

SRI LANKA



INDONESIA

FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

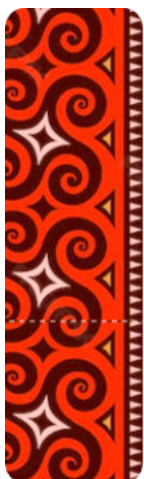
SLIFA Magazine

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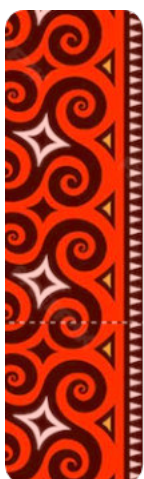
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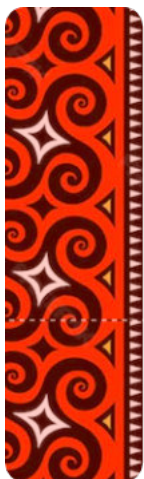
Tor-tor Dance from North Sumatra at the 2023 SLIFA Cultural and Charity Bazaar

The Tor-tor dance is a sacred ceremonial dance from the Batak people of North Sumatra that features rhythmic, controlled movements of the hands and feet performed to traditional gondang music during important cultural events and celebrations.



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Visit slifa.lk/magazine to explore this edition online and discover some of our past issues.

Special thanks to Lutfi Andaru from the Indonesian Embassy for providing the photographs of the various events and Marleena Laxana for providing write-ups for most of the events and also to the members who contributed articles. If you wish to be featured in future editions of the magazine, please submit your articles to secretary@slifa.lk.

From the Editor

It is with great pleasure that we present to you the 21st volume of the SLIFA Magazine, an edition covering our activities from June 2023 to June 2024, with apologies for the delay. As you flip through these pages, you will find a vibrant collection of events and initiatives that showcases the strong bonds between Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

The year 2023/24 has been remarkable. The Cultural & Charity Bazaar in September 2023 was a tremendous success, bringing our diverse community together and funding several meaningful projects—book distributions for underprivileged students in Gampola, donations of a sewing machine and filing cabinets to school in Weligama, and construction of roof wells for clean drinking water in Kalmunai and a washroom for a School in Beruwela.

Our social calendar thrived with the Members Day Outing, Christmas Fellowship, Quiz Night, and Ifthar Program, all offering opportunities for connection/interaction. We also bid farewell to Pak Boyke Nurdin, whose contributions to SLIFA had been invaluable.

Special appreciation to H.E. Dewi Gustina Tobing, the Ambassador and our patron, who has been the driving force behind all of our activities and to Ms Marleena Laxana, our president, for leading from the front. Heartfelt thanks to the Executive Committee and everyone who contributed—from Embassy staff to our dedicated members, our sponsors and volunteers.

As we look forward to strengthening the friendship between our nations even further, I invite your continued participation and contribution to the association.

Please note this edition will not carry a message from the Patron nor the President at that time, due to its delayed publication.

Sha Razeek

Assistant Secretary '23-'24
Editor, SLIFA Magazine



Lake Toba, North Sumatra

SLIFA Executive Committee

(2023-24)



Standing from left: Febrian Rochmadhoni, Alagan Thavarajah, S M Gnanaratne, Shanthini Thavarajah, Thariq Thulba Razeek, Rimzi Nazeer, Akram Rajabdeen, Lutfi Andaru

Sitting from left: Felicia Salley, Prasanna Samarasinghe, Boyke Nurdin, Marleena Laxana, HE Dewi Gustina Tobing, Nihal Jayasuriya, Asha Hannan, A MM Ameer, Iqram Cuttilan

Not in picture: Sha Razeek, Nilam Halaldeen, Abdul Marzook, Lalith Kiriella, Fathima Razik Cader

Inset: Felicia Salley, Mareena Laxana, HE Dewi Gustina Tobing, Asha Hannan, Shanthini Thavarajah



