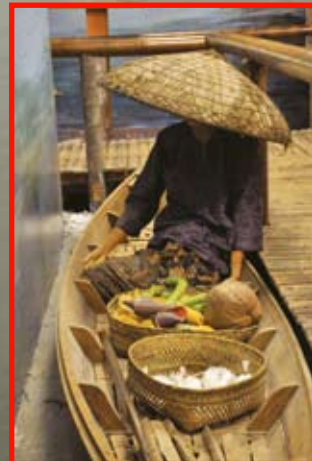


# بروني هاري اين BRUNEI TODAY

JUNE 2009

VOLUME 11, Number 2

Publication of Information Department







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*Royal Mausoleum of Sultan Bolkiah*

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**Note on front & back cover Photos**

Front cover - Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque is one of the most beautiful mosques in the Southeast Asian region.

Back cover - Malay Technology Museum, one of the most popular places to visit in Brunei.

**Published By**

English News & Media IT Division  
Information Department  
Prime Minister's Office  
Brunei Darussalam BB 3510

Tel: 673 2 383400

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**Printed By**

Asia Printers Sdn. Bhd.



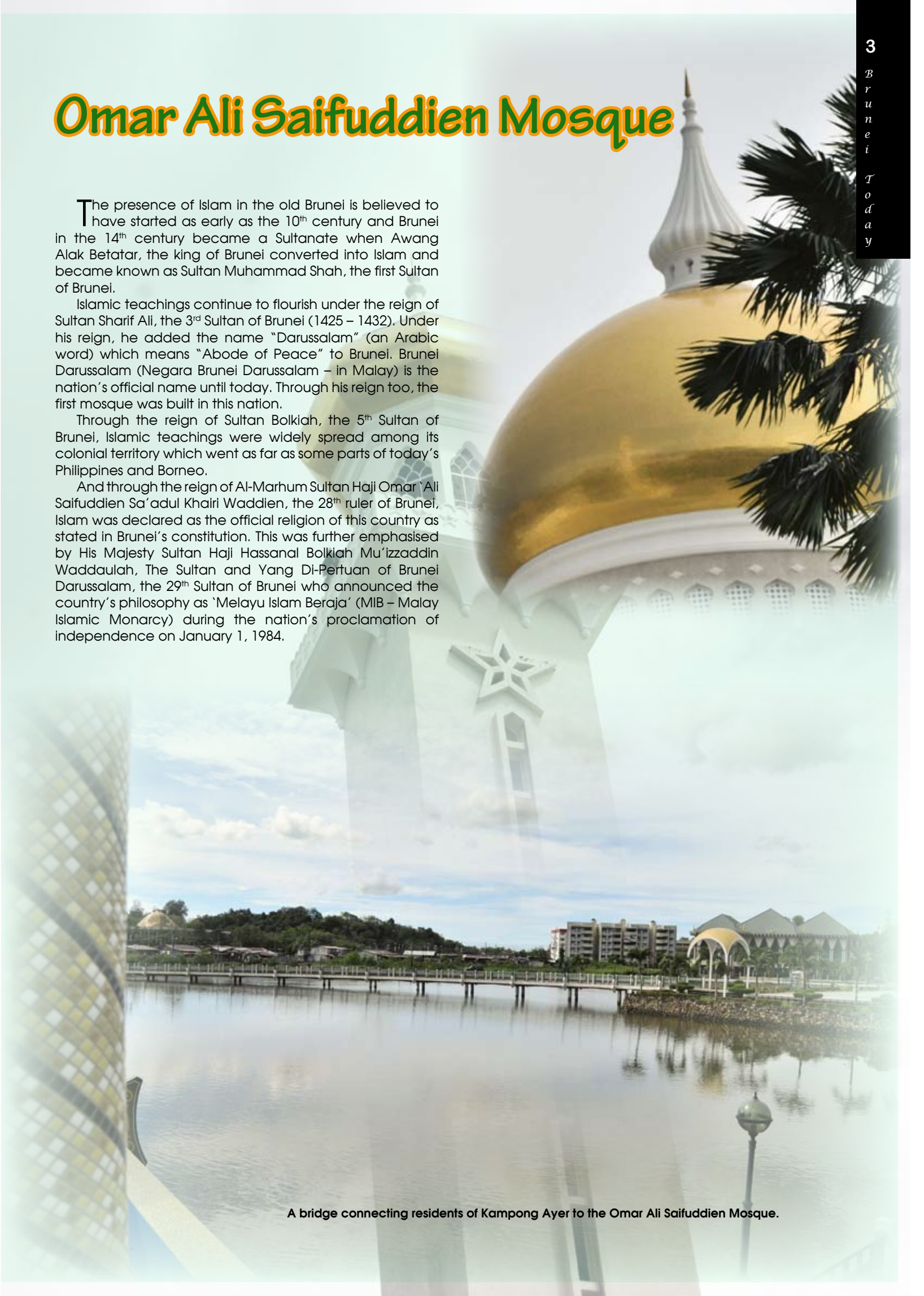
# Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque

The presence of Islam in the old Brunei is believed to have started as early as the 10<sup>th</sup> century and Brunei in the 14<sup>th</sup> century became a Sultanate when Awang Alak Betatar, the king of Brunei converted into Islam and became known as Sultan Muhammad Shah, the first Sultan of Brunei.

Islamic teachings continue to flourish under the reign of Sultan Sharif Ali, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sultan of Brunei (1425 – 1432). Under his reign, he added the name “Darussalam” (an Arabic word) which means “Abode of Peace” to Brunei. Brunei Darussalam (Negara Brunei Darussalam – in Malay) is the nation’s official name until today. Through his reign too, the first mosque was built in this nation.

Through the reign of Sultan Bolkiah, the 5<sup>th</sup> Sultan of Brunei, Islamic teachings were widely spread among its colonial territory which went as far as some parts of today’s Philippines and Borneo.

And through the reign of Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar `Ali Saifuddien Sa`adul Khairi Waddien, the 28<sup>th</sup> ruler of Brunei, Islam was declared as the official religion of this country as stated in Brunei’s constitution. This was further emphasised by His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu`izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, the 29<sup>th</sup> Sultan of Brunei who announced the country’s philosophy as ‘Melayu Islam Beraja’ (MIB – Malay Islamic Monarchy) during the nation’s proclamation of independence on January 1, 1984.



A bridge connecting residents of Kampong Ayer to the Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque.



## History of mosques in Brunei Darussalam

Mosque is defined as any house or open area of prayer in Islam. The Arabic word *masjid* means "a place of prostration" to God, and the same word is used in Persian, Urdu and Turkish<sup>1</sup>. Mosque also refers to the House of Allah (The One God, the Almighty Creator).

The glory of Islam in Brunei Darussalam is enhanced with the building of mosques throughout the nation. The first mosque in the nation was built by the third Sultan, Sultan Sharif Ali who is also known as Sultan Berkat. This mosque known as Masjid Besar was burnt by the Spanish on June 23, 1578 during the Brunei-Spain War, known as 'Perang Kastela' (Castela War).

In today's Brunei Darussalam, there are more than 100 mosques built by the Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at various places throughout the nation particularly at densely populated areas. Besides mosques, *surau* or *balai ibadat* (smaller version of mosque) are also available. Among the objectives to build a mosque is not only meant for prayer, but it will also be used to carry out other religious and community related activities like reading Al-Quran (holy book), religious talks and *doa kesyukuran* (thanksgiving) gathering.

Mosques in Brunei Darussalam are under the jurisdiction of Mosque Affairs Department, the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

There are two main mosques in the nation which have become landmarks; the Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque in Bandar Seri Begawan and the Jame' 'Asr Hassanil Bolkiah in Kiarong. Visit to Brunei Darussalam is not complete without visiting these two mosques.

