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Asam Aur-Aur



Parks



Cloth Weaving



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# Weaving, from handicraft to entrepreneurship



An instructor monitoring one of her trainee doing the weaving.



In the process of weaving.

One distinctive cultural heritage inherited since generations ago is the art of weaving. Cloth weaving, in Brunei Darussalam in particular, is a highly esteemed form of art, recognised both locally and internationally.

The history of cloth weaving started as far as the reign of Sultan Bolkiah, the fifth Sultan of Brunei.

During the early days, cloth weaving would take place after daily chores such as house keeping and cooking were completed. The activity, dominated by women, was one of the ways to past their time while waiting for their husbands to return from their own routines who were known to be fishermen and blacksmiths.

Today, Brunei Darussalam has gained international recognition for producing high quality weaving products. Such excellence were portrayed through the award - 'Seal of Excellence' by UNESCO - AHPADA in the year 2002 and 2003 given to the Brunei Arts and Handicrafts Training Centre (BAHTC) in 2002 and 2003. The awards were given to the woven fabrics named 'Kain SiLubang Bangsi, Bunga Bekarang Indah Terjurai' (Seal of Excellence 2002) and 'Kain Silubang Bangsi, Bebelitang Berantai' (Seal of Excellence 2003).

In its effort to protect and sustain the tradition, the government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in 1975 established the Brunei Arts and Handicraft Training Centre (BAHTC) as a centre providing

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Among the instruments used in pre-weaving process.



The final products - Kain Terunan and mini-cushion covers.



*Trainee at BAHTC focusing on her cloth-weaving job to avoid mistakes.*

courses on various traditional handwork skills. Among the courses available are weaving, plaiting, brass work and songkok-making (traditional head-gear).

For the past 30 years of its establishment, BAHTC had produced about 498 graduates specialising on weaving. From this figure, most of the graduates had set up their own entrepreneurship specialising in producing woven products. More success are seen through a book entitled 'Directory of Handicraft Entrepreneurs in Brunei Darussalam' (2004) which revealed a number of 139 small-and-medium enterprises specialising in cloth weaving. Some of the entrepreneurs carry their business at home while some had set up proper business establishments.

To achieve a very high quality and beautiful woven cloth, the method of weaving plays a significant role. In this era of modernisation where almost every task is done with the help of machinery; weaving in Brunei is still done the conservative way. The entire process is carried out within the equipment named as 'rumah' (house). The threads must also be counted thread by thread.

The process of cloth-weaving involves a number of stages. A piece of woven-cloth is usually 2.2 metres by 0.8 metre where it will take about 10 to 14 days and sometimes even longer to produce.

The stages of cloth weaving begin with preparation of the pattern. The pattern is drawn on a graph paper to ensure the design to follow and to avoid mistakes during the weaving process. A single mistake will spoil the whole production. Most of the patterns used are those of various flowers which reflects the Malay culture and also influence from the Islamic faith which is the official religion of this nation-state.

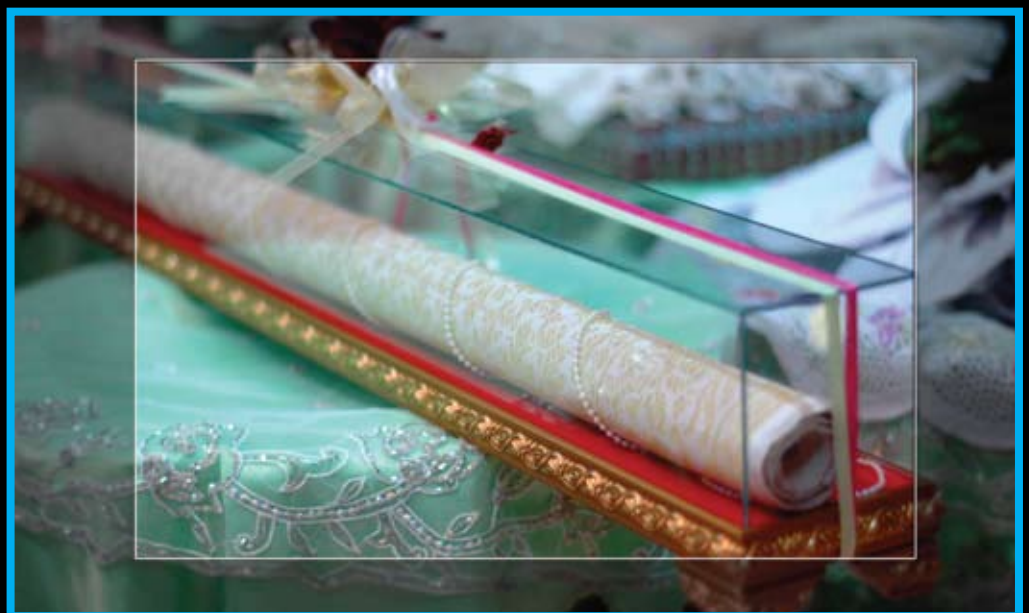
The hand-made woven-cloths or fabrics represent an art of textile which is very expensive and high quality with beautiful patterns and designs.