Office Bearers

Patron	HE Dewi Gustina Tobing Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to Sri Lanka and Maldives	Executive Committee Members	A. A. Amir (Immediate Past President) <i>Chairperson – Membership and Youth Affairs</i>
Vice Patrons	Dudley Thambinayagam Hamilton Amarasinghe I.P.C. Mendis Nihal Gooneratne Patrick Rodrigo Tony Saldin	Febrian Rochmadhoni Felicia Sallay <i>Chairperson – Activities and Projects</i> Abdul Marzook <i>Co-chairperson – Constitutional Affairs</i> Alagan Thavaraj Iqram Cuttilan <i>Chairperson – Cultural and Charity Bazaar</i> Fathima Razeek Cader Nilam Hallaldeem <i>Chairperson – SLIFA Magazine</i> Thariq Razzak Lalith Kiriella Shanthini Thavaraj Akram Rajabdeen M. Rimzi Nazeer S. M. Gnaratne Daham Arangalage	
President	Marleena Laxana		
Vice President	Boyke Nurdin departed to Jakarta on February 2024 Yadi Suryadi assumed duties on February 2024 Nihal Jayasuriya		
Honorary Secretary	Asha Hannan <i>Co-chairperson – Constitutional Affairs</i>		
Honorary Treasurer	Prasanna Samarasinghe		
Assistant Secretary	Sha Razeek <i>Chairperson – Social Media / Web</i>		
Assistant Treasurer	Lutfi Andaru		

SLIFA Annual General Meeting 2023

SLIFA held its Annual General Meeting on June 24, 2023, chaired by President Marleena Laxana. The meeting began with a solemn one-minute silence honoring deceased members and victims of the Cianjur earthquake in Indonesia. Members adopted the minutes of the previous AGM, the annual report, and the audited accounts for 2022/23.

Several constitutional amendments were also discussed and voted upon, including provisions for holding the AGM beyond June in unavoidable circumstances, expanding communication methods for notices, allowing virtual executive committee meetings, and revising signatory authorities for banking operations, which was placed under review.

The meeting saw the re-election of Marleena Laxana for a second term as President after being proposed by the Protem Chairperson, Mr. Tony Saldin, Vice Patron. HE Dewi Gustina Tobing, Ambassador of Indonesia for Sri Lanka and the Maldives, was invited to continue as patron of SLIFA for 2023/24. Other key appointments included Pak Boyke Nurdin and Nihal Jayasuriya as Vice Presidents, Asha Hannan as Honorary Secretary, Prasanna Samarasinghe as Honorary Treasurer, and Lutfi Andaru as Assistant Treasurer. The executive committee was also appointed to serve for the upcoming year.

The senior member of SLIFA, Late Mr. IPC Mendis, Vice Patron, did the honours of cutting the Anniversary cake of SLIFA.

The meeting terminated with dinner hosted by the Ambassador, H.E. Dewi Gustina Tobing, followed by fellowship among members.





SLIFA Cultural & Charity Bazaar



Students from the Sanka Samudhi Dance Academy performing the Ratoeh Jaro Dance from Aceh, Indonesia, at the SLIFA Cultural & Charity Bazaar held at the Indonesian Embassy premises on 2 September 2023.

eh Jaro Dance

From

Indonesia



The Cultural & Charity Bazaar was jointly organised by SLIFA and the Indonesian Embassy on 2nd September 2023 amidst a large gathering from 2.00pm to 10.00pm. The venue was the Indonesian Embassy premises. The Cultural and Charity Bazaar featured a cultural show depicting song and dance items from Indonesia and Sri Lanka as well as other entertainment. 54 stalls consisting of a variety of products from Indonesian, Sri Lankan and other nationalities which included food, clothing, household items, handicrafts, cosmetics and other fancy items were available at the bazaar.

Her Excellency Dewi Gustina Tobing, Ambassador of Indonesia graced the occasion. A large gathering was seen at the event including staff from other embassies and expatriates.

The Chief Guest was Ms. Aruni Wijewardena, Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Several Ambassadors and High Commissioners representing other countries also attended the event.

SLIFA wishes to thank Her Excellency and the Indonesian Embassy, the sponsors, generous donors, participants, stall holders, performers and the public for their support in making this event a success. The proceeds from this event will be utilized for various social service projects.







