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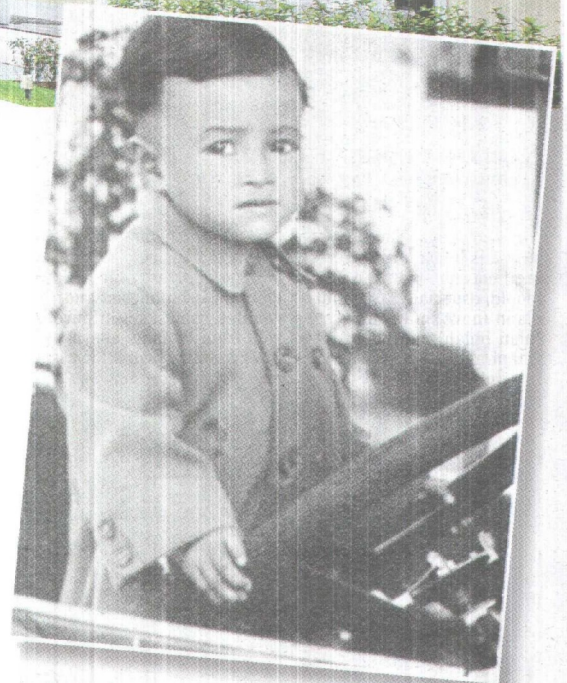


A royal life remembered

Royalty has long fascinated the common people. A royal museum in Klang provides a look at the life of Selangor's eighth sultan, writes ZANNA ES.



REGAL: The Royal Gallery Sultan Abdul Aziz's imposing front.



THE PRINCE: One of the earliest photographs of Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah, age 4.



CLICK: The late Sultan collected quite a number of cameras. Here are two models.

The late Sultan's ancestry can be traced back to the Bugis Sulawesi family of Opu Tanreburung Daeng Relaka who featured in the history of the Malay Archipelago.

SELANGOR has a new museum and gallery which provides a fascinating glimpse into the history of the Selangor sultanate and the life and times of the eighth Sultan, Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah.

The Royal Gallery Sultan Abdul Aziz in Klang, opened in November, houses magnificent artifacts, gifts and personal collection of the late Sultan.

A brainchild of the late Sultan, and originally funded by him, it was set up in 1988 as the Memorial Museum, in one of the late Sultan's private palaces in Jalan Kota Raja (Kampung Jawa).

The palace was renovated, with the support of the State Government, and opened to the public in the year 2000, renamed the Royal Gallery Sultan Abdul Aziz, in honour of his birthname.

However, a year later, the Sultan passed away and the gallery was temporarily closed.

His eldest son, who succeeded him as the ninth sultan, Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah, took up his father's wishes to safeguard traditional values and future heritage consciousness.

As the museum stood on the sultan's private land, the Sultan Suleiman building, built in 1909 and named after Raja Suleiman who became Sultan Alaeddin Suleiman Shah was chosen for its historical significance and accessibility to the public.

Conservation and renovation works on the building adjacent to the Klang Post Office, began in 2005 and were completed

late last year. "The Sultan took a personal interest in the museum and would often spend about three hours going through the artifacts, ensuring that they were correctly documented," said Munasor Aliyasak, the museum manager.

Exhibits on the ground floor provide background on the sultanate, the royal lineage, and brief histories of Selangor's nine sultans.

The late Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Alhaj was born on March 8, 1926, at Istana Bandar in Kuala Langat.

The late Sultan's ancestry can be traced back to the Bugis Sulawesi family of Opu Tanreburung Daeng Relaka who featured in the history of the Malay Archipelago.

The eighth Sultan also

served as Yang di-Pertuan Agong XI, first Chancellor of Universiti Putra Malaysia, and Chancellor of the Universiti Teknologi Mara.

Among the historical items of interest at the gallery is a silver cigar case, a gift from Sir Frank Swettenham, the third Resident in Selangor, to the fourth sultan, Sultan Sir Abdul Samad, royal seals used during the reign of Sultan Sir Abdul Samad, and the royal canes of arecanut (*pinang*) with the royal seal as the hilt.

