

This article is about the national mosque of Indonesia. For the similarly-named mosque in Sarajevo, see Istiklal Mosque.

Istiqlal Mosque (Indonesian: Masjid Istiqlal, lit. 'Independence Mosque') in Jakarta, Indonesia is the largest mosque in Southeast Asia and the sixth largest mosque in the world in terms of worshipper capacity.[3] Built to commemorate Indonesian independence, this national mosque of Indonesia was named "Istiqlal", an Arabic word for "independence". The mosque was opened to the public on 22 February 1978. Within Jakarta, the mosque is positioned next to Merdeka Square and the Jakarta Cathedral.

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History[edit]

Before the mosque[edit]

The mosque was formerly the location of the Wilhelminapark and a 19th-century Citadel.

Design and competition[edit]

After the Indonesian independence in 1945, there was a growing idea to build a national mosque for the new republic, which has been the largest Muslim population in the world since 1971.[4] The idea of constructing a grand Indonesian national mosque was launched by Wahid Hasyim, Indonesia's first minister for religions affairs,[5] and Anwar Cokroaminoto, later appointed as the chairman of the Masjid Istiqlal Foundation. The committee for the construction of the Istiqlal Mosque, led by Cokroaminoto, was founded in 1953. He proposed the idea of a national mosque to Indonesian President Sukarno, who welcomed the idea and later helped to supervise the mosque's construction. In 1954 the committee appointed Sukarno technical chief supervisor.[6]:106

Several locations were proposed; Mohammad Hatta, Indonesian vice president, suggested that the mosque should be built near residential areas on Thamrin avenue, on a plot where

Hotel Indonesia stands today.[7] However, Sukarno insisted that a national mosque should be located near the most important square of the nation, near the Merdeka Palace. This is in accordance with the Javanese tradition that the kraton (king's palace) and masjid agung (grand mosque) should be located around the alun-alun (main Javanese city square), which means it must be near Merdeka Square.[8] Sukarno also insisted that the national mosque should be built near Jakarta Cathedral and Immanuel Church, to symbolize religious harmony and tolerance as promoted in Pancasila (the Indonesian national philosophy and the five principles which constitute the philosophical foundation of Indonesian nationhood).[9] It was later decided that the national mosque was going to be built in Taman Widjaja Kusuma (formerly Wilhelmina park), in front of the Jakarta Cathedral. To make way for the mosque, the Citadel Prins Frederick, built in 1837, was demolished.[10][11]

Sukarno actively followed the planning and construction of the mosque, including acting as the chairman of the jury for the mosque design competition held in 1955. The design submitted by Friedrich Silaban, a Christian architect from North Sumatra, with the theme "Ketuhanan" (English: "Divinity") was chosen as the winner.

Construction[edit]

The foundation stone was laid by Sukarno on 24 August 1961;[12][13] the construction took 17 years. President Suharto inaugurated it as the national mosque on 22 February 1978.[12][14] As of 2013 it is the largest mosque in the region of Southeast Asia, with a capacity of over 120,000.[15][16]:65

Contemporary events[edit]

On Friday night, 14 April 1978 a plastic bomb exploded near the mimbar in Istiqlal Mosque, no casualties in this explosion.[17] More than 20 years later, on 19 April 1999 a second bomb attack exploded in basement of the mosque, breaking the glass of the office rooms.[18]

Between May 2019 to July 2020 the mosque undergone major renovation with a cost of US\$35 million. Among other by polishing and cleaning the marble exterior and stainless steel geometric ornamentation, new mihrab and mimbar, upgrading electrical and plumbing systems, new lighting system using LED lamps, renovation of VIP rooms, new gates and improvements of garden, park and plaza, new kiosk for vendors, and also two storied basement parking space.[19] [2]

A tunnel connecting Istiqlal Mosque and St. Mary of the Assumption Cathedral is being constructed by Indonesian authorities. This tunnel, known as the "Terowongan Silaturahmi" (Tunnel of Friendship), is expected to finish in April 2020 before Ramadan 2020.[20]

Structure[edit]

The mosque has seven entrances, and all seven gates are named after Al-Asmaul-Husna, the names of God in Islam.[21] The number seven represents the Seven Heavens in Islamic cosmology.[22] The wudu (ablution) fountains are on the ground floor, while the main prayer hall and main courtyard are on the first floor. The building consists of two connected rectangular structures: the main structure and the smaller secondary structure. The smaller one serves as main gate as well as stairs and prayer spaces.[citation needed]

Entrance gates[edit]

There are seven entrance gates to the Istiqlal Mosque. Each door is named after one of the 99 Names of Allah. Below are lists of entrance gates into the complex of Istiqlal Mosque:[citation needed]

Main gates

Al Fattah/الفتاح ("The Opener"): Located opposite of the Jakarta Cathedral. This is the main entrance for visitors, which also leads to the main parking area.

