

BRUNEI TODAY

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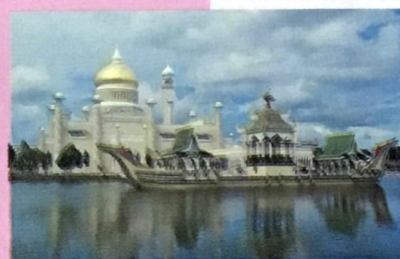
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Brunei Darussalam's 4th
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at the Hassanal Bolkiah
National Stadium.

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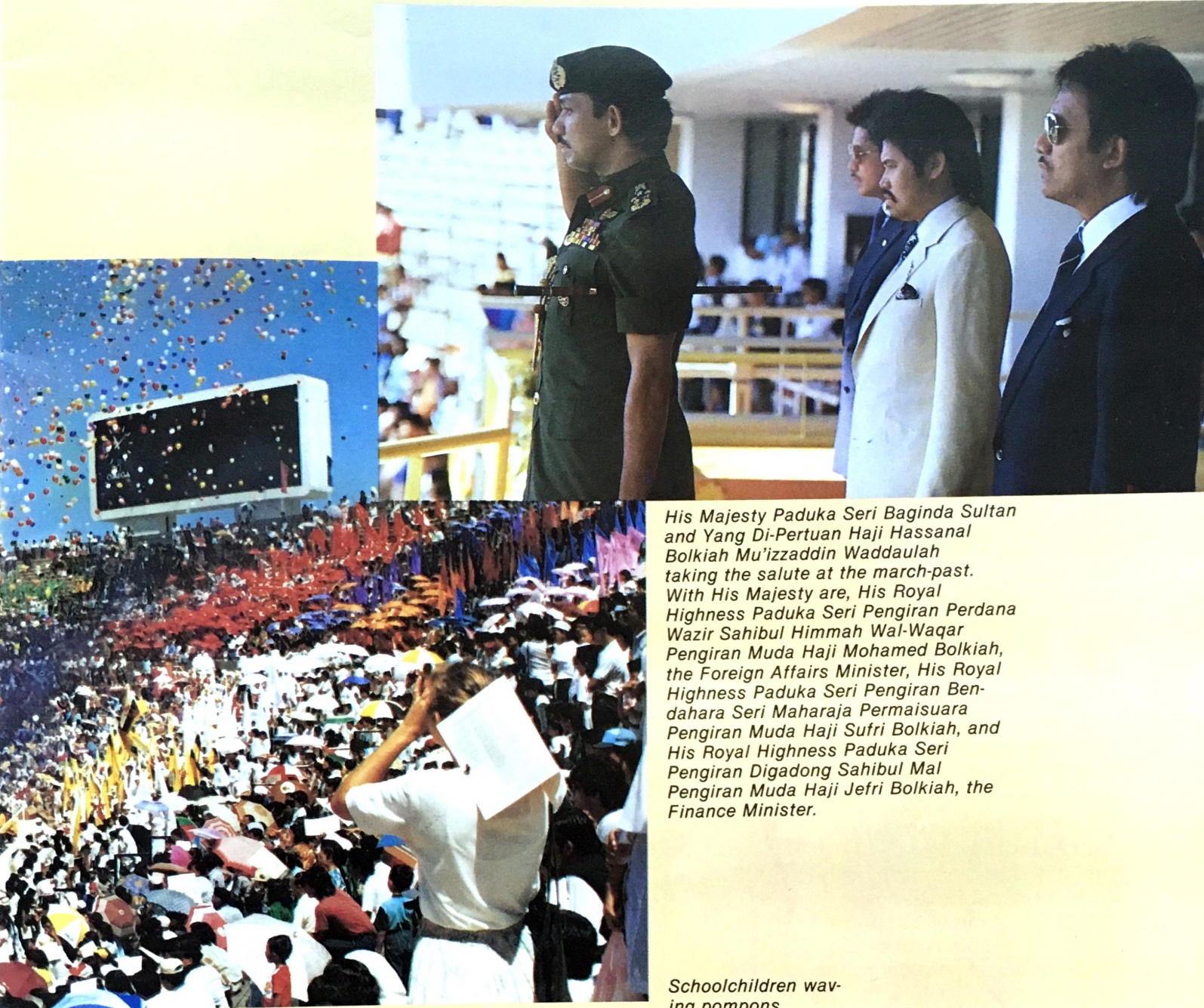


A pledge of loyalty to the nation by representatives of various organisations.