Performance by the
Sri Lanka Malay Association



The Ambassador, HE Dewi
Gustina Tobing, addressing
the gathering



President of SLIFA,
Ms Marleena Laxana



The Chief Guest
Ms. Aruni Wijewardena,
delivering her speech





Bharathanatyam



Interactive Angklung



Kandyan Dance

Indonesia



Baris Dance from Bali, Indonesia



Ratoeh Jaro Dance
from Aceh, Indonesia



Pendet Dance from
Bali Indonesia



Tor Tor Dance

From

North Sumatera, Indonesia



Rahmanika



Raban Dance from
Sri Lanka



Performance by
Rakitha Widyapathige



SLIFA Quiz Night

An evening of intellectual competition and camaraderie unfolded at the Riptaloka Hall on Sunday, March 3rd, 2024, as participants gathered for an engaging quiz night. The event drew ten enthusiastic teams ready to test their knowledge across diverse categories.

With Mr. Jehaan Ismail serving as quizmaster, contestants navigated through six challenging rounds, each featuring ten questions. The competition covered a broad spectrum of topics including General Knowledge, Nature, Sport, Geography, Food and Drink, and Movies and Music.

After a spirited contest, "Charlie's Angels" emerged victorious, with "The Lions" and "Mabole Malay Association" securing second and third positions respectively.

Adding a cultural dimension to the evening, attendees were treated to a special musical interlude featuring violinist Pak Miyoshi Masatoa, whose performance enhanced the atmosphere of the gathering.



Quizmaster: Jehaan Ismail



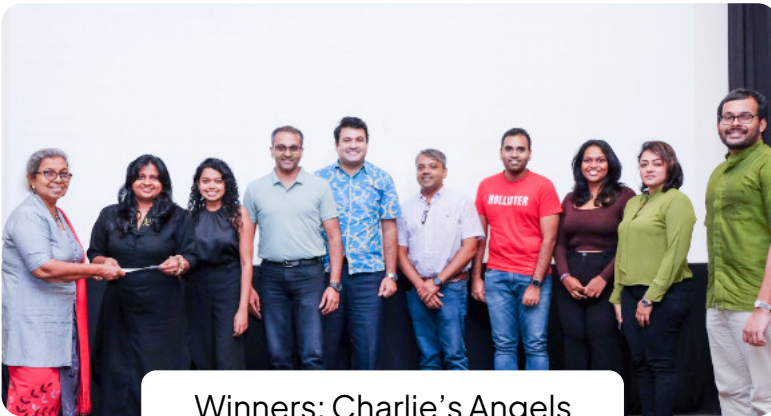
Miyoshi Masatoa







Runner-Up: The Lions



Winners: Charlie's Angels



2nd Runners-Up: Mabile Warriors

Test Your Knowledge

1. What 1815 volcanic eruption on the island of Sumbawa is considered the most powerful in recorded history, ejecting an estimated 160 cubic kilometers of material?
2. What is the only island in the world shared by three completely independent nations?
3. Which Indonesian city is nicknamed 'Parijs van Java' (Paris of Java)?
4. Which Indonesian city lies on the equator and is widely known as Kota Khatulistiwa (Equatorial City)?
5. Which narrow sea passage separates the Indonesian islands of Java and Sumatra and connects the Java Sea to the Indian Ocean?

Answers: 1. Tombora 2. Borneo 3. Pontianak 4. Bandung 5. Sunda Strait

Indonesian Roots, Sri Lankan Soil

In "Indonesian Roots, Sri Lankan Soil," M.D. Tony Saldin masterfully weaves a compelling narrative that bridges two distant lands through a deeply personal and historical lens. Launched on March 2, 2024, at the National Library & Documentation Services Board Auditorium, this book is more than just a family memoir; it is a testament to the intricate human connections that transcend geographical boundaries.

Saldin, a vice patron and former president of SLIFA, traces his family's remarkable journey from the ancient Kingdom of Sumenep in Madura, East Java, to the shores of Sri Lanka during the Dutch colonial period.

The book is divided into three parts: Roots, Branching Out, and Flowering.

Roots delves into the origins of Saldin's family, tracing them back to Enche Pantasih and Sitti Sumba Warnil from the Kingdom of Sumenep, Madura, East Java, around 240 years ago. Saldin also explores the history of Sri Lankan Malays, descendants of exiled princes and soldiers recruited by the Dutch and British East India Companies.