The evaluation on the beauty of woven-cloth depends on the pattern and motif of the flower. However, it is not an easy task to weave different patterns as it needs patience and perseverance in doing the task. The finest product

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Besides Kain Tenunan, the woven-cloth is also made into ties (above pictures).



Kain Jong Sarat decorated in glass frame as a present from the groom to the bride during Majlis Menghantar Berian.

SIPUGUT



SILUBANGBANGSI



JONGSARAT



SUKMAINDERA



SIPUGUTBERLAPIS



*The prices of woven-cloth ranges from \$300 above.*

*Not just a piece of cloth. Now, woven-cloth is also made into handbags and pencil cases.*



weaver's care and diligence. The beauty of flower motifs in various shape and patterns displays the unique traditional characters and shows the creativity of Bruneian in producing high quality and unique arts.

Today with the presence of various influences, weavers are exposed to a variety of modern fashion and style and these more or less have inspired them in designing their weaving pattern. Sometimes the pattern is designed according to customer's request.

There are two weaving designs namely corak Biasa and corak Bepakan. The fabric weaved with gold, silver or silk threads are named corak Biasa while fabric weaved with wool and gold threads are called corak Bepakan. Weaved-cloth with corak Bepakan looks more striking and more expensive than corak Biasa.

The woven-cloth are named according to its patterns, such as; Kain Silubang Bangsi, Kain SiPugut, Kain Jongsarot, Kain Beragi, Kain Sukmaindera, Kain Lipatan Madu, Kain Arap, Kain Beturus and Kain Tajong. Each of these clothes has different patterns.

From the list above, Kain Silubang Bangsi is the most expensive while most demanded is Kain Beragi as the price is affordable. Meanwhile, Kain Jongsarot is famous as a gift during Majlis Menghantar Berian where it is a gift from the groom to the bride.

The prices of the woven-cloth usually ranged from \$300 above and can reach to few thousands of dollars.

The most appropriate time to wear this woven cloth is during royal ceremonials at the palace or the Lapau, during weddings and on the occasion to celebrate the birth of the first child in the family called "Mandi Belawat". The cloth is also made into traditional wedding dress, and as part of local university and institution's graduation gown.

For more commercial value, the woven-cloth is made into decorative items like mini-cushion cover, table-cloth, pencil case, purse, handbag, tie, and wall partition. Some of the woven-cloth (in small size) are also put in frame and sold as souvenirs.