Balloons and smoke add colour to the celebration.



AN ANCIENT STATE COMMEMORATES NATIONAL DAY



His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah taking the salute at the march-past. With His Majesty are, His Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Perdana Wazir Sahibul Himmah Wal-Waqar Pengiran Muda Haji Mohamed Bolkiah, the Foreign Affairs Minister, His Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Bendahara Seri Maharaja Permaisua Pengiran Muda Haji Sufri Bolkiah, and His Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Digadong Sahibul Mal Pengiran Muda Haji Jefri Bolkiah, the Finance Minister.

Schoolchildren waving pompons.

BRUNEI Darussalam is an oil-rich Malay Muslim Monarchy located on the west-coast of the Borneo Island, 400 km north of the equator.

It is one of Asia's ancient kingdoms, having been in existence for more than 1,500 years. Chinese annals made references to Brunei which was said to have been a vassal of China and first sent tributes to that country in the year 518.

Brunei was a powerful kingdom in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with an empire stretching from the Island of Borneo to as far north as the Philippines.



But Western colonial expansion and problems such as wars, internecine strife, insurrection and piracy had gradually forced Brunei to relinquish its grip on the empire to the extent that by 1904 it had shrunk to a small sultanate, wedged between Sarawak and Sabah.

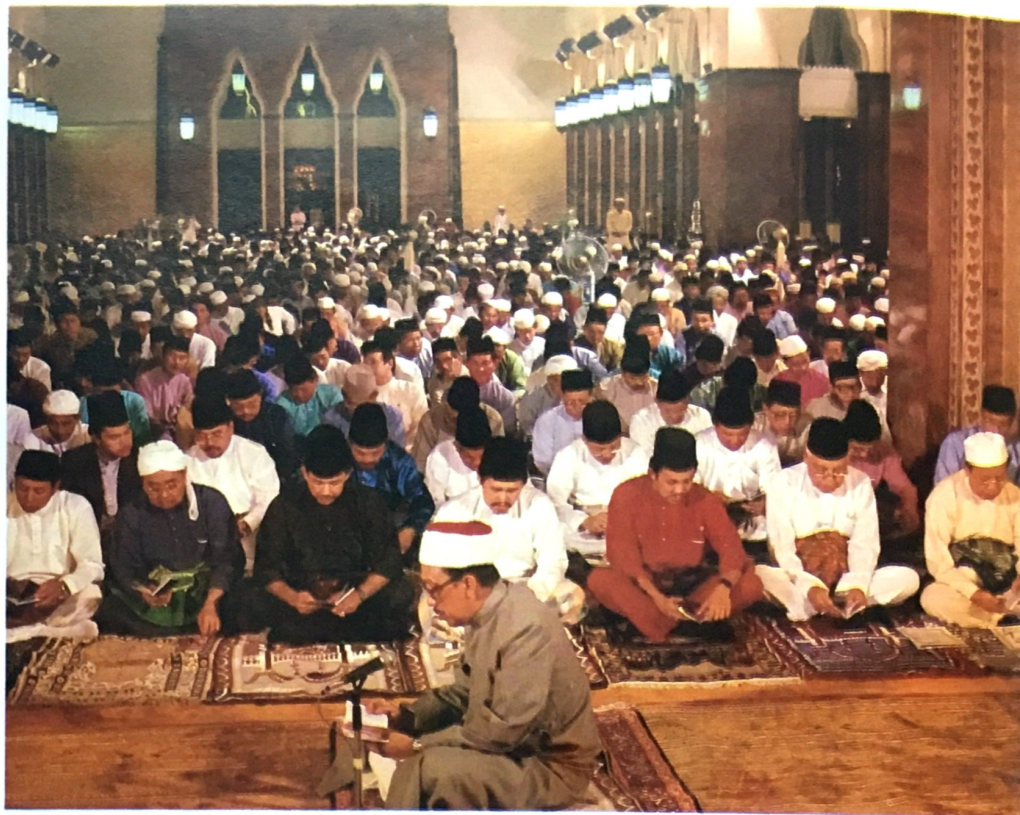
The year 1959 saw the promulgation of the Brunei Constitution, giving Brunei, which became a British Protected State in 1888, internal self-government and changing the post of British Resident, started in 1906, to High Commissioner who continued to act as an adviser to the Brunei Government on all matters except those pertaining to the Islamic Religion and Malay customs.