There is also the Queen Victoria Sword, a gift to Sultan Sir Abdul Samad from the Governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir Frederick Weld, with an inscription that reads "... as a token of friendship of Her Britannic Majesty's Government and in

recognition of His Highness's enlightened policy on the question of debt slavery".

As visitors move up to the first floor, they will get an insight into the late Sultan's early years, with one photograph showing him at the age of four.

Visitors will also discover that Sultan Alaeddin Suleiman Shah agreed to the construction of the Mahkota Puri Palace in Klang, completed in 1903, and used as the sultan's official palace before it was converted as a hostel for school children, and later demolished to make way for a new palace.

A large Hargine music box is an interesting feature: the box was bought at auction in 1928 (for the price of one Straits dollar) by Sultan Sir Hisamuddin Alam Shah at Port Swettenham (now Port Klang).

"The late sultan used to tell stories about how he would usually take a nap in front of the music box apparently exhausted after dancing to the rhythm of the melodious music," said Munasor.

Also displayed are some of the late Sultan's personal belongings including his favourite gold watch bearing the Selangor state crest, and a boxed watch bearing the picture of the late Sultan and the late Tengku Ampuan Rahimah.

Visitors will be dazzled by the beauty of hand-embroidered shoes as well as the several pieces of gold thread embroidered *kain sampin* and a gold-buckled belt with the alphabet 'S' embellished in the centre.

The late Sultan also kept a pistol cane which was used for shooting practices while the German-made pistol was often carried for his personal protection.

The late Sultan enjoyed taking pictures and it is not unusual to find that he owned a few cameras, which are also displayed here.

He often cycled to the rural areas to visit the people, especially to Lumut Island (now known as Pulau Indah) and Pulau Ketam and the bicycles he used are on display, such as the Raleigh New Yorker, an Underwood with a leather seat and pouches as well as the I.A. Giunchina.

The late Sultan was also a coin collector and his collections include commemorative gold coins, dinars in conjunction with Kuwait's 25th national day and Russian coins.

Of particular significance were food containers in Selangor's red and yellow with the State crest embossed on the cover. The containers were used for *nasi beriani*. Another is a colourful flat metal box which could easily be converted into a pencil case for children. "Although they were simple gifts it meant a lot to both the late and the present Sultan as they were donated by the *rakyat*," said Munasor.

On display are also gifts from companies which include a set of golf balls (individually signed by the late Sultan) presented by Sime Darby, the classic F & N soft-drink bottle in gold

presented during the late Sultan's visit to the factory, as well as a copy of the paper currency that was used in the Sungei Buloh leprosy centre in 1936, which was presented to the late Sultan during his visit to the centre.

A centrepiece of the display is royal regalia such as the Sultan's crown which superseded the pure gold Mahkota Leleng crown used in the 19th century.

During the reign of Sultan Muhammad (1826-1857), a Muslim theologian, Sheikh Abdul Ghani, counselled the royal court to obtain a substitute for Mahkota Leleng. Diamonds and gem stones from Pontianak, Indonesia, and genuine rubies, set in pure gold from Pahang, adorn the present crown which is worn on royal occasions.

Also on display is a replica of the diamond tiara worn by the Tengku Ampuan during functions such as royal banquets and investitures.

The Sultan's keris, *Keris Tetali Emas* or *Keris Emas Pendek*, has a blade forged from Lela Pestaka iron, deemed to have exceptional qualities. The sheath is made of cork and it has a gilded rope that adorns the length of the sheath, which encases the seven-grooved blade. The tip of this sheath is axe-shaped, and the hilt is adorned with gemstones.

One of the gifts that the Sultan received while serving as Yang di-Pertuan Agong was a model of the Dome of the Rock, presented by the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

A jade cannon with a dragon carved on the top of the barrel was a gift from Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei.

Among souvenirs collected by the late

Sultan during his travels abroad were silver spoons, samurai head gear as well as beautiful clocks which include the crystal ball clock, mantel clock, swinging clock with brass sculpture as well as the marble clocks.