<sup>1</sup> Source from [www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com)

Tourists from China visiting the mosque.

The 'Mahaligai', a replica of an ancient royal barge.



## Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque

It was during the reign of Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, one of the most beautiful mosques in the Southeast Asia region was built which is the Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque.

The history of Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque began with the setting up of the 'Jawatankuasa Penubuhan Masjid' (committee of the mosque's establishment) initiated by Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien himself in 1952. The site and mosque's structure were approved in 1953; and construction began in 1954,

The mosque was officially opened on Friday, September 26, 1958 by Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, the 28<sup>th</sup> Sultan of Brunei.

Also attending the opening ceremony were; Malay royalty, state dignitaries, the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, the Governor General of Southeast Asia and representatives from the British government.

The opening ceremony of the mosque was also the first news reported over the radio in Brunei Darussalam at that time.

Built on a piece of five hectares of land located on the edge of Sungai Kedayan in the capital, Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque is one of the most magnificent mosques in Southeast Asia. The original area of the mosque is 225 feet (88.1 metres) in length and 86 feet (26.1 metres) width.

The architectural drawing of the mosque was designed by Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien himself. His creativity in creating the great architectural designed entitled him the title *Arkitek Brunei Moden* (Architect of Modern Brunei).

The mosque has a classic Islamic architecture, decorated with gold mosaic, marbles and colourful glasses.





The main dome that is the biggest dome of the mosque has the height of 160 feet (48.5 metres). The spire of the dome is made of original 24K gold while the peak parts are covered with pure gold Venetian mosaic from Italy.

Meanwhile, the glass windows were made specially from Italy whereas the frames are made of copper, ordered from London. The windows are designed with elements from Bruneian tradition such as Arap Gegati, Cove flower and Bay leave.

Within the 50 years of its existence, the mosque's building never had any changes or extension on its size or shape. This is to preserve and maintain the originality of the existing (exterior) architecture.

But several renovations were carried out for its interior in order to provide comfort for the devotees and visitors. In January 1994, about after 36 years in existence, first interior renovation was made. Air conditions were installed and decorated glasses (with Al-Quran verses) were fitted on the *kubah* (domes) small windows. Some of the glasses fitted were designed with the 99 Names of Allah (Asma' Allah al-Husna).

Before, the *kubah* (domes) windows were glassless as this was to allow fresh air to accumulate inside the mosque. Except the installation of the air conditions and glass on the domes windows, the exterior design of the mosque is still the same as 50 years ago.

As preparations to celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary on September 26, last year; several maintenance works were carried out like repairing and polishing the domes.

An interesting fact to know, one of the carpets used at the mosque was a *wakaf* (donation) from Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien.

According to Awang Jais bin Haji Salleh, the mosque's supervisor; the carpet is aged more than hundred years old.

Other *wakaf* (donation) items include a carpet from His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam; and Al-Quran from the public.

The mosque is not only a great landmark because of its beautiful architectural design but also for events held there.

The mass thanksgiving prayer for Brunei Darussalam Independence Day declaration on December 31, 1983 was one of the historic events held at the mosque. Until now, the mosque is still chosen as the main mosque for Brunei Darussalam National Day's mass thanksgiving prayer; and for Royal Wedding Solemnisation ceremony to be held.

Among the Royal Wedding Solemnisation held at the mosque were for His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam on July 28, 1965; His Royal Highness The Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah on September 9, 2004; Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Rashidah Sa'adatul Bolkiah on August 15, 1996; and Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Majeedah Nuurul Bulqiah on June 7, 2007.

Besides royal wedding's solemnisation, members of the public may also conduct their solemnisation ceremony here with the permission from Mosque Affairs Department, the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

The mosque is divided into various areas and can accommodate about 3,000 people. At the ground floor, the prayer areas are divided into two - for men and women.