Over the years Brunei and Britain signed further Agreements, culminating in Brunei Darussalam's resumption of its international responsibilities as a fully independent and sovereign nation shortly after midnight on 31st. December, 1983.

February 23rd. has been designated as the country's National Day.

This year the fourth National Day celebrations were highlighted by a colourful rally at the Hassanal Bolkiah National Stadium in which more than 30,000 people representing organisations in both the public and private sectors took part.

A myriad of displays symbolising discipline and culture, the theme chosen for this year's celebrations which were telecast live as usual, reminded the people on the need to practise mental and physical discipline, and traditional mores as befit the Bruneian concept of Malay Muslim Monarchy in order to perpetuate and upgrade the prosperity, happiness and peace in the country.



His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Negara Brunei Darussalam joins his subjects in congregational prayers at the Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin Mosque.



A giant replica of the national flag carried by thirty youths precedes the march-past.

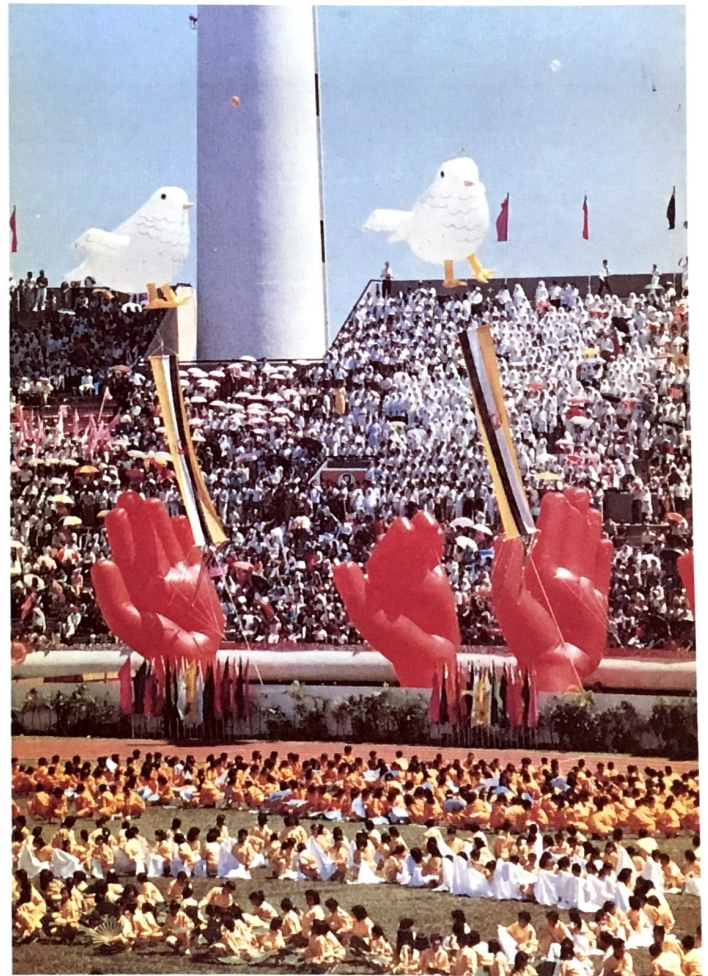
Flag-bearing cadets of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces and the Royal Brunei Police Force.