He delves into the community's martial traditions, achievements, and cultural integration into Sri Lankan society during the 20th century.

Branching Out shifts focus to Saldin's personal experiences in the commercial world, highlighting the Japanese work ethic that governs this realm.

Flowering explores various aspects of Sri Lankan history and culture that have piqued Saldin's interest. He writes about the Malays in Sri Lanka, Sri Lankan Kaffirs, the legend of Saradiel and his band of robbers, the Warriors of Japan, and local place names in his hometown. A standout in this section is his account of Ananda, the one-legged tree cutter, which adds a

poignant and human touch to the historical narrative.

Throughout the book, Saldin's inquisitive mind leads him to research his past and explore his identity. He is not content with merely knowing he is a Sri Lankan Malay; he delves deeper into the community's roots and contributions to Sri Lanka's development.

This journey through time, enriched with personal experiences and insights, is a testament to the power of self-discovery and the importance of embracing one's identity.

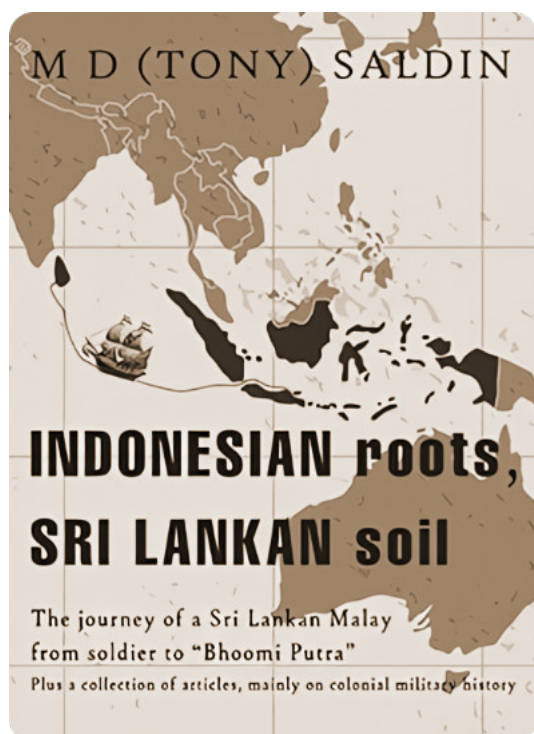
At the book's launch, Indonesian Ambassador H.E. Dewi Gustina Tobing emphasized the significance of Saldin's work in fostering

bilateral relations. She noted how the book contributes to strengthening people-to-people connections between Indonesia and Sri Lanka, transforming a personal narrative into a bridge of cultural understanding. "

Indonesian Roots, Sri Lankan Soil" is more than a genealogical account. It is a powerful exploration of how individual stories are intrinsically linked to broader historical movements. Saldin invites readers to reflect on the complexities of identity, the impact of colonial histories, and the enduring human spirit of adaptation and survival.

In conclusion, Tony Saldin's "Voyage of Discovery" is a must-read for anyone interested in Sri Lankan Malay history and culture. This insightful book is sure to leave a lasting impression on its readers.

Available for purchase at Rs. 1,800/- at Expographics Bookshop Pelawatte, Havelock City Mall, Colombo City Centre, and The Barefoot Bookshop.



Tuning in: **RRI** **Voice of** **Indonesia**

The Voice of Indonesia (VOI), also known as RRI World Service – Voice of Indonesia, is the overseas service of Radio Republik Indonesia and broadcasts in 9 different languages, delivering a unique blend of news, culture, and entertainment to audiences worldwide.

Its English programming includes Diplomatic Forum, VOI Biz Talk, Indonesian Wonder, Indonesia Today, Halo Jakarta Hello Hongkong, Let's Speak Bahasa and many other interesting programs peppered with a good dose of music from the country.

For those of us who still enjoy the nostalgia of shortwave radio, you can tune in on 4755kHz and 3325 kHz. Much easier is to listen online at voinews.id or by downloading the RRI Digital app on your mobile device. You can also follow them on the [voiindonesia](https://www.facebook.com/voiindonesia) facebook page.

