

= Sarawak =

Sarawak ( / sərˈwɑːk / ; Malay : [ saˈrawaʔ ] ) , nicknamed Bumi Kenyalang ( " Land of the hornbills " ) , is one of the two Malaysian states on the island of Borneo ( Sabah being the other state ) . This territory has a certain level of autonomy in administration , immigration , and judiciary which differentiates it from the Malaysian Peninsula states . Sarawak is situated in northwest Borneo , bordering the state of Sabah to the northeast , Kalimantan , the Indonesian portion of Borneo , to the south , and surrounding the independent state of Brunei . The capital city , Kuching , is the economic centre of the state and the seat of the Sarawak state government . Other cities and towns in Sarawak include Miri , Sibu , and Bintulu . As of the 2015 census in Malaysia , the state 's population is 2 , 636 , 000 . Sarawak has an equatorial climate with tropical rainforests and abundant animal and plant species . The state has several prominent cave systems at Gunung Mulu National Park . Rajang River is the longest river in Malaysia ; Bakun Dam , one of the largest dams in Southeast Asia , is located on one of its tributaries . Mount Murud is the highest point in Sarawak .

Earliest human settlements in Sarawak date back to 40 , 000 years ago at the Niah Caves . The state had a trading relationship with China during the 8th to 13th century AD . It came under the influence of the Bruneian Empire in the 16th century . The state was governed by the Brooke family in the 19th and 20th centuries . During World War II , the state was occupied by the Japanese for three years before being ceded as a British Crown Colony in 1946 . On 22 July 1963 , Sarawak was granted self - government by the British . Following this , Sarawak became one of the founding members of the Federation of Malaysia ( established on 16 September 1963 ) alongside North Borneo ( now Sabah ) , Singapore ( expelled in 1965 ) , and the Federation of Malaya ( Peninsular Malaysia or West Malaysia ) . However , the federation was opposed by Indonesia , and this led to the three - year Indonesia - Malaysia confrontation . The state also experienced a communist insurgency from 1960 to 1990 .

The state exhibits notable diversity in ethnicity , culture , and language . The head of state is the Governor , also known as Yang di - Pertua Negeri , while the head of government is the Chief Minister . The government system is closely modelled on the Westminster parliamentary system and has the earliest state legislature system in Malaysia . The state is divided into administrative divisions and districts . English and Malay are the only two official languages of the state ; there is no official religion . Sarawak State Museum is the oldest museum in Borneo . The state is known for its traditional musical instrument , the sapeh . The Rainforest World Music Festival ( RWMF ) is one of the premier music events in Malaysia . Sarawak is the only state in Malaysia to celebrate the Gawai Dayak festival .

Sarawak has abundant natural resources , and its economy is strongly export - oriented , mainly in oil and gas , timber , and oil palm . Other industries are manufacturing , energy , and tourism .

= = Etymology = =

The official explanation of the word " Sarawak " is that it is derived from the Sarawak Malay word serawak , which means antimony . Another popular but unofficial explanation is that it is an acronym from the four Malay words purportedly uttered by Pangeran Muda Hashim ( uncle to the Sultan of Brunei ) , Saya serah pada awak ( I surrender it to you ) when he gave Sarawak to James Brooke in 1841 . However , such an explanation has several flaws because the territory had already been named Sarawak even before the arrival of Brooke , and the word awak never existed in the vocabulary of Sarawak Malay before the formation of Malaysia .

= = History = =

= = Prehistory = =

The first foragers visited the West Mouth of Niah Caves ( located 110 kilometres ( 68 mi ) southwest of Miri ) 40 @, @ 000 years ago when Borneo was connected to the mainland of Southeast Asia . The landscape around the Niah Caves was drier and more exposed than it is now . Prehistorically , the Niah Caves were surrounded by a combination of closed forests with bush , parkland , swamps , and rivers . The foragers were able to survive in the rainforest through hunting , fishing , and gathering molluscs and edible plants . This is evidenced by the discovery of a modern human skull , nicknamed " Deep Skull " , in a deep trench uncovered by Tom Harrisson in 1958 ; this is also the oldest modern human skull in Southeast Asia . The skull probably belongs to a 16- to 17 @-@ year @-@ old adolescent girl . A *Manis paleojavanica* ( Asian giant pangolin ) bone that had not developed into a fossil , dated to 30 @, @ 000 BC , was found nearby as well as in the Mesolithic and Neolithic burial sites inside the Niah Caves . The area around the Niah Caves has been designated the Niah National Park .

Other archaeological sites have since been discovered in the central and southern regions of Sarawak . Another excavation by Tom Harrisson in 1949 unearthed a series of Chinese ceramics at Santubong ( near Kuching ) that date to the Tang and the Song dynasties in the 8th to 13th century AD . It is possible that Santubong was an important seaport in Sarawak during the period , but its importance declined during the Yuan dynasty , and the port was deserted during Ming dynasty . Other archaeological sites in Sarawak include the Kapit , Song , Serian , and Bau districts .

= = = Bruneian empire = = =

During the 16th century , the area of Sarawak now known as Kuching was known to Portuguese cartographers as Cerava , one of the five great seaports on the island of Borneo . It was under the influence of the Bruneian Empire and was self @-@ governed under Sultan Tengah . By the early 19th century , Sarawak had become a loosely governed territory under the control of the Brunei Sultanate . The Bruneian empire had authority only along the coastal regions of Sarawak held by semi @-@ independent Malay leaders . Meanwhile , the interior hinterland of Sarawak was mainly dominated by tribal wars fought by Iban , Kayan , and Kenyah people who were aggressive in their territorial expansions . Following the discovery of antimony ore in the region now known as Kuching , Pangeran Indera Mahkota ( a representative of the Sultan of Brunei ) began to develop the area between 1824 and 1830 . When antimony production increased , the Brunei Sultanate demanded higher taxes from Sarawak ; this led to civil unrest and chaos . In 1839 Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin II ( 1827 ? 1852 ) , the Sultan of Brunei , ordered Pangeran Muda Hashim ( uncle to the Sultan of Brunei ) to restore order ; it was around this time that James Brooke ( a British explorer ) arrived in Sarawak . Pangeran Muda Hashim initially requested assistance in the matter , but Brooke refused . However , he agreed to the request in his next visit to Sarawak in 1841 . Pangeran Muda Hashim signed a treaty in 1841 surrendering Sarawak to Brooke . On 24 September 1841 , Pangeran Muda Hashim bestowed the title of governor on James Brooke . In 1846 Brooke effectively became the Rajah of Sarawak and founded the White Rajah Dynasty of Sarawak after the death of Pangeran Muda Hashim .