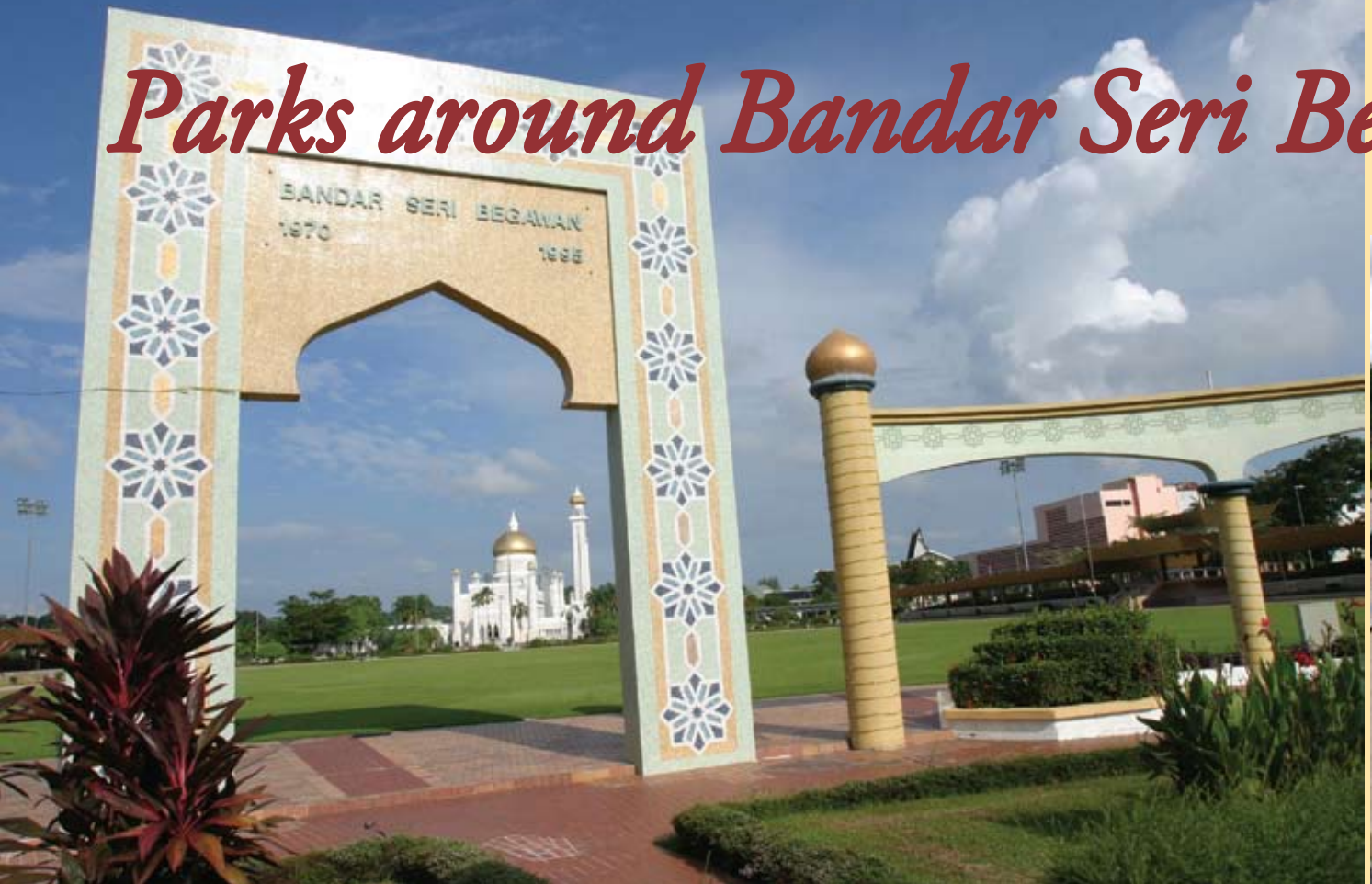
According to an official from BAHTC, they also received purchases for items like mini cushion covers and table-cloth from countries like Japan.

*Brunei's woven-cloth always the first choice for local wedding attire.*



Picture courtesy of Dayangku Nor'asmita Pengantin Hajji Kamarutodin

# Parks around Bandar Seri Begawan



*View of the Taman Haji Sir Muda Omar 'Ali Saifuddien.*

- After a day of hectic activities, a change of scenery
- such as a walk around the park, enjoying the natural
- beauty of a waterfall and a stroll around recreational
- parks are some ways to unwind. Strategically,
- recreational parks based in Bandar Seri Begawan
- offer these.

## **Taman Haji Sir Muda Omar 'Ali Saifuddien**

A well known historical park, situated in the heart of the capital is the Taman Haji Sir Muda Omar 'Ali Saifuddien. Parallel to the legendary Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Mosque, this park has existed since the early 1930's. A lavish spread of green grass with rows of grandstands, this venue is often times chosen as the venue for national events.

This park received a number of facelifts such as the construction of grandstands, fences and tiled floorings. The 'Taman', an endearing name when describing the park, holds a huge collection of memories. One of the main historical events that took place at this venue was the declaration of Brunei Darussalam's sovereignty on January 1, 1984. Thousands gathered here to witness the auspicious occasion. The call "Allah Akhbar" (Allah the Great) as a sign of gratitude to Allah The Almighty illuminated the night. The call was led by the late Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien.

The Taman had also become the venue for national events. Among the events were the National Day celebration, birthday parade for His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, as the starting and finishing line for mass walkathons and others.

The physical infrastructure of the Taman consist of a spread of green grass, two grandstands with a royal dais at the centre of one of the rows. The royal dais is where His Majesty and members of the royal family will be seated during national events.