The Brunei Darussalam Women's Council contingent in the procession.



The display of a pattern called 'Strong Unity' which symbolises the aspiration and tradition of Bruneians in working together to maintain prosperity.

Various colourful displays symbolise culture and discipline.





Malaysian-born Awang Mohammad Nor Zaki bin Long, the Fine Art Teacher at the Arts and Handicrafts Training Centre, was still a young boy when he started to learn the craftsmanship of kris-making from his father, a distinguished creator of royal regalias. Today the 38-year old craftsman is among the handful of masters who can produce exquisite blade, scabbard and hilt that make up the complete kris. In the picture above Awang Mohammad Nor Zaki (bending) shows one of his students how to turn out a matching hilt.

KRIS

THE MALAYS' UNIQUE AND ANCIENT WEAPON

SINCE time immemorial no weapon has been more renowned and revered in the Malay world than the kris. With its razor-sharp blade which is usually wavy, the kris was in former times the favourite weapon of royalty and commoners alike. In the hands of a skillful exponent of *pencak silat*, the Malay art of self-defence, it was, and can still be, a deadly weapon in close combat. As recent as the beginning of the century, no man felt safe and secure leaving home without one tucked in his waistband, ready for the unexpected.

Such confidence in the kris was a tradition made antiquated only by the passage of time.

Although mystic stories emanating from the Indonesian archipelago — where the original kris was believed to have been created — suggest that it has been in existence since time unrecorded, the kris became especially prominent both as a weapon and symbol during the Majapahit Empire in the thirteenth century and later at the Malaccan royal court through the exploits of its legendary warriors, such as Hang

Tuah and his companions. The krises were also the weapons of the famous Bruneian warrior Bendahara Sakam and his men when they drove off the Spanish invaders from the country in 1578.

Genesis, supernatural

To this day no one is sure when exactly the first kris came into being. There are many tales, virtually all preternatural, relating to the genesis and exploits of the kris. One story concerned two brothers who went on a journey. One had a bamboo staff and the other a crude blade. Both these weapons, given to them by their father, possessed supernatural powers and could turn into anything the brothers wished.

One day they came upon a palace where they saw a beautiful girl weaving a piece of cloth on a bamboo loom. The first brother, desirous of knowing more about the girl, commanded his bamboo staff to turn into a bird. The second brother willed his blade to

change into a tiny venomous snake which entered the loom and shortly after bit the girl who immediately fell into a deep coma.

It turned out that the girl was the daughter of the King who owned the palace. He tried everything in his power to revive her but without success. After several efforts failed he became desperate and proclaimed that he would offer his daughter's hands in marriage to any man who could bring her back to life.

The brother who owned the blade-turned-snake being the only one with the antidote succeeded in saving the princess who subsequently became his wife. According to a belief, craftsmen of that period drew inspiration from the story and

so created a weapon with the deadly blade sinuous like the snake in motion, the hilt taking the form of the bird's head and the sheath representing the loom into which the snake slithered before it delivered its coma-inducing bite. Thus the kris was born.

Mysterious

Like the magic blade-turned-snake, the earlier krises were usually endowed with mysterious powers by their makers who were not only exceptional craftsmen but were some kind of occultists as well. The powers could be either good or evil, depending on the propensities of the persons who had them forged. Hence they are numerous stories about what such krises could do for their owners like making them

A kris forged at the AHTC showing an intricate damascened pattern. The scabbard, which bears the State crest in gold, and the hilt are made of solid ivory.





An assortment of krises ranging in length from a few inches to well over a foot and a half with as well as without the *lok* (waves).