= = = Brooke dynasty = = =

Brooke ruled the area and expanded the territory northwards until his death in 1868 . He was succeeded by his nephew Charles Anthoni Johnson Brooke , who in turn was succeeded by his son , Charles Vyner Brooke , on the condition that Charles should rule in consultation with Vyner Brooke 's brother Bertram Brooke . Both James and Charles Brooke signed treaties with Brunei as a strategy to expand the territorial boundaries of Sarawak . In 1861 the Bintulu region was ceded to James Brooke . In 1883 Sarawak was extended to the Baram River ( near Miri ) . Limbang was acquired in 1885 and later added to Sarawak in 1890 . The expansion of Sarawak was completed in 1905 when Lawas was ceded to the Brooke government . Sarawak was divided into five divisions , corresponding to territorial boundaries of the areas acquired by the Brookes through the years .

Each division was headed by a Resident . Sarawak was recognised as an independent state by the United States in 1850 and the United Kingdom in 1864 . The state issued its first currency as the Sarawak dollar in 1858 . However , in the Malaysian context , the Brooke is viewed as a colonialist .

The Brooke dynasty ruled Sarawak for a hundred years as " White Rajahs " . The dynasty adopted the policy of paternalism to protect the interests of the indigenous population and their overall welfare . The Brooke government established a Supreme Council consisting of Malay chiefs who advised the Rajahs on all aspects of governance . The first General Council meeting took place at Bintulu in 1867 . The Supreme Council is the oldest state legislative assembly in Malaysia . Meanwhile , the Ibans and other Dayak people were hired as militia . The Brooke dynasty also encouraged the immigration of Chinese merchants for economic development in the state , especially in the mining and agricultural sectors . Western capitalists were restricted from entering the state while Christian missionaries were tolerated . Piracy , slavery , and headhunting were also banned . Borneo Company Limited was formed in 1856 . It was involved in a wide range of businesses in Sarawak such as trade , banking , agriculture , mineral exploration , and development .

The original residence of James Brooke was a Malay house built in Kuching . In 1857 Hakka Chinese gold miners from Bau , under the leadership of Liu Shan Bang , destroyed Brooke 's residence . James Brooke escaped and organised a bigger army together with Charles Brooke and his Malayo @-@ Iban supporters . A few days later , Brooke 's army was able to cut off the escape route of the Chinese rebels . The Chinese rebels were annihilated after two months of fighting . The Brookes subsequently built a new government house by the Sarawak River at Kuching which is presently known as the Astana . An anti @-@ Brooke faction at the Brunei Court was defeated in 1860 at Mukah . Other notable rebellions that were successfully quashed by the Brookes include those led by an Iban leader Rentap ( 1853 ? 1863 ) , and a Malay leader named Syarif Masahor ( 1860 ? 1862 ) . As a result , a series of forts were built around Kuching to consolidate the Rajah 's power . These include Fort Margherita , which was completed in 1879 . In 1891 Charles Anthoni Brooke established the Sarawak Museum , the oldest museum in Borneo .

In 1941 , during the centenary celebration of the Brooke rule in Sarawak , a new constitution was introduced to limit the power of the Rajah and to allow the Sarawak people to play a greater role in the functioning of the government . However , the draft constitution contained irregularities , including a secret agreement drawn up between Charles Vyner Brooke and British government officials , in which Vyner Brooke ceded Sarawak as a British Crown Colony in return for a financial compensation to him and his family .

= = = Japanese occupation and Allied liberation = = =

The Brooke government , under the leadership of Charles Vyner Brooke , established several airstrips in Kuching , Oya , Mukah , Bintulu , and Miri for preparations in the event of war . By 1941 , the British had withdrawn its defending forces from Sarawak and returned to Singapore . With Sarawak now unguarded , the Brooke regime decided to adopt a scorched earth policy where oil installations in Miri would be destroyed and Kuching airfield held as long as possible before being eventually destroyed . Meanwhile , Japanese forces decided to seize British Borneo to guard their eastern flank in the Malayan Campaign and to facilitate their invasion of Sumatra and West Java . A Japanese invasion force led by Kiyotake Kawaguchi landed in Miri on 16 December 1941 ( eight days into the Malayan Campaign ) and conquered Kuching on 24 December 1941 . British forces led by Lieutenant Colonel C. M. Lane decided to retreat to Singkawang in Dutch Borneo bordering Sarawak . After ten weeks of fighting in Dutch Borneo , the Allied forces surrendered on 1 April 1942 . When the Japanese invaded Sarawak , Charles Vyner Brooke had already left for Sydney ( Australia ) while his officers were captured by the Japanese and interned at the Batu Lintang camp .

Sarawak remained part of the Empire of Japan for three years and eight months . Sarawak , together with North Borneo and Brunei , formed a single administrative unit named Kita Boruneo ( Northern Borneo ) under the Japanese 37th Army headquartered in Kuching . Sarawak was divided

into three provinces , namely : Kuching @-@ shu , Sibuan @-@ shu , and Miri @-@ shu , each under their respective Japanese Provincial Governor . Basically , the Japanese retained pre @-@ war administrative machinery and assigned Japanese for government positions . The administration of Sarawak 's interior was left to the native police and village headmen , under Japanese supervision . Though the Malays were typically receptive toward the Japanese , other indigenous tribes such as the Iban , Kayan , Kenyah , Kelabit and Lun Bawang maintained a hostile attitude toward them because of policies such as compulsory labour , forced deliveries of foodstuffs , and confiscation of firearms . The Japanese did not resort to strong measures in clamping down on the Chinese population because the Chinese in the state were generally apolitical . However , a considerable number of Chinese moved from urban areas into the less accessible interior to lessen contact with the Japanese .

Allied forces later formed the Z Special Unit to sabotage Japanese operations in Southeast Asia . Beginning in March 1945 , Allied commanders were parachuted into Borneo jungles and established several bases in Sarawak under an operation codenamed " Semut " . Hundreds of indigenous people were trained to launch offensives against the Japanese . Intelligence gathered from the operations helped Allied forces ( headed by Australia ) to reconquer Borneo in May 1945 through Operation Oboe Six . This led to the surrender of the Japanese to the Australian forces on 10 September 1945 at Labuan , followed by the official surrender ceremony at Kuching aboard the Australian Corvette HMAS Kapunda on the next day . Sarawak was immediately placed under British Military Administration until April 1946 .