The station has a rich history dating back to the country's formative years and offers a fascinating glimpse into Indonesia's rich tapestry of culture, heritage, politics, and provides a unique global perspective. It continues to be more than just a radio station – it's a cultural ambassador, bridging understanding between Indonesia and people from around the world.



In Memoriam

Tribute to Mr. I.P.C.Mendis.



When I received a call from Marleena Laxana on November 20th evening and she began this conversation by saying that there is bad news, I immediately knew that she was going to inform me of the passing of a mutual friend and so it was.

Mr. I.P.C. Mendis better known to all his friends and colleagues as “IPC” had passed away peacefully at his home.

My early memories of IPC goes way back to 1992 when Sri Lanka Indonesia Friendship Association (SLIFA) was first inaugurated by a few senior colleagues namely Erick Gunesekera, L.Pathirana, B.D.K.Saldin and Brigadier Salleh all of whom are no more together with the current Vice Patron Hamilton Amerasinghe. Attending those early meetings then, I vividly remember that all

suggestions put forward by IPC were appreciated and largely agreed by all.

I always had a deep respect for IPC for his seniority and reached out to him for help and advice in all matters concerning SLIFA during my tenure as the President of the Association to which IPC was ever ready to oblige.

In the later years IPC’s contributions to SLIFA were invaluable and his work ethics more than remarkable.... Energy, commitment, integrity are all words that begin to capture my image of IPC.

His intellectual depth and expressions in all matters concerning SLIFA amazed me. I have known many people with some of these qualities, but it is rare indeed to find all of them in the same person, and specially to the extent found in IPC.

I recall that IPC hardly missed a SLIFA meeting, an outing or any other function despite health issues faced by him in the latter part of his life. If a friend was unable to provide transport, IPC would use public transport to find his way to attend SLIFA functions. So much was his dedication.

My home was only a short distance from where IPC lived. Hence, in those early days IPC was able to travel together with me to attend SLIFA meetings and functions. This also enabled me to cultivate a closer friendship with IPC and get to know him better as a good friend.

Despite his old age and difficulties in walking, I use to often see IPC walk past my home at the crack of dawn to attend the morning Mass at 5.am at Holy Emmanuel Church, Moratuwa while most of us were still enjoying our slumber.

In appreciation

Late I.P.C. Mendis, Vice Patron

In terms of wealth he lived humbly,
But in terms of knowledge and wisdom,
he was wealthy beyond scope

In terms of his exterior,
he was (mild/gruff), blunt and suffered few fools
In terms of his interior, he had a heart of gold,
was kind for those he loved and cared

In terms of his flaws,
many would advise caution when associating with him,
But in terms of his merits, he was an inspiration to
those who took the time to get to know him.

In terms of his persona,
he was easily irritable, for non discipline,
and broke as many bridges as he built.
But in terms of his character he was a man of principle
and lived a life of disciplined routine in his own
inimitable way.
and was laid to rest on November 20, 2023.

May his soul RIP.

Marleena Laxana

During the three decades of our friendship and despite many thousand miles that separated us in the past five years, we always found time to speak and wish each other at every Christmas and New Year.

IPC – is a very caring and beloved family man, a cherished colleague, a scholar and friend who will be missed by many, but never forgotten by those who were fortunate enough to have known him.

May his gentle soul rest in eternal peace and rise in glory.

Nihal Gooneratne

Past President

Sri Lanka Indonesia Friendship Association

Obituaries

It is with deep sadness that we mention the passing away of the following members of SLIFA

Mr.I.P.C Mendis

Past President and Vice Patron

Mr. Ifthikhar Aziz

Past Exco Member

Mr. Thajudeen Girsy



SLIFA Ifthar Program

The Ifthar program was held for SLIFA Members for the 2nd consecutive year on 22nd March 2024, organised by SLIFA, headed by the Team Leader, Mr. Thariq Thulba, which was a tremendous success. Her Excellency; the Indonesian Ambassador graced this occasion, and also was attended by members of all religions. A sermon (Bayan) was presented by Sheik Zaakir Misbah and thereafter (dua) blessings/intentions for break-fast which was followed by Azdhan and Maghreb prayers.



SLIFA

Social Services Projects

The proceeds from the Cultural and Charity Bazaar held on 02nd September 2023 which was jointly organised by SLIFA and the embassy were utilised towards the following social service projects.

