Village) that was synonymous with the State capital, Bandar Brunei (Brunei Town) then.

The Pigaffeta account clearly indicates that Kampong Ayer has been in existence for many centuries, and at the time of Pigaffeta's visit, it was already well-established, prompting the renowned traveller to refer to it as 'city'.

Unique

His description of Kampong Ayer as 'city' was quite apt because Brunei was then at the height of its power and was therefore well known in the region. As a centre of the Malay world, people from distant lands came to Brunei to witness its beauty as well as to trade, and Kampong Ayer was a bustling 'city' throbbing with activities.

The choice of Kampong Ayer as home was made as much out of preference as necessity. This was attributable to the Bruneians' primeval need to live in a closely knit community in order to be better able to defend themselves against marauders, and to their traditional occupations as craftsmen, traders and fishermen.

They also depended on water transportation for the supply of the basic materials needed for their cottage industries and the sale of the finished products to the other villages in the kingdom.

Today, Kampong Ayer is vastly different from the days of Pigaffeta. It is, of



A Padian paddles her canoe full of daily necessities.

course, no longer the whole capital but part of modern Bandar Brunei that was resettled on shore in 1906 and renamed Bandar Seri Begawan in 1970.

Like the rest of the country, it has inevitably moved with the time, without abandoning the traditions that made it famous and unique.

Traditional cottage industries including silverware and brassware crafting and cloth-weaving still flourish. Knowledge of these industries has been handed down through the centuries from father to son

and thus today's silversmiths, for example, are as skillful as their ancestors had been in producing exquisitely handcrafted silverware. This ancient knowledge is also being perpetuated at the Brunei Arts and Handicrafts Training Centre where some of the master craftsmen from Kampong Ayer pass their skills to the country's youths.

Power

The brass cannons mentioned by Pigaffeta were made in Kampong Ayer and some of these



A Malay and English Secondary School.

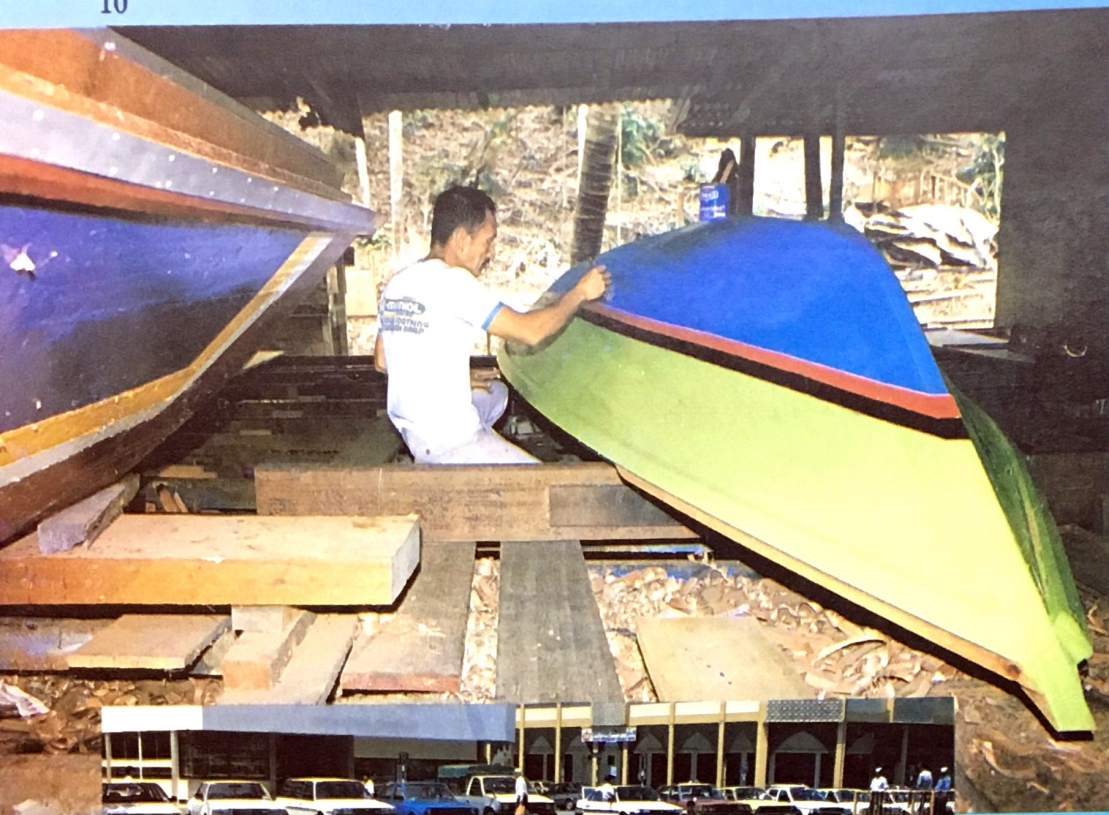


A clinic.

ancient weapons, a symbol of power in those days, are being permanently displayed at the elegant Brunei Museum, which is situated on a hill at Kota Batu (Stone Fort), about three miles from the capital overlooking the area in the Brunei river where the State's old capital once was.