Ar Rozzaq/الرزاق ("The Provider"): Located at Jalan Perwira. The door leads to the main parking area.

As Salam/السلام ("The Peace"): Entrance for important guests e.g. clerics or ambassadors. The entrance leads to the front rows near the imam.

Other gates

Al Quddus/القدوس ("The Holy"): Located on the northeast of the mosque complex.

Al Malik/الملك ("The King"): Located on the west of the mosque complex. Used for very important guests e.g. the president of Indonesia or other important guests.

Al Ghaffar/الغفار ("The Forgiving"): Located on the south end of the courtyard hall building, just below the minaret of Istiqlal Mosque. This door is the closest to the southeast gate as well as the furthest from the mosque mihrab.

Ar Rahman/الرحمن ("The Compassion"): Located on the southwest corner of the mosque's hall building, near the entrance gate of Al Malik.

Dome[edit]

The rectangular main prayer hall building is covered by a 45-m diameter central spherical dome; the number "45" symbolizes the 1945 Proclamation of Indonesian Independence.[12][23] The main dome is adorned with a stainless steel ornamental pinnacle in the form of a crescent and star, the symbol of Islam. The smaller secondary dome is also adorned with a stainless steel pinnacle with the name of Allah (God) in Islamic calligraphy.[citation needed]

The dome is supported by twelve round columns, and the prayer hall is surrounded by rectangular piers carrying four levels of balconies. Twelve columns represent the (mostly accepted) birthday of the Islamic prophet Muhammad in 12th Rabi' al-awwal.[24]

Interior[edit]

The main floor and the four levels of balconies make five floors in all; the number "5" represents the Five Pillars of Islam and also Pancasila, [25] Staircases at the corners of the building give access to all floors. The main hall is reached through an entrance covered by a dome 8 meters in diameter; the number 8 symbolizes August, the month of Indonesian Independence. The interior design is minimalist, simple and clean-cut, with a minimum of stainless steel geometric ornaments. The 12 columns are covered with stainless steel. On the main wall on qibla there is a mihrab and minbar in the center. On the main wall, there is a large metalwork in Arabic calligraphy, spelling the name of Allah on the right side and Muhammad on the left side, and also calligraphy of Surah Thaha 14th verse in the center. The metalworks, stainless steel covers and ornaments were imported from Germany. Originally, as in the National Monument nearby, the white marbles were planned to be imported from Italy. However to cut costs and support the local marble industry, it was later decided that the marbles would be from Tulungagung marble quarries in East Java

instead.[26]

Minaret[edit]

The main structure is directly connected to the arcades that are spread around the large courtyard. The arcades connect the main building with a single minaret in the southern corner. Unlike many Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Indian mosques with multiple minarets, Istiqlal mosque has a single minaret to symbolize the divine oneness of God. It is 66.66 m tall to symbolize (incorrectly[27][failed verification]) the 6,666 verses in the Quran.[28] The 30-metre-high stainless steel pinnacle on top of the minaret symbolizes the 30 juz' of the Quran.[29] On the southern side near the minaret there is also a large bedug (large wooden drum made of cow skin).[30] In common with the entire Islamic world, traditionally Muslims in Indonesia use the drum with the adhan (call to prayer). The mosque offices, function hall, and madrasah are on the ground floor. The mosque provides facilities for social and cultural activities.

Some Muslims in Indonesia said Istiqlal's dome and minaret structure was much too modern and Arabic in style. They regarded the architecture as being out of harmony with Islamic culture and architecture in Indonesia. In response, former president Suharto began an initiative to construct more mosques of the Javanese triple-roofed design.[31]

Capacity[edit]

Istiqlal Mosque can hold pilgrims as many as 200,000 people consisting of:

The main prayer room and balcony and wing contain 61,000 people.