Two more of his students working on a blade and a sheath.



invincible; warning them of approaching dangers; saving them from sudden attacks; flying out at night to seek and destroy their enemies; and other equally fascinating tales.

Stories like these add to the mystique surrounding the kris which to the Malays is not only an ancient and unique weapon but also a treasured ornament and heirloom.

Different

Clearly the kris is very unlike any other daggers or knives in origin and appearance. Almost all krises have *lok* or waves, the total of which has always been an odd number. Another unique feature is the widening of the blade just below the hilt, and on one side of this part is usually found a small ornamentation which may take the form of an elephant's trunk, a snake's tongue or other objects according to the preference of the kris-maker.

The blade is normally covered by a damascened pattern called *pamur* or *kurau* depending on the composition of the metal used to fabricate the pattern. The kris-maker believes the pattern strengthens the blade and makes it more lethal.

Some krises like Kris Sula, which was used in the old royal courts to execute wrong-doers, or Kris Palembang are without the *lok*. The hilt of such a kris, however, is more often than not still resembles a bird's head.

Secret

Making a superb kris requires great skills that come from years of learning and practice. The knowledge of making this covetous weapon was once hard to come by as it was a closely guarded secret passed on from one generation to another and was taught only to a few selected family members. A person who was expert at metal-working particularly making kris and other

weapons was known as 'Pandai Besi'. There is a village in Brunei's centuries-old Kampong Ayer (Water Village) called Kampong Pandai Besi where obviously the country's ironsmiths once lived.

Quite often the blade, hilt and sheath are nowadays made by three separate craftsmen. The experts who can fashion all three as in the old days number a mere handful in the Malay world today.

The procedure of making the kris is basically the same as in the past, the only difference being the availability of modern tools. A piece of metal is repeatedly heated and hammered until it is flat. The next steps involve shaping, sharpening, filing and polishing. At some point along the process, the *puting kris* or shank-pin, onto which the hilt is to be fitted, is drawn out, and traces of impurities are removed from the blade.

The finished blade is then immersed in home-made vinegar

for at least twenty-four hours to bring out the *pamur* or *kurau*.

The hilt and sheath are usually made of hard fine-grained wood that is both durable and attractive. In Brunei, the two types of wood popularly used are obtained from the *kulimpapa* and *hasana* trees. In the old days horn and ivory were rarely employed. But lately as the kris is becoming more of a decorative object than a weapon, the use of horn or ivory for the hilt and sheath has been more common.

Revival

The art of kris-making will live on in Brunei Darussalam as it has been revived at the Brunei Arts and Handicrafts Centre where young men and women formally undergo a three-year course.

The kris may no longer be seen inside a man's waistband, except perhaps during certain ceremonies, but the awe and fascination for this extraordinary weapon will never cease.



Depending on the owner's preference the hilt and sheath can be made from ivory, silver or fine-grained wood which is sometimes combined with ivory, silver or gold as collar or band.

MOSQUES

Lasting symbols of Brunei's adherence to Islam

ISLAM came to Brunei in the 14th century or earlier because Chinese historians of the Ming Dynasty noted in their writings about Brunei, which had strong ties with China, that Islam had already reached the state in 1371 and Jawi, which is derived from the Arabic script, was widely used in the country at the time.

The mosque imam (in front) leads the faithful in the weekly Friday congregational prayer.



**PERPUSTAKAAN
JABATAN PENERANGAN
BRUNEI**



The Omar Ali Saifuddin Mosque with the 16th. century replica of the royal barge in the foreground seen from across the lagoon.



The Mohamed Bolkiah Mosque at Serusop near the Brunei International Airport.

The mosque imam delivers the Friday sermon before the start of the congregational prayer.





Decorative verses from the holy Koran like this one adorn the walls of the mosque.