Book Distribution

Books and stationery for under-privileged students in Kirinda Model School, Gampola, Hindu College, Gampola and K/AI Mina M. MV in Gampola were distributed to 100 students. The distribution of books to 100 students was done on 07th of May 2024 with Her Excellency's participation. Mr. Yadi Surihadi, Counsellor and Vice President from the embassy too was present. The President Ms. Marleena Laxana and Vice President Mr. Nihal Jayasuriya were present at this event.



Donation of Sewing Machines and Filing Cabinets

A sewing machine and 3 filing cabinets were donated to Hemachandra Gunasekera Maha Vidyalaya, Weligama through the Rotary Club of Colombo Midtown Branch and H. E. was present at this occasion on 2nd May 2024 together with Mr. Yadi Suriahadi from the Indonesian Embassy, SLIFA President Ms. Marleena Laxana and several other officials from SLIFA. Mr. Fabrian Rochmadhoni of the Indonesian Embassy performed 2 dances to the delight of the students. The students from the school welcomed Her Excellency.



Roof Wells for Drinking Water

Two roof wells were donated to KM/KM/AL-Jalal Vidyalaya, Sainthamaruthu and KM/KM/M.S. Kariapper Vidyalaya – Sainthamaruthu through Ms. Fawaza Thaha President of YWMA, to facilitate drinking water for the students. Due to the recent adverse weather conditions the un-weiling of the wells were pushed back and the schools have been asked to use the well pending the official handover.



Washroom Renovation

The Renovation the Boys washroom and the replacement of doors to the Girls wash room at Ariyawansha Maha Vidyalaya, Beruwela through Rotary Club, Colombo Midtown Branch will be completed by June 21, 2024 and will handed over shortly by Her Excellency.



Farewell Pak Boyke



SLIFA organized a farewell dinner for Mr. Boyke Nurdin, Counsellor of the Indonesian Embassy and Vice President of SLIFA whose tenure in Sri Lanka was ending on January 31, 2024. The event was held at the Golf Club on 18th January 2024. Her Excellency graced the occasion and all the EXCO members were present.

The EXCO extended the warmest appreciation to Pak Boyke for his unstinted support to SLIFA in all its activities. During his tenure, Pak Boyke played a tremendous role in all of SLIFA's initiatives and had indeed been the link between the association and the embassy. His ideas, dedication and support have been invaluable and he will be fondly remembered. We wish him all the best in his future endeavors.



Members Day Outing

This year the SLIFA Members day outing was at Paarua Natures Resort on 25th November 2023. Her Excellency was present at the resort and it was a funfilled day. The ambience, music and food were of high standards and the members present had an enjoyable day out.



How Indonesia Veered to the Left While The Dutch Kept Right

by Sha Razeek

When I first landed in Jakarta back in 2012, I was prepared for culture shock – different food, unfamiliar language, new customs. What I didn't expect was the strange comfort I felt watching traffic flow on the familiar left side of the road, just like back home in Sri Lanka.

Indonesia's decision to drive on the left side of the road might seem puzzling at first glance. After all, the country spent over three centuries under Dutch colonial rule, and the Netherlands drives firmly on the right. So what gives?

The answer I found out, like many quirks of history, involves a mix of colonial politics, practicality, and good old-fashioned stubbornness.

When the Dutch first established their colonial presence in the Indonesian archipelago in the early 17th century, there wasn't much need for traffic rules. Horse-drawn carriages were limited to a few colonial enclaves, and most locals traveled by foot or boat. But as the colonial administration expanded, the Dutch naturally implemented right-side driving in their Indonesian territories, matching their homeland's practice.

But during the Napoleonic Wars, the British briefly took control of the Dutch East Indies from 1811 to 1816. Although 5 years may seem like a short period, the British implemented major reforms and made some significant archeological discoveries that would have a lasting impact on the archipelago. One of these changes was to implement their preferred left-side driving system. When the Dutch returned to power, they found that changing everything back would be a massive

undertaking. The road infrastructure, though limited, had already been adapted to left-side traffic. Plus, most of Indonesia's neighboring territories under British influence (like Malaysia and Singapore) drove on the left.