= = = British crown colony = = =

After the war , the Brooke government did not have enough resources to rebuild Sarawak . Charles Vyner Brooke was also not willing to hand over his power to his heir apparent , Anthony Brooke ( his nephew , the only son of Bertram Brooke ) because of serious differences between them . Besides , Vyner Brooke 's wife , Sylvia Brett , also tried to discredit Anthony Brooke while trying to install her own daughter to the throne . Therefore , Vyner Brooke decided to cede the sovereignty of Sarawak to the British Crown . A Cession Bill was put forth in the Council Negri ( now Sarawak State Legislative Assembly ) and was debated for three days . The bill was passed on 17 May 1946 with a narrow majority ( 19 versus 16 votes ) . Supporters of the bill were mostly European officers , while the Malays opposed the bill . This caused hundreds of Malay civil servants to resign in protest , sparking an anti @-@ cession movement and the assassination of the second colonial governor of Sarawak Sir Duncan Stewart by Rosli Dhobi .

Anthony Brooke opposed the cession of the Rajah 's territory to the British Crown . However , he was linked to anti @-@ cessionist groups in Sarawak , especially after the assassination of Sir Duncan Stewart . Anthony Brooke continued to claim sovereignty as Rajah of Sarawak even after Sarawak became a British Crown colony on 1 July 1946 . For this he was banished from Sarawak by the colonial government and was allowed to return only 17 years later for a nostalgic visit , when Sarawak became part of Malaysia . In 1950 all anti @-@ cession movements in Sarawak ceased after a clamp @-@ down by the colonial government . In 1951 Anthony relinquished all his claims to the Sarawak throne after he used up his last legal avenues at the Privy Council .

= = = Self @-@ government and the Federation of Malaysia = = =

On 27 May 1961 , Tunku Abdul Rahman , the prime minister of the Federation of Malaya , announced a plan to form a greater federation together with Singapore , Sarawak , Sabah and Brunei , to be called Malaysia . This plan caused the local leaders in Sarawak to be wary of Tunku 's intentions in view of the great disparity in socioeconomic development between Malaya and the Borneo states . There was a general fear that without a strong political institution , the Borneo states would be subjected to Malaya 's colonisation . Therefore , various political parties in Sarawak emerged to protect the interests of the communities they represented . On 17 January 1962 , the Cobbold Commission was formed to gauge the support of Sarawak and Sabah towards the

federation . Between February and April 1962 , the commission met more than 4 @, @ 000 people and received 2 @, @ 200 memoranda from various groups . The Commission reported divided support among the Borneo population . However , Tunku interpreted the figures as 80 percent support for the federation . Sarawak drafted an 18 @-@ point agreement to safeguard its interests in the federation . On 26 September 1962 , Sarawak Council Negri passed a resolution that supported the federation with a condition that the interests of the Sarawak people would not be compromised . On 23 October 1962 , five political parties in Sarawak formed a united front that supported the formation of Malaysia . Sarawak was officially granted self @-@ government on 22 July 1963 , and later formed the federation of Malaysia with Malaya , North Borneo , and Singapore on 16 September 1963 .

The Malaysian federation had drawn opposition from the Philippines , Indonesia , Brunei People 's Party , and Clandestine Communist Organisation ( CCO ) . The Philippines and Indonesia claimed that the British would be " neocolonising " the Borneo states through the federation . Meanwhile , A. M. Azahari , leader of the Brunei People 's Party , instigated the Brunei Revolt in December 1962 to prevent Brunei from joining the Malaysian federation . Azahari seized Limbang and Bekenu before being defeated by British military forces sent from Singapore . Claiming that the Brunei revolt was solid evidence of opposition to the Malaysian federation , Indonesian President Sukarno ordered a military confrontation with Malaysia , sending armed volunteers and later military forces into Sarawak . Sarawak became a flashpoint during the Indonesia ? Malaysia confrontation between 1962 and 1966 . Such confrontation gained little support from Sarawakians except for CCO . Thousands of CCO members went into Kalimantan and underwent training with Communist Party of Indonesia . During the confrontation period , around 10 @, @ 000 to 150 @, @ 000 British troops were stationed in Sarawak , together with Australian and New Zealand troops . When Suharto replaced Sukarno as the president of Indonesia , negotiations was restarted between Malaysia and Indonesia which led to the end of the confrontation on 11 August 1966 . In 1967 a new agreement was signed which required anyone who wished to cross the Sarawak ? Kalimantan border to have a border pass endorsed at border control posts .

After the formation of the Peoples ' Republic of China in 1949 , the ideology of Maoism started to penetrate Chinese schools in Sarawak . The first communist group in Sarawak was formed in 1951 , with its origins in the Chung Hua Middle School ( Kuching ) . The group was succeeded by the Sarawak Liberation League ( SLL ) in 1954 and later by the CCO . Its activities spread from schools to trade unions and farmers . The activities of the CCO were mainly concentrated in the southern and central regions of Sarawak . It also successfully penetrated a political party named the Sarawak United Peoples ' Party ( SUPP ) . The CCO tried to realise a communist state in Sarawak through constitutional means but during the confrontation period , it resorted to armed struggle against the government . Weng Min Chyuan and Bong Kee Chok were the two notable leaders of the CCO . Following this , the Sarawak government started to establish New Villages along the Kuching ? Serian road to prevent the community from helping the communists . The CCO formally set up the North Kalimantan Communist Party ( NKCP ) in 1970 . In 1973 , Bong surrendered to chief minister Abdul Rahman Ya 'kub ; this significantly reduced the strength of the communist party . However , Weng , who had directed the CCO from China since the mid @-@ 1960s , called for armed struggle against the government , which after 1974 continued in the Rajang Delta . In 1989 the Malayan Communist Party ( MCP ) signed a peace agreement with the government of Malaysia . This caused the NKCP to reopen negotiations with the Sarawak government , which led to a peace agreement on 17 October 1990 . Peace was restored in Sarawak after the final group of 50 communist guerrillas laid down their arms .

= = Politics = =

= = = Government = = =

The head of the Sarawak state is the Yang di @-@ Pertua Negeri ( also known as TYT or State

Governor ) , a position largely symbolic in nature , appointed by the Yang di @-@ Pertuan Agong ( king ) of Malaysia . The TYT appoints the chief minister as the head of government . Generally , the leader of the party that commands the majority of the Legislative Assembly of the state is appointed as the chief minister . Elected representatives are known as state assemblymen . The state assembly passes laws on subjects that are not under the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Malaysia such as land administration , employment , forests , immigration , merchant shipping and fisheries . The state government is constituted by the chief minister and his cabinet ministers and assistant ministers .