"Women in boat selling necessities," to quote Pigaffeta, continue to be part of the Kampong Ayer traditions. Although their numbers have dwindled to a mere handful of old women today, the 'Pedian' as they





Boat-making is one of Kampong Ayer's traditional cottage industries.



Children enjoying a dip in the Brunei River.

Water taxis (above).

are known locally, can still be seen paddling their perahu (canoes) from house to house vending fish, prawns, vegetables, chillies and the like. Their large and distinctive hats, which protect them from the heat, are a particular attraction.

These women, like most of their fellow residents, continue to decline fully assisted government offers to resettle them on dry land. So far the number of families who had taken up the offers under the resettlement schemes launched in the Thirties, Fifties and Sixties totalled a few hundreds only. While encouraging resettlement, the Government through the Brunei/Muara District Office (BDO) carries on with the responsibility of providing Kampong Ayer with all the facilities necessary to ensure and maintain a high standard of



**PERHIMPATAN
JABATAN PENERANGAN
BRUNEI**



A police station.

secondary school that cost more than \$35 million to build and is capable of accommodating one thousand students at a time.

Although these facilities and those not mentioned here are readily available on the mainland, just a stone's-throw away, they have been provided to make Kampong Ayer as self-contained as possible.

Quaint

According to the latest estimate, there are some 30,000 people living in the Water Village that is really made up of several small villages with the huddled houses linked by wooden/concrete catwalks. The BDO has thus far built more than 31,500 metres of catwalks and 46 concrete jetties.

The bulk of the people or about eighty per cent work

with the public and the private sectors, while many of the remaining twenty per cent have businesses of their own or take up fishing as their means of livelihood.

Everyday hundreds of motor boats can be seen carrying commuters to and from shore. The majority of the Kampong Ayer inhabitants own motor cars which they garage on the mainland.

It is quite obvious that with such a high standard of living the choice of Kampong Ayer as home nowadays is no longer a necessity but one of traditional preference. And with the Government continuing to give them all the latest comforts, it seems certain that quaint Kampong Ayer will endure as part of the country's proud heritage for generations more to come.

living comparable with that on the mainland.

Modern

As a living site Kampong Ayer may be centuries old but its life style is up to date. The houses, built on stilts and linked closely together, may look the same as they have been hundreds of years ago but inside, these wooden houses are clean, well-kept and possess all the luxuries associated with modern living. Electricity and piped water are supplied to these houses from the mainland.

Other facilities include three ante-natal and outpatient clinics; a police station; two postal agents and a house to house mail delivery; three mosques and four religious schools; eleven Malay primary and English preparatory schools, and a big Malay and English medium



Workers building a walkway.

WEAVING

the hobby that became a traditional art



Ornamental bakul or baskets.



MENGANYAM, which can be translated as plaiting or weaving certain parts of bamboo, rattan and the leaves of other local plants into a variety of articles, is one of Brunei Darussalam's traditional handicrafts.

Like any other arts, plaiting requires skills, concentration and patience. It was started in Brunei Darussalam a long time ago by housewives as a hobby to pass away the time while their husbands who were either farmers or fishermen went about their works.

As time passed they

became skillful and creative, turning out beautiful finished products that those not blessed with the know-how were eager to buy them or trade something valuable in their possession for them. Thus what originally began as a pastime became a sideline income earner for the diligent housewives.

In those days skills of any kind did not come easily and nor were they eagerly divulged. What one learned one usually kept to one-self and passed on only to members of one's family.

Plaiting was no exception.

It joined other crafts, the secrets of which were jealously guarded by those in possession of the knowledge.

Root

Some of the more popular items still plaited today are 'tudung dulang' or dish cover, and 'bakul' or basket and other related articles.

Basket-weaving is believed to have originated from Sengkurong and Tanjung Nangka, two villages about 17 km southwest of the capital, and dish cover-making had its root in the Kampong Ayer or Water Village half of the capital.



Some of the items produced at
the Brunei Arts and Handicrafts
Training Centre.