Schools in the State close on Fridays and Sundays. Boys and girls receive extra lessons on reading the Mukaddam and Koran in mosques throughout the country. Here a teacher imparts his knowledge of the Mukaddam to a group of girls who must be proficient at it before learning how to read the Koran.



At any rate the majority of Bruneians have been Muslims since around that period, and today, Islam is so deeply rooted in the Bruneian culture and traditions that its presence permeates through every facet of life in the country.

The most obvious are the mosques which number more than 60 throughout the State, and each is strategically built within easy reach of every Muslim in the area.

Majestic

To a Bruneian Muslim, the mosques are not only places of worship but are also symbols of Brunei's perpetual adherence to



Islam and reminders that the religion plays a central role in the life of every Muslim man, woman and child.

The biggest and most imposing of them all is the Omar Ali Saifuddin Mosque in the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan.

It is a majestic edifice of classical Islamic architecture and was officially opened in 1958 by the country's 28th ruler Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien who outlined its design and after whom it is named.

The Mosque, regarded by many as one of the largest and most magnificent in Asia, is surrounded on three sides by a lagoon which borders Kampong

Ayer or Water Village and the mainland half of the capital on the north bank of the Brunei River.

Linked to the Mosque and built in the middle of the lagoon is an elegant concrete boat, which was once the stage for Koran Reading Competition, in the shape of a sixteenth century royal barge.

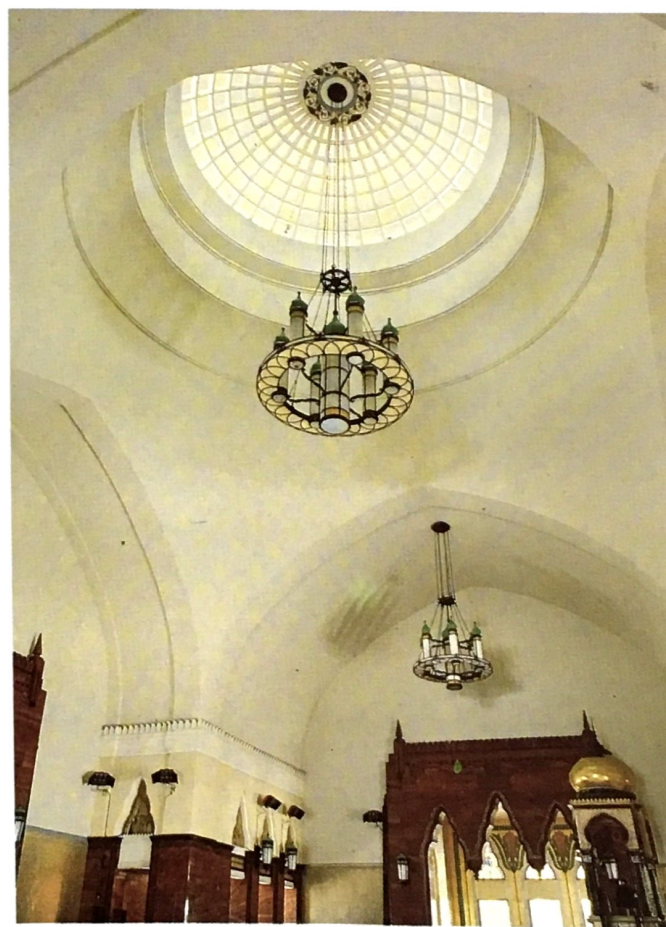
Breathtaking

The classical Islamic architecture design, the cream-coloured outer walls, stained glass and a huge distinct gold dome, which dominates the building and rises to a height of 48.8 metres, combine to make the Mosque a matchless beauty.

Slightly to the south is the 50.6-metre minaret which has a lift inside to take visitors right up to the top from where they can get a breathtaking view of the capital and its environs.

Inside, the Mosque is cool and serene, and is naturally ventilated. Its steps, floor and columns are made of the finest marble which was imported from Italy and was constructed by Italian master craftsmen who came to Brunei Darussalam specially to do the job.