To protect the interests of the Sarawakians in the Malaysian federation , special safeguards have been included in the Constitution of Malaysia . Sarawak has the power to control the entry and residence of non @-@ Sarawakians and non @-@ Sabahans . Only those lawyers who reside in Sarawak can practice law there . The High Court in Sarawak is independent of the High Court in Peninsular Malaysia . The chief minister of Sarawak must be consulted before the appointment of the chief judge of the Sarawak High Court . There are also Native Courts in Sarawak . Sarawak receives special grants from the federal government and charges its own sales tax . Natives in Sarawak enjoy special privileges such as quotas and employment in public service , scholarships , university placements , and business permits . Local governments in Sarawak are independent of the local authority laws enacted by the Malaysian parliament .

Major political parties in Sarawak can be divided into three categories : native non @-@ Muslim , native Muslim , and non @-@ native ; parties , however , may also include members from more than one group . The first political party , the Sarawak United Peoples ' Party ( SUPP ) , was established in 1959 , followed by the Parti Negara Sarawak ( PANAS ) ( in 1960 ) and the Sarawak National Party ( SNAP ) ( in 1961 ) . Other major political parties such as Parti Pesaka Sarawak ( PESAKA ) appeared by 1962 . Sarawak has been the political stronghold of the ruling Alliance Party and , later , its successor the Barisan Nasional ( BN ) coalition since the formation of Malaysia in 1963 . Stephen Kalong Ningkan ( of the SNAP ) was the first Chief Minister of Sarawak from 1963 to 1966 following his landslide victory in local council elections . However , he was ousted in 1966 by Tawi Sli ( of the PESAKA ) with the help of the Malaysian federal government , causing the 1966 Sarawak constitutional crisis . The political climate in the state was stable until the 1987 Ming Court Affair , a political coup initiated by Abdul Taib Mahmud 's uncle to topple the Taib @-@ led BN coalition . However , the coup was unsuccessful and Taib was able to retain his chief ministerial status .

In 1970 the first Sarawak state election was held , with members of the Council Negri ( now Sarawak State Legislative Assembly ) being directly elected by the voters . This election also marked the beginning of ethnic Melanau domination in Sarawak politics by Abdul Rahman Ya 'kub and Abdul Taib Mahmud . In the same year , the North Kalimantan Communist Party ( NKCP ) was formed , which mounted guerilla warfare against the newly elected Sarawak state government . The party was dissolved after the signing of a peace agreement in 1990 . 1973 saw the birth of Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu ( PBB ) following a merger of several parties . This party would later become the backbone of the Sarawak BN coalition . Since 1983 a Dayak @-@ based party , the SNAP , has fragmented into several splinter parties due to recurrent leadership crises . Sarawak originally held state elections together with national parliamentary elections . However , the then chief minister Abdul Rahman Ya 'kub delayed the dissolution of the state assembly by a year to prepare for the challenges posed by opposition parties and to solve the seat allocations for the newly admitted SNAP party into the Sarawak BN . This made Sarawak the only state in Malaysia to hold state elections separate from the national parliamentary elections since 1979 .

In 1978 , the Democratic Action Party ( DAP ) was the first West Malaysia @-@ based party to open its branches in Sarawak . This party derived the majority of its support from urban centres since the 2006 state election and became the largest opposition party in Sarawak . In 2010 , it formed the Pakatan Rakyat coalition with the Parti Keadilan Rakyat ( PKR ) and the Parti Islam Se @-@ Malaysia ( PAS ) ; the latter two parties had become active in Sarawak between 1996 and 2001 . Sarawak is the only state in Malaysia where Peninsular @-@ based component parties in the BN coalition , especially the UMNO , have not been active in Sarawak politics .

== Administrative division ==

=== Divisions ===

Unlike other states in West Malaysia , Sarawak is divided into divisions rather than districts . Each division is headed by one resident . Currently , the state is divided into 12 divisions :

=== Districts ===

The divisions are further divided into districts , each of which is headed by a district officer ; each district is divided into subdistricts , each headed by a Sarawak Administrative Officer ( SAO ) . Currently , there are around 39 districts in the state . There is also one Development Officer for each Division and District to implement development projects . For each district , the state government appoints a village headman ( known as ketua kampung or penghulu ) for each village . The 39 local governments in Sarawak are under the jurisdiction of the Sarawak Ministry of Local Government and Community Development . The list of divisions , districts , and subdistricts is shown in the table below :

== Security ==

The first paramilitary armed forces in Sarawak , a regiment formed by the Brooke regime in 1862 , were known as the Sarawak Rangers . The regiment had helped the Brookes to pacify the state , and taken part in guerilla warfare against the Japanese , in the Malayan Emergency and the Sarawak Communist Insurgency against the communists . The regiment is famed for its jungle tracking skills . Following the formation of Malaysia , the regiment was absorbed into the Malaysian military forces and is now known as the Royal Ranger Regiment . In 1888 Sarawak , together with neighbouring North Borneo , and Brunei , became British protectorates , whereby the responsibility for foreign policy was handed over to the British in exchange for military protection . Sarawak security was also the responsibility of Australia and New Zealand . After the formation of Malaysia , the Malaysian federal government is solely responsible for foreign policy and military forces in the country .

== Territorial disputes ==

Sarawak has seen several territorial disputes , including with Malaysia 's neighbours Brunei and Indonesia , as well as with China over the ownership of islands in the South China Sea . In 2009 a dispute over Limbang District was settled with Brunei , which dropped its claim over the territory . Sarawak claimed the James Shoal ( Beting Serupai ) and Luconia Shoals ( Beting Raja Jarum / Patinggi Ali ) as part of its exclusive economic zone ( EEZ ) . Meanwhile , there are several Sarawak ? Kalimantan border issues yet to be settled with Indonesia .

== Environment ==

== Geography ==

The total land area of Sarawak is nearly 124 @, @ 450 square kilometres ( 48 @, @ 050 sq mi ) , and lies between the northern latitudes 0 ° 50 ? and 5 ° and eastern longitudes 109 ° 36 ? and 115 ° 40 ? E. Sarawak makes up 37 @. @ 5 percent of the total area of Malaysia . It contains large tracts of tropical rainforest with abundant plant and animal species .

The state of Sarawak has 750 kilometres ( 470 mi ) of coastline , interrupted in the north by about 150 kilometres ( 93 mi ) of Bruneian coast . Sarawak is separated from Kalimantan Borneo by

ranges of high hills and mountains that are part of the central mountain range of Borneo . These become loftier to the north , and are highest near the source of the Baram River at the steep Mount Batu Lawi and Mount Mulu . Mount Murud is the highest point in Sarawak . Lambir Hills National Park is known for its various waterfalls . The world 's largest underground chamber , the Sarawak Chamber , is located inside the Gunung Mulu National Park . Other attractions in the park include the Deer Cave ( the largest cave passage in the world ) and the Clearwater Cave ( the longest cave system in Southeast Asia ) . The national park is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site .