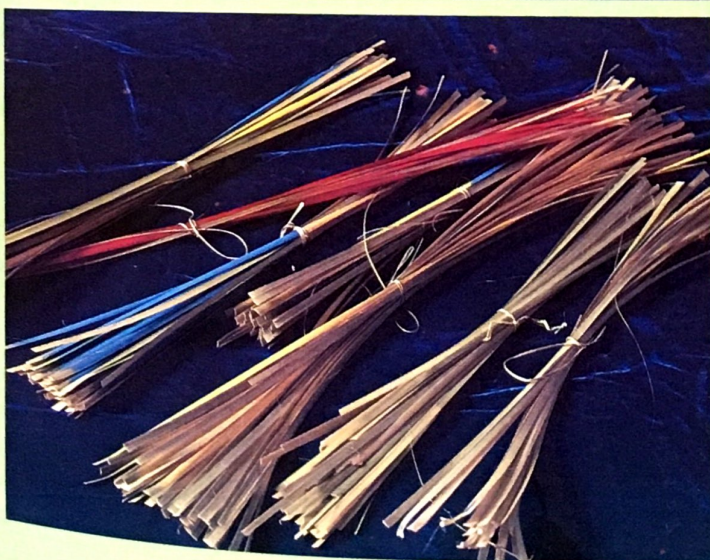
Tissue boxes.



A nyiru.



A weaver making a siraung or hat (above).



Processed bamboo and rattan.

Baskets and other related containers come in many sizes, shapes and colours. They include the ordinary baskets with or without covers; *takiding* which is taller and wider at the top and is borne piggy-back fashion for carrying fruits, vegetables and harvested rice; *nyiru* which is tray-shaped and used for drying foodstuffs and winnowing paddy, among other things; *takung*, a square sieve-like container used in the kitchen mainly for washing things like vegetables and fish; and *tapisan*, another strainer but smaller and finer than the *takung*.

To make a basket or any of the related containers, *buluh liat* or flexible young bamboos are used. Each stalk is cut to the required length and split into eight equal parts. These are then scraped until smooth and painted in different colours according to the kind of design the weaver has in mind. The process of weaving begins as soon as the paint is dry.

Innovation

The rim and the framework, which are made from rattan *dahanan*, are double-layered to act as grip for the edges and other parts of the plaited bamboo strips. The grip is further secured with rattan *paladas* or rattan *manuk*. Nowadays some weavers break with tradition by using strong strings like *tangsi* or catgut.



Takiding of different sizes.

A clump of bamboos.

Moreover, the weaver's skills are no longer confined to producing traditional household-type articles but a host of other things as well, including hats, purses, handbags, tissue boxes and decorative miniatures.

The skills, which were once hard to get hold of, have been formally made available to school leavers since 1976 at the Brunei Arts and Handicrafts Centre. The instructors are from Kampong Ayer, who acquired their skills the traditional way, and thus with their help another cultural heritage has been assured of survival in Brunei Darussalam.



A DISPLAY OF



The Malay Technology Museum.



Pressing sugar-cane to get its juice.

MALAY TECHNOLOGY



A place for processing gula anau, honey-like liquid obtained from the Nipah palm tree.

Ambulung or sago processed from the Rumbia palm tree.



Some of the things found in a house of that period. The picture shows, among others, a large earthenware vase for storing water, pillows, and a batik sarong for rocking a baby to sleep.





Coppersmiths at work.



Kampong Ayer houses.

AS an ancient State with a colourful history, Brunei Darussalam has its own brand of traditional know-how in utilising natural materials to support a cultural life that is unsurpassed in richness and authenticity.

Evidence of this can be seen at the newly opened Malay Technology Museum (MTM) at Kota Batu a few kilometres from the capital. The MTM joins the Brunei Museum and Constitutional History Museum as a conservatory of various aspects of Brunei's national heritage.

Built on a six-hectare site adjacent to the Brunei Museum, it is a gift from the Royal Dutch/Shell Group of Companies to Brunei Darussalam on the occasion of the country's resumption of full independence.

The MTM specifically exhibits Brunei Darussalam's traditional technology and its relations to the people's activities during the period from 1880 to 1950. It focuses on two main fields namely, the technological know-how and life of the Kampong Ayer (Water Village) inhabitants and those on the mainland.

The \$7-million building consists of two multi-storeyed wings connected by a circular staircase access block. The first, a three-storeyed wing, houses an open exhibition-cum-entrance hall, two galleries and a conference room while the second, a two-storeyed wing, comprises a small gallery, offices and an administration area, workshop and storage facilities.