*The Silver Jubilee Park, perfect spot for a stroll (above and below).*





awan



*A historical 'Cendera Lambang Kenangan' at the far end of Taman Haji Sir Muda Omar 'Ali Saifuddien.*

At the far end of the Taman, Cendera Lambang Kenangan, a monument was built to commemorate the change of 'Brunei Town' (Bandar Brunei) to Bandar Seri Begawan.

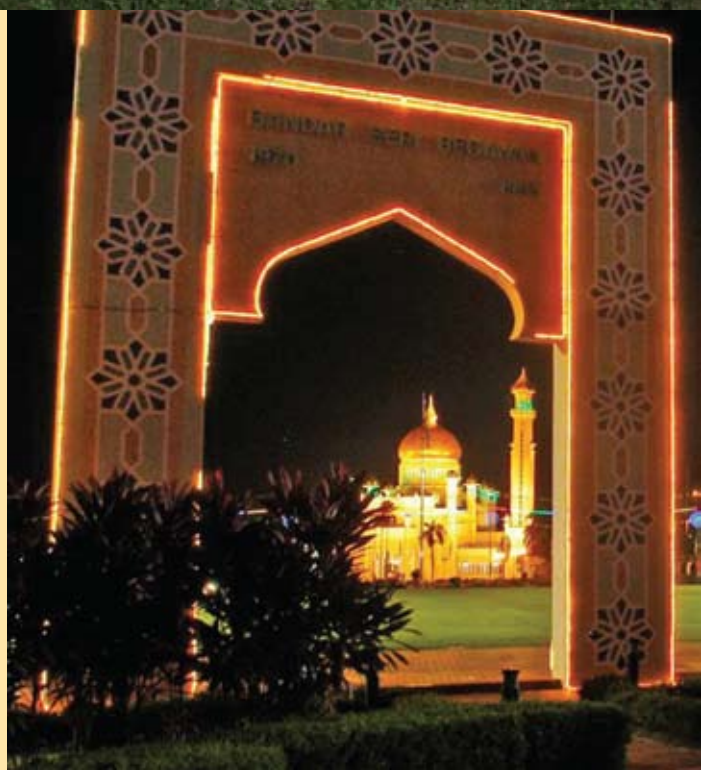
As the Taman is considered as a historical site, it is only opened when national events are organised at this venue. However, during His Majesty's birthday, this Taman is opened for the public in the evenings. It proved to be a popular spot as you will be able to see people from all walks of life enjoying the outdoors and spending quality time with their loved ones here. Young children playing football and kites, families having a picnic are a common sight.

### Silver Jubilee Park

Another park is the Silver Jubilee Park, a combination of historical and recreational park. Located about five minutes from the heart of Bandar Seri Begawan, the park is considered as historical as it was built to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of His Majesty's ascension to the throne. Conveniently, this park is accessorised with comfortable walkways for one to stroll around or even for a jog with a water fountain based at the centre of the park.

This park, similar with Taman Haji Sir Muda Omar 'Ali Saifuddien, was occasionally used as a venue for meet-the-people session for His Majesty's birthday celebration. Also held in conjunction with His Majesty's birthday celebration, night stalls are usually set up at the vicinity of this park.

*Brunei Darussalam's famous mosque, Omar 'Ali Saifuddien mosque is just a short-walk from the park.*



*Spectacular view of Istana Nurul Iman from Damuan recreational park.*



### **Damuan Recreational Park**

A walking distance from the 1,788-room Istana Nurul Iman, is the popular Damuan Recreational Park. A one-kilometer long stretch of land sandwiched between the Bandar Seri Begawan – Tutong road and the Damuan River, it is based about 4 ½ kilometre from the heart of the capital.

With it being next to the serene calm river of Damuan, the park is equipped with walkways, playground, and adorned with six sculpture designs themed 'Harmony in Diversity', symbolising ASEAN's solidarity and the aspirations of its member countries who love peace, freedom and mutual respect. The designs were completed during the Fourth ASEAN Square Sculpture Symposium which lasted from January 11 to February 24, 1986.