The water fountain is one of the attractive features around the mosque.







The prayer areas are beautifully decorated with a massive chandelier which was designed by Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar `Ali Saifuddien. The chandelier that hangs beneath the main dome weights about four tonnes while the smaller chandeliers weights about two tonnes.

Another prayer area is located on the first floor mainly used for the royal family and foreign VIPs on visit to Brunei Darussalam. Several rooms are also available such as Royal/VIP holding room, PA system and technician room, office and mini library.

During the olden days, *bilal* (muezzin) would have to go to the 13-level minaret for Azan (call for prayer) but with the existence of public announcement system, this is no longer practised, said Awang Jais bin Haji Salleh.

The mosque's minaret (tower) which is 166 feet (50.3 metres) height with 244 stair steps was considered as the the highest building in Brunei Darussalam during the time of the construction.

The mosque supervisor further added that; the mosque also conducts religious activities every night at the mosque. Among the activities are religious talks and classes like *kuliah Subuh* and *Fardhu Ain* classes, Al-Quran reading classes for adults (three times a week), and recital of Surah Yaasin and Tahlil, Rattib Al-Attas and Hadith 40.

Meanwhile on Friday morning, Al-Quran reading classes for children are also conducted. Currently there are about 100 students attending the classes with five teachers.

The mosque has about 23 officers and staffs which consists of Penguasa Masjid, Imam, *bilal*, supervisors, Marbut (caretaker of the mosque), security and labours.

The mosque not only has beautiful interior design but also has an attractive compound. There is a water fountain and small pool used for *wuduk* (ablution) during the olden days. But now the pool has become a decoration as water is supplied through pipes.



Mimbar is where the sermons are read.



An incense burner that produces aromatic smell throughout the mosque.





Another attraction is the lagoon as within the lagoon, there is a concrete ship which cost \$250,000 to build.

The concrete ship known as 'Mahaligai' (shaped like an ancient royal barge) was officially opened by His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam on Monday, 17 Ramadhan 1387 corresponding to December 18, 1967 at 8.30 pm to commemorate the 1400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Nuzul Al-Quran (the revelation of the holy Quran).