The first gallery displays different types of ancient houses at Kampong Ayer during the years 1880-1950, showing changes in the architecture and materials

A Kedayan house.



Inside the longhouse of the Murut, an animistic indigenous tribe.



employed. The interiors, reconstructed to resemble the inside of those houses, are equipped with original appliances of that period. In the centre of the gallery stands a model of the earliest Kampong Ayer house.

The second gallery contains examples of the activities carried out by the Kampong Ayer residents. These include traditional methods of fishing and trapping, '*memburis perahu*' (boat-making), and a host of handicrafts for which Brunei is famous such as silver-crafting, brass-casting and cloth-

weaving. The visitor can view the finished products of these handicrafts in the exhibition hall.

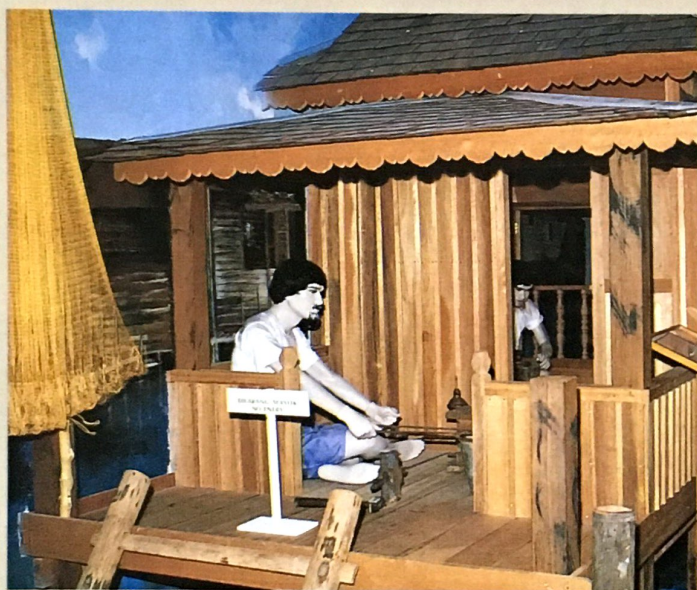
The last gallery projects various types of native houses and traditional industries found on the mainland. The main replicas are houses of four of the country's indigenous tribes namely, Kedayan, Dusun, Murut and Punan. Each house is quite distinct from the others especially the manner in which the walls and roof are done as well as the allocation of bedrooms and kitchen. The replicas contain the usual household articles as they were used in those days.

There are also models of traditional industries such as the processing of '*ambulung*', a kind of flour (sago) obtained from a palm tree, Rumbia; '*gasing*' or top-making; processing '*gula anau*', honey-like liquid procured from another palm tree, Nipah; extracting sugar-cane juice; and trapping '*Punai Tanah*' (wild pigeons).

Members of the public can visit the MTM everyday, except Tuesdays, between 9.30 am and 5.00 pm. On Fridays the visiting hours are from 9.00 am to 11.30 am, and 2.30 pm to 5.00 pm.



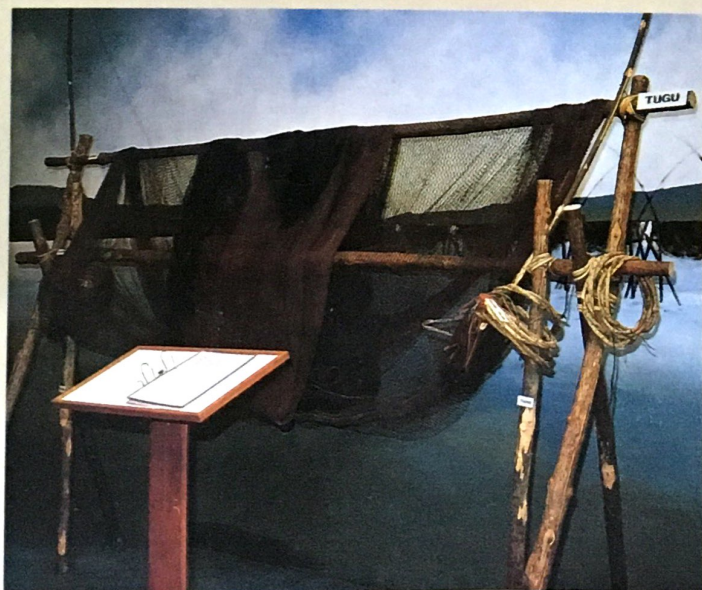
Young ladies playing congkak, a traditional game.



A silversmith balai or workshop.



Winnowing paddy.



A fishing net.