Sarawak is generally divided into three ecoregions . The coastal region is rather low @-@ lying and flat with large areas of swamp and other wet environments . Beaches in Sarawak include : Pasir Panjang and Damai beaches in Kuching , Tanjung Batu beach in Bintulu , and Tanjung Lobang and Hawaii beaches in Miri . The hill region accounts for most of the inhabited land and are where most of the cities and towns are found . The ports of Kuching and Sibu are built some distance from the coast on rivers . Bintulu and Miri are close to the coastline where the hills stretch right to the South China Sea . The third region is the mountainous region along the Kalimantan ? Borneo border and with the Kelabit ( Bario ) , Murut ( Ba 'kelalan ) and Kenyah ( Usun Apau Plieran ) highlands in the north .

The major rivers in Sarawak are : the Sarawak River , Lupar River , Saribas River , and Rajang River . The Sarawak River is the main river flowing through Kuching . The Rajang River is the longest river in Malaysia , measuring 563 kilometres ( 350 mi ) including Balleh River , its tributary . To the north , the Baram River , Limbang River , and Trusan River drain into the Brunei Bay .

Sarawak has a tropical geography with an equatorial climate . It experiences two monsoon seasons : a northeast monsoon and a southwest monsoon . The northeast monsoon occurs between November and February , causing heavy rainfall ; the southwest monsoon sees less rainfall . The climate is stable throughout the year except for the two monsoons . The average daily temperature varies from 23 ° C ( 73 ° F ) in the morning to 32 ° C ( 90 ° F ) in the afternoon , with Miri having the lowest average temperatures in comparison to other major towns in Sarawak . Miri additionally has the most hours of sunshine ( more than six hours a day ) , while other areas receive sunshine for five to six hours a day . Humidity is usually high , exceeding 68 percent . The annual rainfall varies between 330 centimetres ( 130 in ) and 460 centimetres ( 180 in ) , spanning 220 days a year . Lothosols and lithosols make up 60 percent of the land , while podsols accounts for 12 percent of the Sarawak land area . Alluvium is found in the coastal and riverine regions while 12 percent of the Sarawak land area is covered with peat swamp forest .

Sarawak can be divided into two geological regions : the Sunda Shield , which extends southwest from the Batang Lupar River ( near Sri Aman ) and forms the southern tip of Sarawak , and the geosyncline region , which extends northeast to the Batang Lupar River , forming the central and northern regions of Sarawak . The oldest rock in southern Sarawak is schist , which was formed during the Carboniferous and Lower Permian times . While the youngest igneous rock in this region is andesite , found at Sematan . Geological formation of the central and northern regions started during the late Cretaceous period . Several types of stone that can be found in central and northern Sarawak are shale , sandstone , and chert .

Landscapes of Sarawak

= = = Biodiversity = = =

The Sarawak coastline is covered with mangrove and nipah forests . It forms two percent of the total forested area in Sarawak , most commonly found in the estuarine areas of Kuching , Sarikei , and Limbang . The major trees found here include : bako ( *Rhizophora* ) , nipah palm ( *Nypa fruticans* ) , and nibong ( *Oncosperma tigillarum* ) . Peat swamp forests that cover 16 percent of the forested land are concentrated in southern Miri and the lower Baram Valley . The main trees in the peat swamp forests are : ramin ( *Gonystylus bancanus* ) , meranti ( *Shorea* species ) , and medang jongkong ( *Dactylocladus stenostachys* ) . Kerangas forest occupies five percent of the total forest area , while Dipterocarpaceae forests occupy mountainous areas . Several plant species have been studied for their medicinal properties .



The Sarawak rainforest has one of the highest concentrations of species per unit area in the world . The state has about 185 species of mammals , 530 species of birds , 166 species of snakes , 104 species of lizards , and 113 species of amphibians . The state also accounts for 19 percent of the mammals , 6 percent of the birds , 20 percent of the snakes and 32 percent of the lizards as endemic species . These species are largely found in Totally Protected Areas . There are 2 @,@ 000 tree species , 1 @,@ 000 species of orchids , 757 species of ferns , and 260 species of palm . The state is also the habitat of endangered animals , including the borneo pygmy elephant , proboscis monkey , orangutans and rhinoceroses . Matang Wildlife Centre , Semenggoh Nature Reserve , and Lanjak Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary are noted for their orangutan protection programmes . Talang ? Satang National Park is notable for its turtle conservation initiatives . Birdwatching is a common activity in various national parks such as Gunung Mulu National Park , Lambir Hills National Park , and Similajau National Park . Miri ? Sibuti National Park is known for its coral reefs and Gunung Gading National Park for its Rafflesia flowers . Bako National Park , the oldest national park in Sarawak , is known for its 275 species of proboscis monkeys , and Padawan Pitcher Garden for its various carnivorous pitcher plants . The Rhinoceros hornbill is the state bird of Sarawak .

The Sarawak state government has enacted several laws to protect its forests and endangered wildlife species , including the Forests Ordinance 1958 , Wild Life Protection Ordinance 1998 , and Sarawak Natural Parks and Nature Reserves Ordinance . Some of the protected species are the orangutan , green turtle , flying lemur , and piping hornbill . Under the Wild Life Protection Ordinance 1998 , Sarawak natives are given permissions to hunt for a restricted range of wild animals in the jungles but should not possess more than 5 kilograms ( 11 lb ) of meat . The Sarawak Forest Department was established in 1919 to conserve forest resources in the state . Following international criticism of the logging industry in Sarawak , the state government decided to downsize the Sarawak Forest Department and created the Sarawak Forestry Corporation in 1995 . The Sarawak Biodiversity Centre was set up in 1997 for the conservation , protection , and sustainable development of biodiversity in the state .

== == Conservation issues == ==

The percentage of current forest cover in Sarawak has been controversial . The then chief minister Abdul Taib Mahmud claimed that the state has 70 percent forest cover in 2011 and 48 percent in 2012 . However , in 2012 his cabinet minister claimed that the forest cover was 80 percent . The Sarawak government also planned to preserve 60 percent forest cover in the coming years . The Sarawak Forest Department held that the forest cover was 80 percent in 2012 . In contrast , foreign media asserted that Sarawak has lost 90 percent of its forest cover with a mere 3 percent to 5 percent cover left . According to Wetlands International , 10 percent of all Sarawak forests and 33 percent of peat swamp forests were cleared between 2005 and 2010 , which is 3 @.@ 5 times higher than the total rate of deforestation in Asia and 11 @.@ 7 times more than peat swamp deforestation in Asia .