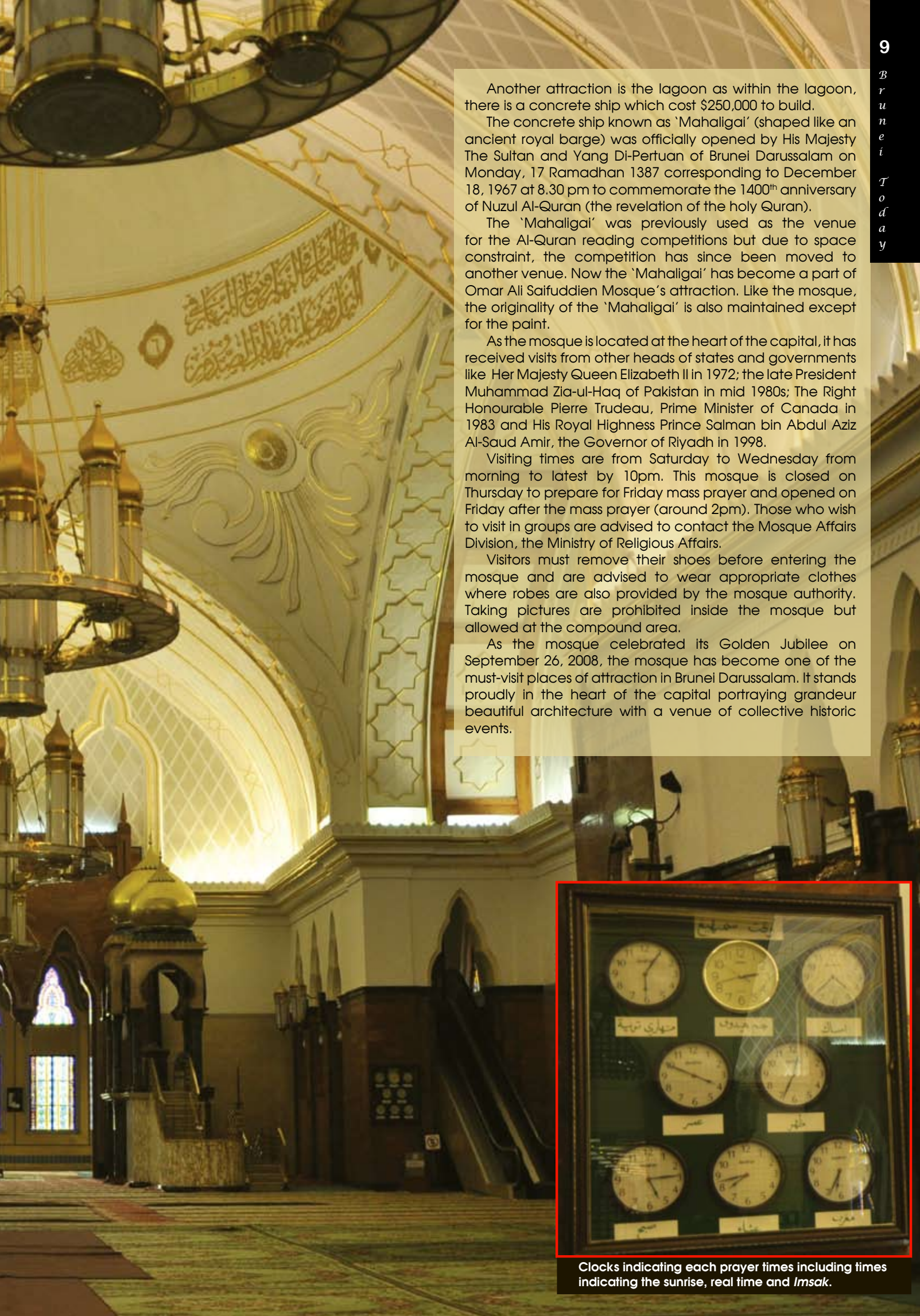
The 'Mahaligai' was previously used as the venue for the Al-Quran reading competitions but due to space constraint, the competition has since been moved to another venue. Now the 'Mahaligai' has become a part of Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque's attraction. Like the mosque, the originality of the 'Mahaligai' is also maintained except for the paint.

As the mosque is located at the heart of the capital, it has received visits from other heads of states and governments like Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1972; the late President Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq of Pakistan in mid 1980s; The Right Honourable Pierre Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada in 1983 and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud Amir, the Governor of Riyadh in 1998.

Visiting times are from Saturday to Wednesday from morning to latest by 10pm. This mosque is closed on Thursday to prepare for Friday mass prayer and opened on Friday after the mass prayer (around 2pm). Those who wish to visit in groups are advised to contact the Mosque Affairs Division, the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Visitors must remove their shoes before entering the mosque and are advised to wear appropriate clothes where robes are also provided by the mosque authority. Taking pictures are prohibited inside the mosque but allowed at the compound area.

As the mosque celebrated its Golden Jubilee on September 26, 2008, the mosque has become one of the must-visit places of attraction in Brunei Darussalam. It stands proudly in the heart of the capital portraying grandeur beautiful architecture with a venue of collective historic events.



Clocks indicating each prayer times including times indicating the sunrise, real time and Imsak.



# Malay Technology Museum

One of the most popular places to visit in Brunei Darussalam is the Malay Technology Museum. Located along Jalan Kota Batu, this museum is just minutes away from the Brunei Museum and a few miles away from the capital Bandar Seri Begawan.

The Malay Technology Museum was officially opened on February 29, 1988 by His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam. The building cost around B\$7 million to build and was sponsored by the Royal Dutch/Shell Group of Companies.