Measuring 68.6 metres long and 26 metres wide, the Mosque has sufficient room for 3,000 worshippers inside and a few thousands more on its spacious compound.



The interior of the mosque showing the inside of the huge dome.

Another view of the mosque with a bridge leading to it from a section of Kampong Ayer.

An aerial view of Taman Haji Sir Muda Omar 'Ali Saifuddien where the procession in the capital began and ended.

MAULUD THAT



IS CELEBRATED WORLD-WIDE



His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Negara Brunei Darussalam meets the leader of each contingent before the start of the procession.



His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Negara Brunei Darussalam, accompanied by His Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Perdana Wazir Sahibul Himmah Wal-Waqar Pengiran Muda Haji Mohamed Bolkiah, the Foreign Affairs Minister, His Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Digadong Sahibul Mal Pengiran Muda Haji Jefri Bolkiah, the Finance Minister, His Majesty's eldest son His Royal Highness Prince Al-Muhtadee Billah, Cabinet Ministers and other State dignitaries, leads the procession on the four-kilometre route around the capital.



MAULUD which means birthday in Arabic has a special significance in Brunei Darussalam as it has been known to refer to the birthday of one person only: the Prophet Muhammad (May the Peace and Benediction of Allah be upon him).

The Prophet was born in the holy city of Mecca on the twelfth day of Rabiulawal in the year corresponding to 571 of the Christian era.

The birthday is observed throughout the Muslim world in a variety of ways every year on 12th Rabiulawal, which is the third month in the Islamic calendar.

Brunei Darussalam commemorates the maulud with various religious activities design not only to strengthen further the awareness of Muslims in the State on the Prophet's traditions and teachings but also to remind them of the valiant struggles and sacrifices of the Prophet, his family and his friends in re-establishing Islam as commanded by Allah the Almighty.

Last year the birthday fell on 4th November which as usual was a public holiday in Brunei Darussalam.

As in previous years, the celebration, the theme of which was 'United Towards Peace and



Some of the women teachers and school-children taking part in the procession.

Members of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces.



Progress', climaxed with processions in the country's main towns. State-wide, more than 65,000 people from all walks of life took part.

In Bandar Seri Begawan, the procession on the 4-km route around the capital was led by His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Negara Brunei Darussalam.

It was preceded by a gathering at the Taman Haji Sir Muda Omar Ali Saifuddien where it began and finished.



Some of the foreign envoys who attended the gathering at the Taman Haji Sir Muda Omar Ali Saifuddien. They are (from left to right) HE Mr. Mir Abad Hussain, the Pakistani Ambassador; HE Dr. Eckart Cuntz, the Ambassador of the German Federal Republic; Mr. William Bunel, First Secretary of the French Embassy; Mr. Oetarjo Soerjodinoto, the Minister Counsellor of the Indonesian Embassy; HE Mr. Thomas Ferguson, the US Ambassador; HE Mr. Roger Westbrook, the British High Commissioner; and Mr. Anwar-ul-alam, the Bangladesh Deputy High Commissioner.



Participants carrying banners with religious messages.

The Royal Brunei Police Band and the Police contingent.



HORNBILLS

Regarded by primitive people as sacred, and symbols of purity and fidelity



FORESTS cover about seventy-five per cent of Brunei Darussalam and under this vast canopy live a myriad of wildlife, including a variety of birds some of which are quite rare.

Among these are several species of hornbills which inhabit not only the jungles of Brunei but those of the other Borneo territories as well. Although none of the hornbills can be described as common, the eight species are White-Crested Hornbill (*Berenicornis*

carmatus); Wrinkled Hornbill (*Aceros leucocephalus corrugatus*); Bushy-Crested Hornbill (*Anorrhinus galeritus*); Black Hornbill (*Anthracoceros malayanus*); Helmeted Hornbill (*Rhinoplax vigil*); Rhinoceros Hornbill (*Buceros rhinoceros borneensis*); Pied Hornbill (*Anthracoceros cornatus convexus*); and Wreathed Hornbill (*Aceros undulatus undulatus*).