Sarawak 's rainforests have been gradually depleted by the demand driven by the logging industry and the introduction of palm oil plantations . The issue of human rights of the Penan and deforestation in Sarawak became an international environmental issue when Swiss activist Bruno Manser entered Sarawak from 1984 until 2000 . Deforestation has affected the life of indigenous tribes , especially the Penan , whose livelihood is heavily dependent on forest produce . This led to several blockades by indigenous tribes during the 1980s and 1990s against logging companies encroaching on their lands . There have also been cases where Native Customary Rights ( NCR ) lands have been given to timber and plantation companies without the permission of the locals . The indigenous people have resorted to legal means to reinstate their NCR rights . In 2001 the High Court of Sarawak fully reinstated the NCR land claimed by the Rumah Nor people , but this was overturned partially in 2005 . However , this case has served as a precedent , leading to more NCR rights being upheld by the high court in the following years . Sarawak 's mega @-@ dams policy such as the Bakun Dam and Murum Dam projects has submerged thousands of hectares of forest

and displaced thousands of indigenous people . Since 2013 , the proposed Baram Dam project has been delayed due to ongoing protests from local indigenous tribes . Since 2014 , the Sarawak government under new chief minister Adenan Satem has started to take action against illegal logging in the state and to diversify the economy of the state .

= = Economy = =

Sarawak has abundant natural resources . Primary sectors such as mining , agriculture , and forestry accounted for 32 @. @ 8 percent of the state economy in 2013 . The main contributors in the manufacturing industry are food and beverages , wood @-@ based and rattan products , basic metal products , and petrochemical products . Meanwhile , the services sector includes cargo transportation services , air transport , and tourism . From 2000 to 2009 Sarawak had an average annual Gross Domestic Product ( GDP ) growth rate of 5 @. @ 0 percent . Annual GDP growth was volatile from 2006 to 2013 , ranging from -2.0 percent ( 2009 ) to 7 @. @ 0 percent ( 2010 ) with a standard deviation of 3 @. @ 3 percent . Sarawak contributed 10 @. @ 1 percent of the GDP of Malaysia for the nine years leading up to 2013 , becoming the third largest contributor after Selangor ( 22 @. @ 2 percent ) and Kuala Lumpur ( 13 @. @ 9 percent ) The GDP of Sarawak has grown from RM 527 million ( US \$ 171 @. @ 3 million ) in 1963 to RM 58 billion ( US \$ 17 @. @ 4 billion ) in 2013 , rising by 110 times . At the same time , GDP per capita has jumped from RM 688 ( US \$ 223 @. @ 6 ) to RM 46 @, @ 000 ( US \$ 13 @, @ 800 ) , soaring by 60 times . Sarawak has the third highest GDP per capita [ RM 44 @, @ 437 ( US \$ 1331 @. @ 1 ) ] in Malaysia ; after Kuala Lumpur and Labuan . Sarawak state government was able to maintain fiscal surpluses over seven years until 2013 , supported by oil and gas industry which accounted for 34 @. @ 8 percent of the state 's revenue . Sarawak also attracted RM 9 @. @ 6 billion ( US \$ 2 @. @ 88 billion ) in foreign investments where 90 percent of the investments went to Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy ( SCORE ) . SCORE is the second largest economic corridor in Malaysia .

Strongly export @-@ oriented , the Sarawakian economy is susceptible to global commodity prices . Total exports as a percentage of GDP was more than 100 percent in 2013 while total trade exceeds 130 percent . Liquefied Natural Gas ( LNG ) exports accounted for more than half of the state 's total exports while crude petroleum exports accounted for 20 @. @ 8 percent . Meanwhile , palm oil , sawlogs , and sawn timber accounted for 9 @. @ 0 percent of the total exports . Sarawak currently receives 5 percent oil royalty ( percentage of oil production paid by the mining company to the lease owner ) from Petronas over oil explorations in Sarawak territorial waters . Majority of the oil and gas deposits are located offshore next to Bintulu and Miri at Balingian basin , Baram basin , and around Luconia Shoals . Sarawak is also one of the world 's largest exporters of tropical hardwood timber , constituted 65 percent of total Malaysian log exports in 2000 . The last United Nations ( UN ) statistics in 2001 estimated Sarawak 's sawlog exports at an average of 14 @, @ 109 @, @ 000 cubic metres ( 498 @, @ 300 @, @ 000 cu ft ) per year between 1996 and 2000 . Oversea @-@ Chinese Banking Corporation ( OCBC Bank ) was the first foreign bank to open its branches in Sarawak in 1955 . Apart from domestic banks , 18 European , 10 Middle Eastern , 11 Asian , and five North American banks have local branches in Sarawak . There are also several Sarawak @-@ based companies involved in various economic sectors such as Cahya Mata Sarawak Berhad ( CMSB ) , Naim Holdings , Rimbunan Hijau , Ta Ann Holdings , Shin Yang , Samling , WTK ( Wong Tuong Kwang ) Holdings and KTS ( ??? ) Group .

Sarawak consumer price index ( CPI ) is highly correlated with Malaysian CPI , with inflation averaging between 2 @. @ 5 and 3 @. @ 0 percent from 2009 until 2013 with a high in 2008 ( 10 @. @ 0 percent ) and a low in 2009 ( -4.0 percent ) . Income inequality in Sarawak has not shown any significant changes from 1980 to 2009 , with the Gini coefficient fluctuating between 0 @. @ 4 to 0 @. @ 5 . Sarawak saw a reduction in poverty rate from 56 @. @ 5 percent ( 1975 ) to less than 1 percent ( 2015 ) . Unemployment rate also slipped from 4 @. @ 6 percent ( 2010 ) to 3 @. @ 1 percent ( 2014 ) .

= = = Energy = = =

Sarawak Energy Berhad ( SEB ) is responsible for generation , transmission , and distribution of electrical power throughout Sarawak . There are three operational dams in Sarawak as of 2015 : Batang Ai Dam , Bakun Dam , and Murum Dam with several others under feasibility study and planning . Sarawak also derive its electrical energy from coal fired power plant and thermal power station using Liquefied Natural Gas ( LNG ) . The total capacity of the state power generation is expected to reach 7 @, @ 000 MW by 2025 . Beside empowering the state , Sarawak Energy also exports electric to neighbouring West Kalimantan in Indonesia . Alternative energy sources such as biomass , tidal , solar , wind , and Micro hydro dams are also being explored for their potential to generate power .

The Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy ( SCORE ) was established in 2008 and is planning for further development as far out as 2030 to exploit the abundant energy resources in the state ( Murum Dam , Baram Dam , Baleh Dam , and coal @-@ based power plants ) and to develop 10 high priority industries such as aluminium , glass , steel , oil , fisheries , livestock , timber , and tourism . The Regional Corridor Development Authority ( RECODA ) is the government agency responsible for managing SCORE . The entire central region of Sarawak is covered under SCORE and is to include major areas such as Samalaju ( near Bintulu ) , Tanjung Manis , and Mukah . In 2008 , plans are for Samalaju to be developed as an industrial park , with Tanjung Manis as a halal food hub , and Mukah as the administrative centre for SCORE with a focus on resource @-@ based research and development .

= = = Tourism = = =

Tourism plays a major role in the economy of the state contributing 9 @. @ 3 percent of the state 's GDP in 2015 . The Sarawak Tourism Board is responsible for tourism promotion in the state under the purview of the Sarawak Ministry of Tourism . Meanwhile , private tourism sectors are united under the Sarawak Tourism Federation . The Sarawak Convention Bureau is responsible for attracting conventions , conferences , and corporate events to be held in the Borneo Convention Centre Kuching . Most of the foreign visitors come from Brunei , Indonesia , the Philippines , Singapore , and China . The Sarawak Hornbill Tourism Award is held every two years to recognise the best in the tourism sector of the state . The Rainforest World Music Festival ( RWMF ) is the region 's premier " world music " event , attracting more than 20 @, @ 000 people yearly . Other events that are held regularly in Sarawak are the ASEAN International Film Festival , Asia Music Festival , Borneo Jazz Festival , Borneo Cultural Festival , and Borneo International Kite Festival . Major shopping complexes in Sarawak include The Spring , Boulevard , Hock Lee Centre , City One shopping malls in Kuching , and Bintang Megamall , Boulevard , Imperial Mall , and Miri Plaza shopping malls in Miri . The Sarawak capital of Kuching has been mentioned as one of the retirement destinations in Malaysia .

= = Infrastructure = =

The overall level of infrastructure development in Sarawak is relatively low compared to that in Peninsular Malaysia . The Sarawak Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Communications ( MIDCom ) is responsible for infrastructure and telecommunication development in Sarawak . Sarawak has 21 industrial estates , with four main agencies responsible for their implementation and development . In 2009 , 94 percent of urban areas were supplied with electricity ; the percentage of rural areas supplied with electricity increased from 67 percent in 2009 to 91 percent in 2014 . In terms of telecommunication , in 2013 the coverage of fixed telephone line in Sarawak was 25 @. @ 7 percent , and the percentage of people using mobile phones was 93 @. @ 3 percent . Computer usage was 45 @. @ 9 percent in the same year ; the percentage of people using the internet was 58 @. @ 5 percent in urban areas and 29 @. @ 9 percent in rural areas . The state @-@ owned Sacofa Sdn Bhd ( Sacofa Private Limited ) is responsible for constructing telecommunication towers in Sarawak . Sarawak Information Systems Sdn Bhd ( SAINS ) is responsible for the implementation

and development of information technology ( IT ) in Sarawak . In 2012 Sarawak had 63 post offices , 40 mini @-@ post offices , and five mobile post services . Mail delivery coverage in rural areas was 60 percent in 2015 .

The Kuching Water Board ( KWB ) and the Sibu Water Board ( SWB ) are responsible for management of the water supply in their respective areas . The state @-@ owned LAKU Management Sdn Bhd manages the water supply for Miri , Bintulu , and Limbang . The Rural Water Supply Department manages the water supply for the remaining areas . As of 2014 , 82 percent of the rural areas have a fresh water supply .

= = = Transportation = = =

Sarawak has a total of 32 @, @ 091 kilometres ( 19 @, @ 940 mi ) of connected roadways in 2013 , with half of these ( 18 @, @ 003 kilometres ( 11 @, @ 187 mi ) ) being paved state routes , 8 @, @ 313 kilometres ( 5 @, @ 165 mi ) of dirt tracks ( built by timber and plantation companies ) , 4 @, @ 352 kilometres ( 2 @, @ 704 mi ) of gravel roads , and 1 @, @ 424 kilometres ( 885 mi ) of paved federal highway . The primary route in Sarawak is the Pan Borneo Highway , which runs from Sematan , Sarawak , through Brunei to Tawau , Sabah . However , in that the road condition is presently unsatisfactory , due to danger spots , sharp bends , blind spots , potholes , and erosion found along the road , funds from the federal budget have been allocated to upgrade the roads in Sarawak . Under the SCORE economic corridor , more roads were built to the major hydroelectric dams , Bintulu , and Kapit . Major cities and towns in Sarawak provide public transportation services such as buses , taxis , and limousines . Bus service is also available for travel to the neighbouring areas of Sabah , Brunei , and Pontianak ( Indonesia ) . Sarawak uses a dual carriageway with the left @-@ hand traffic rule . It also allows motorists to " turn left when the exit is clear " .

Kuching International Airport is the main gateway to Sarawak . Miri Airport serves a limited number of international flights . Other smaller airports such as Sibu Airport , Bintulu Airport , Mukah Airport , Marudi Airport , Mulu Airport , and Limbang Airport provide services to Kuala Lumpur and other domestic destinations in Sarawak . There are also a number of remote airstrips serving rural communities in the state . There are three airlines serving flight routes in Sarawak : Malaysia Airlines , Air Asia , and MASwings . Hornbill Skyways is an aviation company owned by the Sarawak state government . It provides private chartered flights and flight services for state government servants .

Sarawak has four primary ports at Kuching , Sibu , Bintulu , and Miri . The Bintulu seaport is under the jurisdiction of the Malaysian federal government . It is also the busiest port in Sarawak , mainly handling LNG products and standard cargo shipping . The remaining ports are under the respective state port authorities . Other ports in Sarawak include Samalaju Industrial Port and Tanjung Manis Industrial Port ( TIMP ) . The combined throughput of the four primary ports was 61 @. @ 04 million freight weight tonnes ( FWT ) in 2013 . Sarawak has 55 navigable river networks with a combined length of 3 @, @ 300 kilometres ( 2 @, @ 100 mi ) . For centuries , the rivers of Sarawak have been a primary means of transport as well as a route for timber and other agricultural goods moving downriver for export at the country 's major ports . Sibu port is the main hub along the Rajang River , located 113 kilometres ( 70 mi ) from the river 's mouth , handling mainly timber products . However , since the initiation of Tanjung Manis Industrial Port ( TIMP ) further downriver , the total throughput of Sibu port has declined . Express boats are an important means of transport along the rivers of Sarawak .

No rail lines have been laid down in Sarawak because of logistical challenges and dispersed population in the state .