The construction of the Malay Technology Museum began in 1985 and completed by 1987 on a 15 hectares piece of land by the riverside of Brunei River in Kota Batu.

This museum mainly showcases technological aspects that were available in the olden days of Brunei depicting the lifestyle of Bruneians who lived on dry land and at the water village. All exhibits showcased at the museum are important records of cultural tools used by Bruneians which some are now no longer used or exist.

There are three exhibition halls which feature galleries on Water Village Traditional Houses, Water Village Traditional Technology and Inland Traditional Technology.

This museum is opened daily from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm except for Saturday at 9.45 am and closed for Friday Mass Prayer from 11.30 am to 2.30 pm; and admission is free.

## Hall Number 1: Water Village Traditional House Gallery

This gallery showcases architectural structure of houses in the water village in the late 19<sup>th</sup> to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century.



In the olden days, the houses were commonly built from materials like *daun apong*, *kajang* and bamboo. Other than that, the type of houses could reflect the status of the owner.

This gallery exhibits six model houses shown in detail, backed up by diorama, depicting the panoramic view of the water village:

- *Rumah Belah Bubung* (one-ridge-roofed house), the roof looked like inverted V-shaped. As the house is easy to construct therefore most commoners chose this type of house.
- *Rumah Tungkup* (covered-roofed house), this type of house was usually built by nobles and dignitaries, and also person with high status in the Malay Brunei community like Pengiran and Pehin.
- *Rumah Loteng* (house with attic), the shape is like *Rumah Tungkup* but has an attic. This type of house was normally built by nobles and dignitaries. It is recognised by its double storeys or attic above the main house. Word 'Loteng' comes from Chinese word 'Lau Teng' which means room at the upper level.
- *Rumah Belah Bubung Berserambi* (one ridge-roofed house with veranda), this type of house is an enlargement of the *Rumah Belah Bubung*.





- *Rumah Potong Lima* (five-roofed house), this type of house is introduced in late 1940's and made of *Bullian* (wood) and zinc-roofed.; and
- *Rumah Belanggar* (collided-roofed house), which was introduced in the late 1950's.

## Hall Number 2: Water Village Traditional Technology

Water village or Kampong Ayer in Brunei Darussalam was the largest residential area in the country for the past 100 years. During early Brunei, most of its people were self-employed and involved in cottage industries.

The second gallery shows various types of handicrafts and cottage industries found in the water village. The display includes boat construction, roof-making, gold smithing, silver smithing, brass casting, ironsmithing and cloth-weaving.

The gallery portrays ideas of activities in the olden days by featuring model of main types of occupation/cottage industries and its related equipments such as the fishing gears, *memburis perahu* (boat-making), *menuhur atap* (making roof), and arts and handicrafts.

It was told that some of the names of several villages in the water village were derived from these entrepreneurships like Kampong Pandai Besi (reflects to the activities of *bertukang besi* (ironsmithing)).

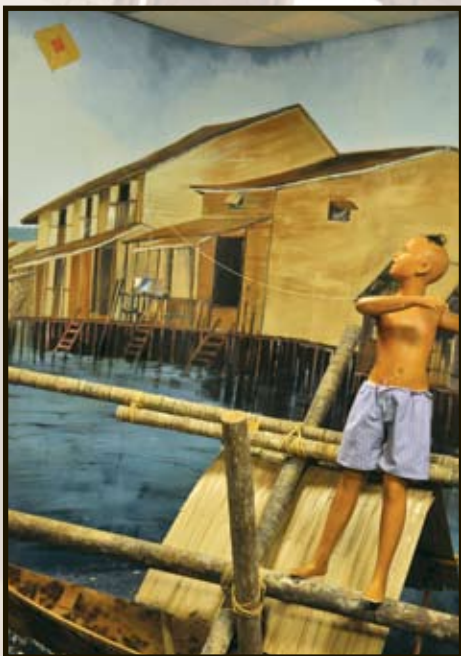
Local arts and handicrafts products are also exhibited in this gallery. Among the products are weaved-cloth, different shapes of *bedil* (cannons), *calapa*, *langguai*, *cupu*, *kiri berukir* (antique pot), *lanjang*, *gangsua* (brass tray).