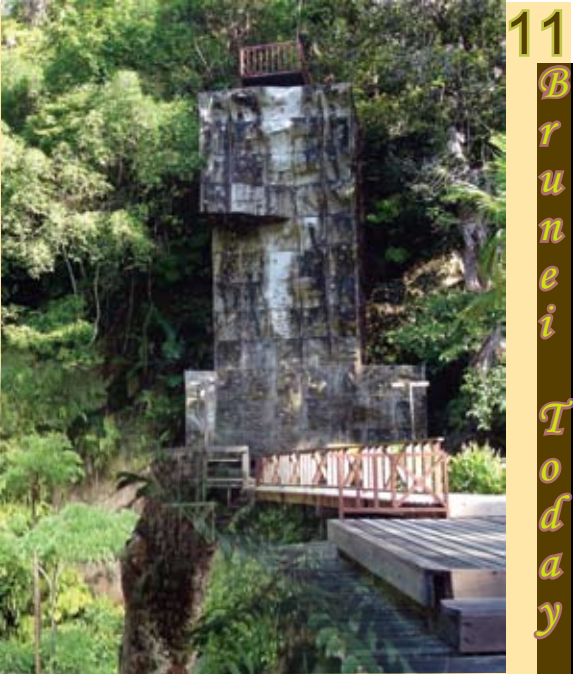
This park is also popular among joggers and strollers. Other sports activities such as canoeing, boat cruise, and fishing are also widely popular. The Damuan River is also a passage way for the big barge to transport rocks from Temburong to the local quarries in the Brunei-Muara district.

There are also several food stalls where patrons will be able to enjoy their meal by the river. It is an ideal place to unwind and dine, open in the evenings. It is further

*The sceneries around Damuan recreational park.*



*Tasek Lama Recreational Park offers you a well preserved natural environment with good recreational facilities.*



ornamented with sundry flowers as well as palm and other trees, making it cool and shady.

### **Tasek Lama Recreational Park**

For a much closer interaction with mother nature, the Tasek Lama Recreational Park, based in the city centre features a beautiful garden of trees and flowers. An ideal place to relax and enjoy the serene quiet surroundings with the sounds of luscious waterfall in the background.

With its green nature very well preserved, it is a perfect haven for jungle trekking, outdoor activities and even for just a walk. It has a waterfall and reservoir that provides a tranquil retreat away from the bustle of the city centre.

The park received several facelifts where visitors now would be able to walk or jog on a nicely cushioned walkway, children would now be able to enjoy the new colourful playgrounds, new clean restrooms, better amenities and recreational facilities. With well-paved walkways, it is hoped that the safety standard of the park would be further enhanced along with attracting more visitors.



*His Majesty's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday monument at the waterfront of Kampong Ayer.*



### **Dirgahayu 60 Monument**

Another park where you can sit and relax, and enjoy the water village is the Dirgahayu 60 monument. Located right in front of the world's largest water settlement area, Kampong Ayer and next to the Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Foundation Complex, the monument was built to commemorate His Majesty's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary in 2006. The monument was officially opened by His Majesty on July 22, 2007 during the Brunei-Muara district's meet-the-people session.



*Bukit Markucing recreational park is the best choice for those who enjoys hiking.*

### **Bukit Markucing Recreational Park**

A new addition to parks around Bandar Seri Begawan is the Bukit Markucing Recreational Park. Located in Kampong Belimbing in Mukim Kota Batu, it is about 10 minutes drive from the capital.

Launched on April 9, 2006; this park is 165 metres (3.5 kilometres above sea level) that covers several hills and it overlooks the famous water village or Kampong Ayer. Jungle trekking is required as you need to hike two kilometres of multiple hills before reaching the peak of Bukit Markucing. The multiple hills are Bukit Nenas, Bukit Karmunting, Bukit Jati, Bukit Luba, Bukit Markucing, Bukit Jati, Bukit Luba, Bukit Jibus and Bukit Sipinang. Huts were also built at various locations for those who want to enjoy the scenery of the water village.



Brunei Darussalam strategically located on the island of Borneo with an equatorial tropical climate has its own share of unique fruits and vegetables.

One that is highly demanded is Brunei's own cherry or locally known as Asam Aur-Aur.

Round-shaped with a red to yellow skin and a juicy, slightly tart white pulp, it is also known as *Garcinia parvifolia* that belongs to the



Mangosteen (*Garcinia mangostana*) group. The fruit is called Brunei Cherry as its size and appearance is quite similar to a cherry.

Asam aur-aur is native to the Island of Borneo; and occurs naturally both in Brunei and the Malaysian state, Sarawak. The fruit is rarely cultivated but usually grown as a dooryard tree. The trees are adapted to a wide range of soils, but prefer well-drained alluvial soils. Normal growth from seedling to a healthy tree will take about four to five years where cultivation can also be made by cross-cutting using joint-wedge technique or grafting.