All of these hornbills except the last one, Wreathed Hornbill, are found in Brunei's jungles around the Tutong, Belait and Temburong districts.

Kings

Of the species, the Rhinoceros Hornbills, regarded by many as kings among hornbills, are perhaps the most attractive with their bright yellow or red beaks. The Rhinoceros Hornbills is known in Brunei Malay as *Loklang*, while the Ibans, an indigenous group of Borneo, call it *Kenyalang*.

Altogether there are forty-five species of hornbills believed to be in existence today throughout the tropical and subtropical forests of the world including Southeast Asia, Africa and the Solomon Islands. Most of them live in heavy rain forests and fly in pairs or in small flocks of a dozen or less.

Ho ting

Hornbills are large birds, usually between two and four feet long from tip to tail, with some of them reaching more



Rhinoceros Hornbill
— *Buceros*
rhinoceros (*Loklang*)

than five feet. A hornbill is easy to spot even while in flight because it has an enormous down-curved beak, at least a foot long, which leads from the casque on its head. The casque, made of the same material as the beak, is a big protruberance which distinguishes the hornbill from other large birds. Although it looks heavy, it is mostly hollow inside and thus weighs only a few ounces. Like the rest of the beak it is dark grey or black in colour, while in species such as the Rhinoceros Hornbill it is bright yellow or red.

Only in one species — the Helmeted Hornbill — is the casque solid. Until the late 18th century it was prized by the Chinese who called it *ho ting* and were prepared to pay a lot of money for it. They used *ho ting* to make intricate curved buckles for the emperor, as well as other ornaments like



Helmeted Hornbill —
Rhinoplax vigil (*Lantudon*)

snuff bottles and palace decorations. The indigenous people like the Ibans and Kenyahs, also valued it highly because the earrings of their noblest warriors were made from it.

Sacred

The hornbill's body is mostly covered in black or brown plumage with white patches on the wings and tail. The feathers, especially those of the Rhinoceros Hornbill which the Ibans, Kenyahs and other animistic tribes regard as sacred bird, were revered by these people who used to adorn their war hats and coats with them. Kenyah warriors, for example, believed that the feathers had magic that could turn their enemies' swords into flame.

In another animistic belief, the Kenyahs predicted the outcome of important events such as war by watching the flight of hornbills. It is said that they went to war only if they saw the hornbills flying from left to right because it meant victory but postponed the attack if the birds flew from the opposite direction, right to left.

Devotion

Hornbills are known to be monogamous. The 'couple' are so devoted to each other that primitive people everywhere look upon them as symbols of purity and fidelity. This devotion is apparent in their nesting habits.

When the female wishes to lay her eggs, she and her spouse search for a hollow in a tall tree trunk. If none is found, they start making a large hole inside a tree trunk with their strong beaks. Once finished, the female bird goes inside to lay her eggs. Then she, from the inside, and her mate, from the outside, carefully seal up the entrance with a mixture of mud and saliva, plastering it smoothly with their beaks, and leaving only a small gap through which her beak pro-



Wrinkled Hornbill —
Rhyticeros corrugatus (Alau buloh)

Pied Hornbill — *Anthraceroceros coronatus convexus*
(Sangang)



trudes. The wall becomes as hard as brick thus providing protection for her and her eggs from predators until the eggs are hatched and the chicks five or six weeks old. During all this time, her faithful mate ceaselessly feeds her, and later their chicks as well with things like fruits, seeds, lizards and frogs. After about ten weeks they break the wall by pecking hard at it and the young hornbills hop out onto a branch to start learning how to fly while their parents start work on closing the nest once more with a view to using it on another occasion.

Most of the facts in this article are derived from the one written for Radio Brunei by Mrs Nallamma Macdonald, a nature enthusiast — Ed.