## Hall Number 3: Inland Traditional Technology Gallery

Brunei Darussalam has seven *puak* (ethnic groups) that is *Melayu*, *Kedayan*, *Tutong*, *Belait*, *Dusun*, *Murut* and *Bisaya*. *Puak Melayu* (Malay) mainly lived in Kampong Ayer before migrating to land while the others had already lived on land. All of these groups speak Bahasa Melayu (Malay language) but also have their own dialect.

Therefore the third gallery mainly portrays on indigenous technologies. This gallery among others displays model of:

- Traditional equipment used for making Ambulong and Tapa Garut, a place to scrap Sago.







- Gaman: a kind of raft used for fishing in the shallow sea. It is made from light wood which is water resistant, making it suitable and buoyant as a water craft.
- House of Puak Murut – the house is divided into three *takap* (rooms) and each *takap* is for one family. Besides the *takap* the house also has *sikang*, the social area. At one end of *sikang*, there is one special instrument that would be used for *Barukai* ceremony (a head cult ceremony).
- House of Puak Dusun – for Puak Dusun there are two bedrooms. The master bedroom is always situated on the right hand side from the front door entrance to signify the 'head' of the family. Meanwhile on the other bedroom, a warming place after giving birth to a baby is exhibited. The social section of the house is installed with a set of musical instrument and *kemajang* which are used for the purposed of Temarok (Dusun traditional dance).
- House of Kedayan – usually used for extended family living together under one roof but still considered as two-family unit. Also exhibited is Gasing, a local traditional game mainly mastered by the Malay Kedayan and still played and popular until today.
- Durung – it is a special hut for storing paddy. The stairs is removable, called as *Tangga Kambing* and only installed when used. *Dinar*, a round object is fixed at the four posts of durung to avoid pest like rat.





- Candasan Gelagah - is a traditional device for pressing sugar cane to obtain the juice. This equipment could hardly be found nowadays as it is replaced with modern and portable machines.
- Perusahaan Membuat Gulana - Gulana is a palm/brown sugar which is usually added as a food ingredient. Nowadays, this activity is not much practised but still available in some villages.

Also showcased at the museum are the ASEAN Youth Sculptures and interactive corner of traditional games.

At the compound of the museum, visitors would be able to find several items exhibited such as the front gate of General Hospital. General Hospital was opened on September 7, 1929. The General Hospital no longer exists as today's referral hospital is the Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha (RIPAS) Hospital opened on August 28, 1984. The General Hospital was demolished and the gate has been kept as remembrance.





## The two mausoleums

Besides Brunei Museum and Malay Technology Museum, other places to visit around Kota Batu are the two royal mausoleums.

One of the mausoleums belongs to Sultan Sharif Ali, the third Sultan of Brunei who reigned from 1425 - 1432. Sultan Sharif Ali was also known as 'Sultan Berkat'. He was a pious ruler who spread Islam successfully and effectively. Sultan Berkat was the first Sultan to build a mosque in Brunei.