The tree is symmetric in shape, umbrageous and has a quite thick canopy density within 1.80 cm to 10.0 cm. The tree only grow in average height with closely arranged branches which grows spirally like mangosteen's trees (*Garcinia mangostana*).

The shapes of the leaves are acuminate at the end and lanceolate at the base with 12 cm to 20 cm in length and 6.0 cm to 10.0cm in width. The leaves are dark green in colour. The surface of the leaf is smooth, less dense, and shiny with wavy edges.

The flower which later will produce the fruit is small in size. It takes approximately 102 days to mature.

The fruits are small and round in shape with 3.23cm to 2.48cm in length and 3.0cm to 3.4cm in width. Asam Aur-Aur is common in Brunei and it is highly esteemed by the locals. Usually ripe asam aur-aur will taste sweet; the peel will change colour from green (premature) to yellowish and finally red (mature). The fillings (white pulp) are juicy and taste sweet sour.

The number of fruits produced depends on the age of the tree. A four-year old tree (first production) will be able to produce about 15kg of fruit. Meanwhile trees aged five years and above are able to produce between 20kg to 40kg per tree.

# Asam Aur-Aur



*The average size of the tree makes plucking easy.*

*In the process of separating the peel and filling of asam aur-aur.*

According to Hajah Jamilah Haji Abidin, Assistant Agriculture Officer, at the Fruits Development Unit, Plants Development Division, Department of Agriculture; in Brunei, plantations of asam aur-aur have a potential to be developed in large scales as the demand for the fruit is available and the market price is quite good.

She further added that, the fruit also has a potential to become a downstream or processing industry. But currently there is no such industry established in Brunei.

Department of Agriculture through Fruits Development Units (under Plants Development Division) will continuously give assistance and support for those who are interested in fruit cultivation including the asam aur-aur.

“We at this unit do researches on the best ways to do the cultivation; then we share the knowledge with the cultivator. Besides giving advises, we also sell the young trees and fertilisers at subsidised price to registered cultivators and entrepreneurs,” said Hajah Jamilah.

The fruit can be eaten all-out fresh or dried; the dried asam aur-aur is used for flavouring dishes. The fillings of the mature asam aur-aur can be eaten raw and made into fruit jam preserves.

An interview with Dayang Hajah Norhana from Kampong Kasat, revealed that in the olden days, besides being used as ingredients for cooking; asam aur-aur was also used an ingredient for Brunei’s traditional medicine.

“The white fillings of the fruits would be soaked in water for three days, and then the water would be filtered. Later the produce (water) which is called ‘asam cuka asli’ (original sour vinegar) is mixed with nila (blue-dye). This combination can be used to cure ‘gajah-gajahan’ (swollen neck),” said Dayang Hajah Norhana.

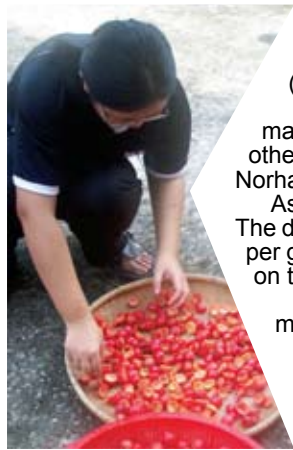
Meanwhile, the dry asam aur-aur can be made as cure for stomach ache. But there are still other ingredients to be added, added Dayang Hajah Norhana.

As the fruit is seasonal, the demand is quite high. The dried asam aur-aur usually cost around \$15 to \$35 per gantang (galloon). But the price may vary depends on the supply of the fruits.

The new fresh dry asam aur-aur will cost more than the old one.

It takes three to four shiny days to dry the asam aur-aur. The newly dry asam aur-aur are blackish red while the old dry asam aur-aur are black.

The well-dry asam aur-aur must be keep at air tight container. Some people especially older people prefer to store the dry asam aur-aur in tin or jar.



*The peel left to dry under the sun.*



*The dry asam aur-aur (above left) and the fresh fruit (above right).*

We also would like to share recipes of local delicacies with Asam Aur-Aur.

**Lauk Masin Masak Lemak (Salted fish with coconut milk).**

**Ingredients:**

- 600g of salted fish
- Three pieces of onion (cut into thin slices)
- Two table spoons of chili paste
- One teaspoon of shrimp paste
- 500 ml of coconut milk
- Five pieces of asam aur-aur (dry)

**Steps:**

- Cut the salted fish into desired pieces, clean with water and drain.
- Put all the ingredients into the cooking pot. Bring to boil.