The space in the preliminary building contains 8,000 people.

The open terrace room on the 2nd floor contains 50,000 people.

All corridors and other places contain 81,000 people.

Facilities[edit]

In display of religious tolerance, during large Christian celebrations such as Christmas, Istiqlal Mosque helped provide parking space for worshipers of the nearby Jakarta Cathedral.[32]

Sound system and multimedia[edit]

For the purpose of worship and information facilities Istiqlal Mosque uses a centrally controlled sound system located on the rear glass room of the second floor, with the number of speakers as many as 200 channels spread on the main floor.

The number of speakers contained in the corridor, connecting building and preliminary building are 158 channels. The sound system is controlled by 26 amplifiers and 5 (five) mixers and is supervised by six people who take turns both day and night when in use.

To support the smooth communication at the time of worship and activity, on the main floor has also been installed plasma TV system so that access information can be followed evenly by the pilgrims who are throughout the main room of the mosque that cannot see the preacher.[citation needed]

Garden[edit]

Istiqlal mosque is located on former Wilhelmina Park, thus prior of mosque construction, there are numbers of decorative plants and trees planted in the garden. Some of garden's old large trees might be hundred years old. The park is also the location of a river branch, the tributary of Ciliwung river, completed with floodgates. The original river branch

went westward to Molenvliet and turned northward along canal towards its estuarine in old Batavia. The other branch turned northward to a floodgate which drain eastward along a canal in front of Pasar Baru, the canal turned north along Jalan Gunung Sahari, all the way to Ancol in the north.[citation needed]

In the southwestern corner of the garden surrounding the mosque, there is a large pool and a grand fountain that spouts water 45 m high. The fountain only operates on Fridays during congregational salat and during Islamic holidays such as Eid ul-Fitr and Eid ul-Adha. The river Ciliwung flows across the mosque complex along the eastern side of the mosque.[33] Imams and Muezzins[edit]

Istiqlal Mosque has one Grand Imam, one Deputy Grand Imam, and seven imams. As of 2016 the Grand Imam is former Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs (2011–2014), Nasaruddin Umar and the Chairman of Istiqlal Mosque is the former Indonesian Ambassador to Syria (2006–2010), Muhammad Muzammil Basyuni.[34] Previous Grand Imams include Zaini Miftah (1970–1980), Mukhtar Nasir (1980–2004), Nasrullah Djamaluddin (2004–2005) and Ali Mustafa Yaqub (2005–2015). The current Deputy Grand Imam is Al Hajj Syarifuddin Muhammad, former chairman of the Indonesian Hafiz Association.[citation needed]

There are seven other imams who lead daily prayers at the mosque:

Muhammad Salim Ghazali

Ahmad Husni Ismail

Muhasyim Abdul Madjid

Martomo Malaing

Ahmad Rofiuddin Mahfudz

Hasanuddin Sinaga

Ahmad Anshoruddin

In addition, the Istiqlal Mosque also has seven Muezzins in charge of Calling for Prayer and provides teaching services about the Quran and Islam. They are:

Abdul Wahid

Qadarasmadi Rasyid

Abdullah Sengkang

Ahmad Achwani

Hasan Basri

Muhdori Abdur Razzaq

Saiful Anwar al-Bintani

Visitors[edit]

Following US President Barack Obama and his wife's visit to the Istiqal Mosque in November 2010, about 20 visitors per day have come to tour the mosque.[35] Among foreign dignitaries who have visited Istiqlal mosque are former US president Bill Clinton;[36] President of Iran Mahmoud Ahmadinejad;[37] former Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi; Prince Charles of United Kingdom; Li Yuanchao, Vice President of the Communist Party of China; President of Chile Sebastián Piñera; Heinz Fischer, the President of Austria; Jens Stoltenberg, the Prime Minister of Norway,[38] and German Chancellor Angela Merkel in 2012.[39] King Salman Of Saudi Arabia visited the mosque during his Indonesia tour in March 2017.[40]

See also[edit]

Jakarta portal

Indonesia portal

Islam portal

Architecture portal

Timeline of Islamic history

Islamic architecture

Islamic art

List of mosques in Asia

List of largest mosques

Islam in Indonesia

List of tallest domes