There is a section of commemorative official plates and plates used at Mahkota Puri Palace as well as a gold-plated tea set.

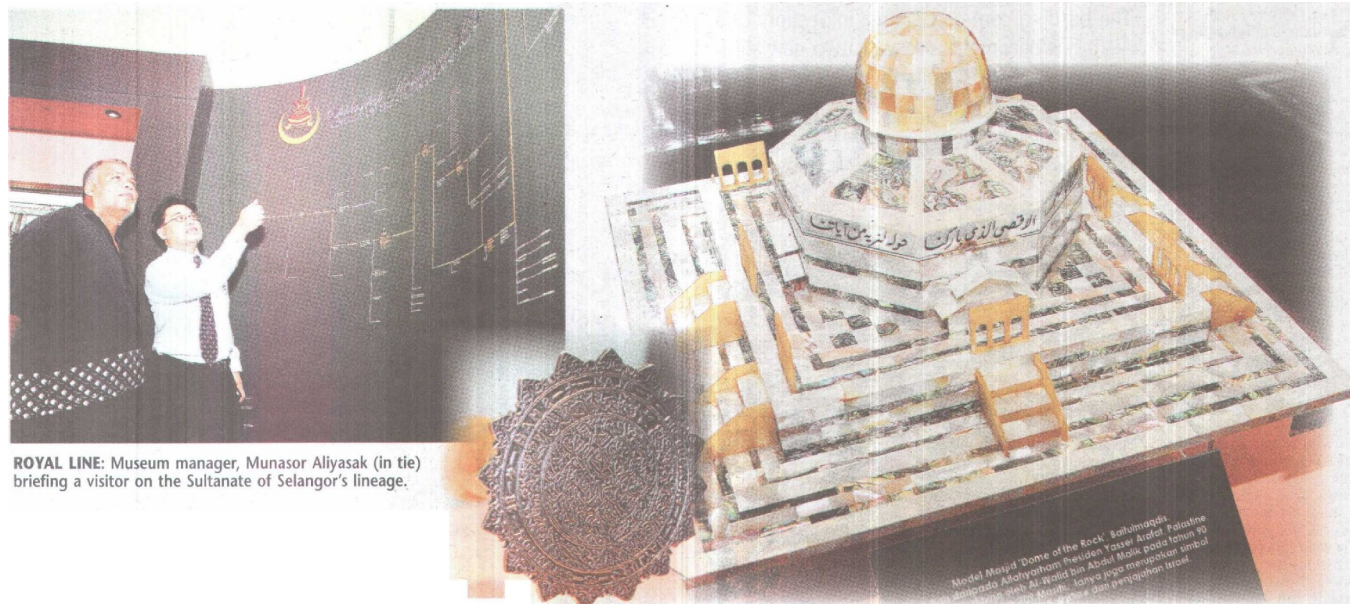
Visitors would certainly be interested in the 6.7-metre-long crocodile captured in the Klang River in 1961 by Mohd Salleh bin Abdul Karim and Ibrahim bin Abdul Karim, three months after Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Alhaj ascended the throne.

It is said that the crocodile "surrendered" itself to the two mediums as an attestation to the sovereignty of the new Sultan. The crocodile's skull was presented to the Sultan by V M Hutson, first curator of the National Zoo. Other items of interest are a cathedral-shaped bird cage, a Javanese tiger, as well as gold-plated flamingo, gold-plated deer and a porcelain horse.

The final section houses personal paintings and decorative chairs as well as greeting cards with Chinese characters embossed in solid gold, as well as the lela cannon.

The gallery is open from 10am to 5pm daily except Mondays and on public holidays. Call 03-3373-6500 or fax 03-3373-6510.

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ROYAL LINE: Museum manager, Munasor Aliyask (in tie) briefing a visitor on the Sultanate of Selangor's lineage.

OFFICIAL MARK: One of the royal seals on display.

FROM ARAFAT: A model of the Dome of the Rock, in mother of pearl, a gift to the sultan from Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.