So the Dutch colonial government made a pragmatic decision: Indonesia would remain driving on the left while the Netherlands continued driving on the right. This split-personality approach to traffic rules persisted through Indonesia's independence in 1945 and continues to this day.

It's one of history's little ironies – a rare instance where a colonial power didn't force its ways upon its colony. Instead, the practical challenges of changing an established system won out over imperial consistency.

Today, Indonesia remains firmly in the left-driving camp along with about a third of the world's countries, creating a curious historical footnote that connects it more to Britain's colonial influence than to the Dutch who actually governed the archipelago for centuries.

X'mas Members Fellowship

The Second Christmas fellowship was held on 26th December 2023 between 4.00 pm to 7.00pm. It was a festive celebration with a huge gathering of Indonesians participating.

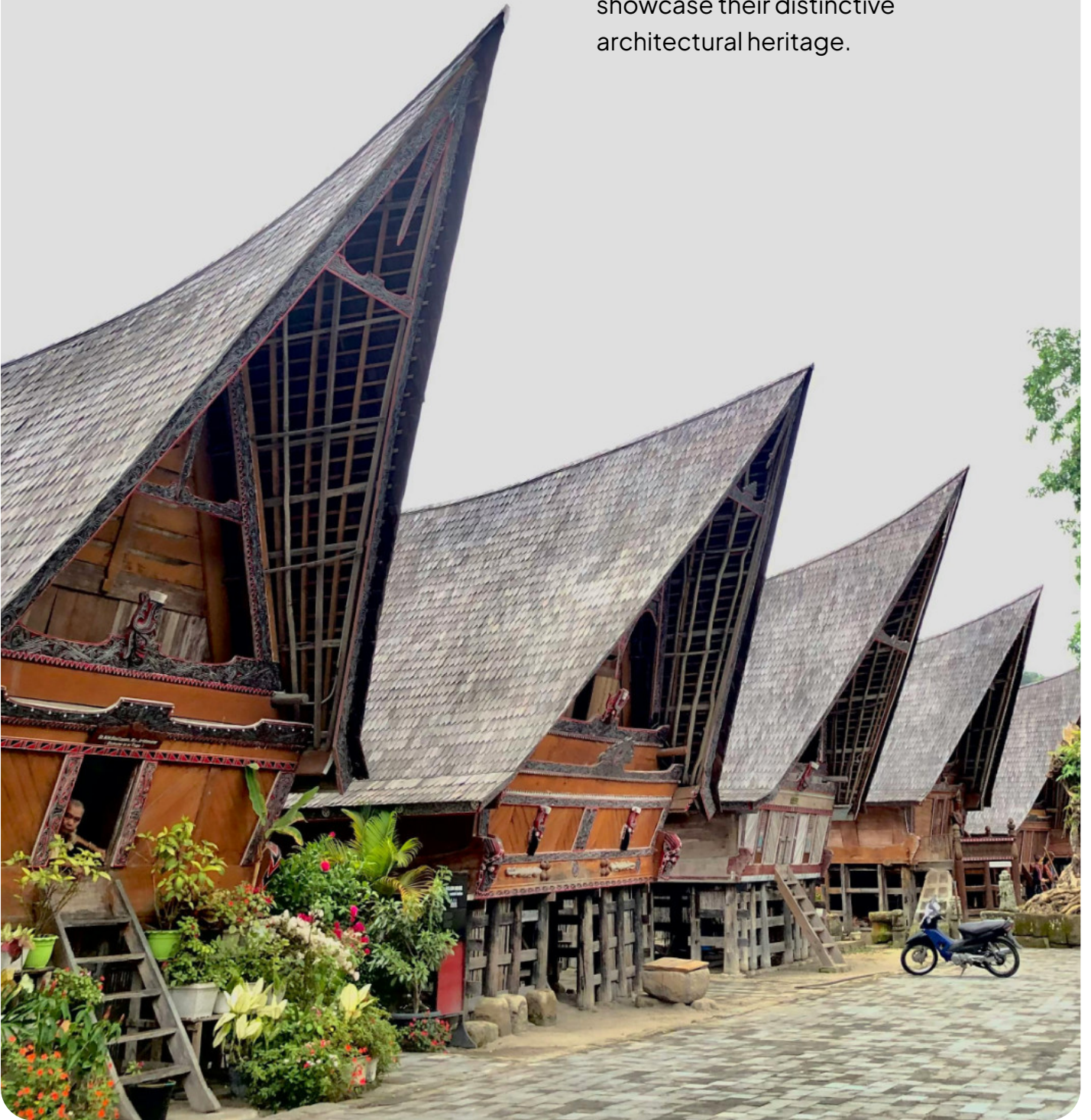
The Methodist priest of Moratuwa; Fr. Anura Perera conducted the service. Carols were performed by the church choristers, which was followed by a sumptuous dinner hosted by Her Excellency.