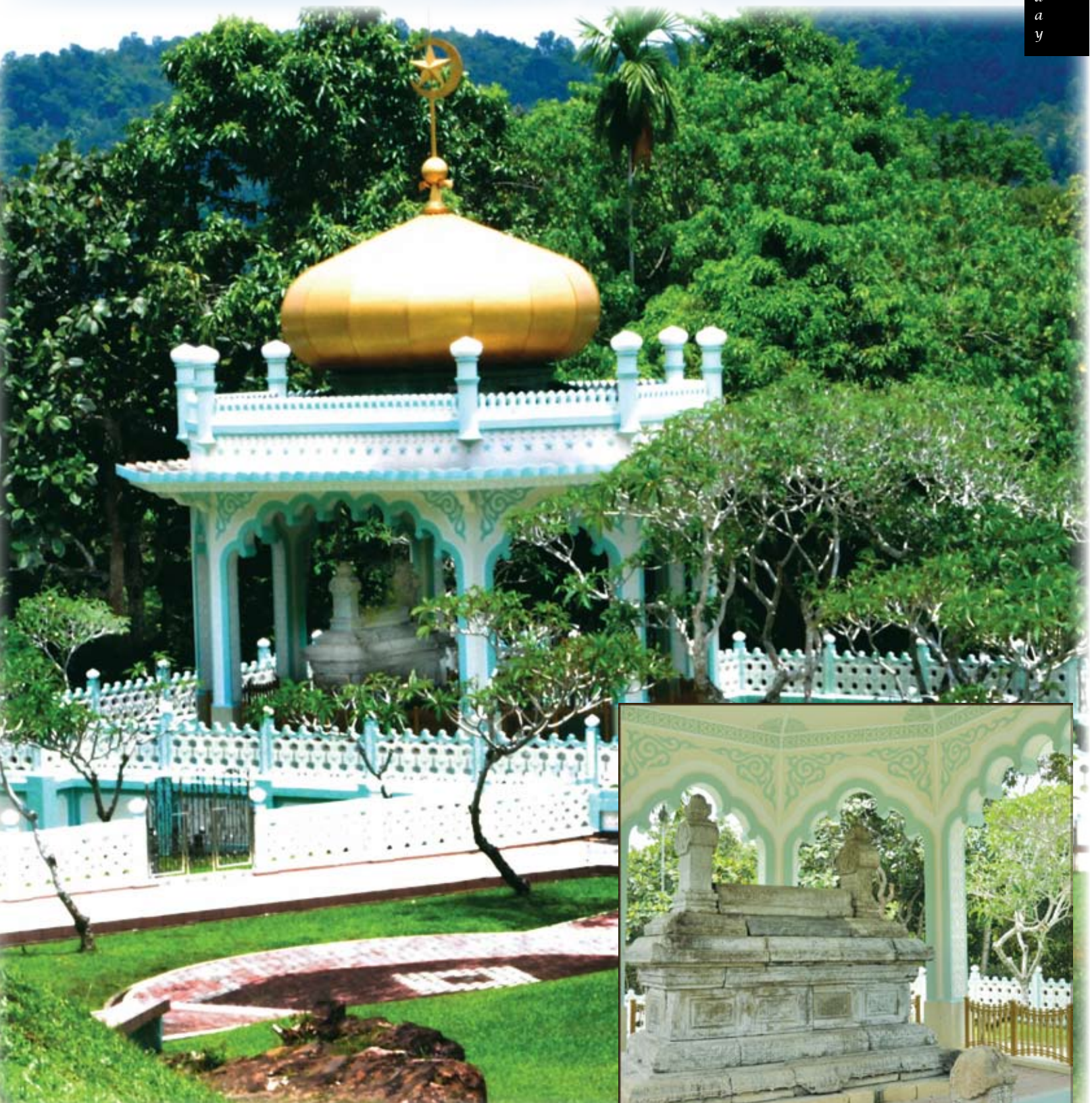
The other mausoleum was of the fifth Sultan of Brunei, Sultan Bolkiah who was famously known as 'Nakhoda Ragam'. He reigned from 1485 to 1524. Under the rule of Sultan Bolkiah, Brunei expanded into an empire where it reached to as far as the some of the islands of today's Philippines and Borneo.



The royal mausoleum of Sultan Sharif Ali.







The royal mausoleum of Sultan Bolkiah.





 موزیوم تیکنولوژی مالایو  
MALAY TECHNOLOGY MUSEUM