A special appreciation to Mr. J. A. T. Perera for his donation of goody packs given to the Children present at the occasion.





Keeping with the cover theme of Batak culture, here's a picture of Rumah Bolon, the traditional houses of the Toba Batak people. These magnificent structures with their soaring boat-shaped roofs and intricate wooden carvings showcase their distinctive architectural heritage.



“Indonesian history includes an unprecedented event of global significance: it was the first country to declare independence after World War II. This milestone came less than two days after Japan capitulated. After almost 350 years of Dutch presence (1600–1942) and a three-and-a-half-year Japanese occupation (1942–5), a few local leaders announced that their archipelago would go forward as a sovereign state. It was the first domino to fall, at a time when much of Asia, Africa and the Arab world remained in the hands of a few Western European states ...”

- Excerpt from the book

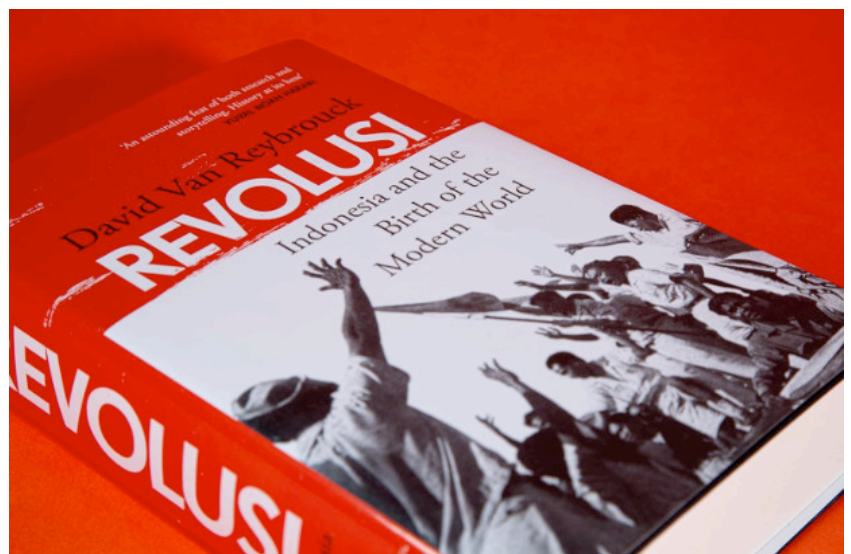
Published in February 2024, "Revolusi" is David Van Reybrouck's masterful exploration of Indonesia's struggle for independence from Dutch colonial rule. Through meticulous research and powerful oral histories from the last living witnesses of this period, Van Reybrouck crafts a compelling narrative that brings to life this pivotal moment in both Indonesian and global history.

In the book Van Reybrouck skillfully demonstrates how Indonesia's fight for independence was a critical turning point that inspired anti-colonial movements worldwide. The revolution is presented not as a singular event but as a complex process with far-reaching consequences that continue to shape our world today.

Revolusi:

Indonesia and the Birth of the Modern World

By David Van Reybrouck



The book's greatest strength lies in its human element. By interweaving personal testimonies with broader historical analysis, Van Reybrouck creates an intimate, ground-level view of history. From ordinary villagers to revolutionary leaders, these voices provide perspectives often absent from traditional historical accounts, giving readers a nuanced understanding of how independence was experienced by those who lived through it. His ability to connect Indonesia's specific struggle to universal themes of freedom, identity, and self-determination makes "Revolusi" not just an important historical text but a deeply moving human story about the messy, painful, yet ultimately hopeful process of liberation.