= = = Healthcare = = =

Sarawak has three major government hospitals : Sarawak General Hospital , Sibu Hospital , and Miri Hospital . There are also district hospitals , public health clinics , 1Malaysia clinics , and rural clinics . Besides government @-@ owned hospitals and clinics , there are several private hospitals

in Sarawak such as the Normah Medical Specialists Centre , Timberland Medical Specialists Centre , and Sibu Specialist Medical Centre . Sarawak is also a medical tourism destination for Brunei and Indonesian visitors . Universiti Malaysia Sarawak ( UNIMAS ) is the only government university that produces medical graduates in the state . The Sarawak Hospice Society was set up in 1998 to promote hospice care in home settings . Hospital Sentosa is the only mental hospital in Sarawak .

Access to good quality healthcare is still a challenge in the rural communities . For villages located outside the operational areas of health clinics , a flying doctor service ( FDS ) is available once a month . Village health promoters are stationed in remote villages after being provided with three weeks of first aid and basic health care training . A variety of traditional medicine practices are still being used by the various communities in Sarawak .

In 2015 the doctor @-@ patient ratio in the state was 1 : 1 @,@ 104 ? lower than the World Health Organisation ( WHO ) recommendation of 1 doctor to 600 patients . In the same year , there were 2 @,@ 237 doctors in Sarawak , with 1 @,@ 759 serving in public sector and 478 in the private sector . Moreover , there are 248 specialists , 942 medical officers , and 499 house officers in the state .

= = = Education = = =

Sarawak overall literacy rate was 25 percent in 1960 . Today , the state has a 90 percent literacy rate . The Malaysian Ministry of Education is responsible for primary and secondary education in Sarawak . The oldest schools that are established in Sarawak are : St. Thomas 's School Kuching ( 1848 ) , St Mary 's School Kuching ( 1848 ) , and St Joseph 's School Kuching ( 1882 ) . In 2012 Sarawak had 185 government secondary schools , four international schools , and 14 Chinese independent schools . Sarawak has a considerable number of indigenous students enrolled in Chinese schools . The Sarawak government also emphasises pre @-@ school education in the state . Sarawak has three public universities : Universiti Malaysia Sarawak ( UNIMAS ) , Universiti Teknologi Mara ( UiTM ) Kota Samarahan campus , and Universiti Putra Malaysia Bintulu Campus . Universiti Utara Malaysia ( UUM ) also set up several off @-@ campus study centres in Kuching and Sibu . Sarawak also has two private universities : Curtin University Sarawak and Swinburne University of Technology Sarawak Campus . Vocational training is also given priority to supply a skilled workforce for the SCORE economic corridor . There are also several community colleges and four teacher training colleges in Sarawak . Batu Lintang Teachers ' Training College is the third oldest of its kind in Malaysia . In 2015 the total teaching workforce in Sarawak was 40 @,@ 593 .

Sarawak State Library ( also known as PUSTAKA ) is the largest library in the state . Public and village libraries are found in various towns and cities .

= = Demography = =

As of the 2015 Malaysian census , the population of Sarawak was 2 @,@ 636 @,@ 000 , making it the fourth most populous state in Malaysia . However , due to the large area of Sarawak , it has the lowest population density in Malaysia , which stands at 20 people per km<sup>2</sup> . The average population growth rate per year from 2000 to 2010 was 1 @.@ 8 percent . As of 2014 , 58 percent of the population is urban while 42 percent of the population reside in rural areas . As of 2011 , the crude birth rate in Sarawak was 16 @.@ 3 per 1000 individuals , the crude death rate was 4 @.@ 3 per 1000 population , and the infant mortality rate was 6 @.@ 5 per 1000 live births .

People from Sarawak are called Sarawakians . Sarawak has more than 40 sub @-@ ethnic groups , each with its own distinct language , culture and lifestyle . Cities and larger towns are populated predominantly by Malays , Melanau , Chinese , and a smaller percentage of Ibans and Bidayus who have migrated from their home villages for employment opportunities . Generally , Sarawak has six major ethnic groups : Iban , Chinese , Malay , Bidayuh , Melanau , and Orang Ulu . Several minor ethnic groups include : Kedayan , Javanese , Bugis , Murut , and Indian . Sarawak has 150 @,@ 000 registered migrant workers working as domestic workers or in plantation , manufacturing , construction , services and agriculture . However , the total number of illegal immigrants may be as high as 320 @,@ 000 to 350 @,@ 000 people .

The term Dayak is commonly used to refer to the Iban people and the Bidayuh . The term is often used in a nationalistic context . In 2015 the Malaysian federal government recognised the use of the term on official forms . Bumiputera ( son of the soil ) refers to the Malays and other indigenous groups in Peninsular Malaysia , Sarawak and Sabah . This group of people generally enjoy special privileges in education , jobs , finance , and political positions . Orang Asal refers to all the indigenous groups in Malaysia excluding Malays .

= = = Iban = = =

Sarawak has the highest number of Ibans in Borneo , numbering 745 @, @ 400 people . They are also known as Sea Dayaks . The large majority of Ibans practise Christianity . The Ibans originally inhabited the areas around the Rajang basin , but following Brooke 's military expeditions , they gradually moved into northern regions of Sarawak . Iban settlements are usually in the form of a longhouse . The longhouse was a defensive unit in the past , when headhunting was prevalent . Today it remains a ritual symbol among its households . In the past , the Ibans recognised status hierarchy such as raja berani ( the rich and the brave ) , orang mayuh ( ordinary people ) , and ulun ( slaves ) . However , during the Brooke era , Iban society was restructured into formal offices such as tuai rumah ( headman ) , penghulu ( regional chief ) , and temenggong ( paramount chief ) . They still observe many of their traditional rituals and beliefs such as Gawai Antu ( festival of the dead ) and the Gawai Dayak ( Harvest Festival ) .

= = = Chinese = = =

Chinese traders first came to Sarawak in the 6th century AD . The Chinese population today consists of communities originated from immigrants during the Brooke era . These migrants first worked as labourers inside gold mines at Bau , Sarawak . A variety of dialect groups is found among Sarawak Chinese ; Cantonese , Foochow , Hakka , Hokkien , Teochew , and Henghua ( Putian people ) . They celebrate major cultural festivals such as Hungry Ghost Festival and the Chinese New Year . The majority of Sarawak Chinese are made up from Buddhists and Christians . In Kuching , most of the Chinese settled near the Sarawak River , an area which would later form Chinatown . In 1901 Wong Nai Siong brought his clansmen to settle in Sibu , near the Rajang River . The Chinese later went to work at coal mines and oil fields in Miri . The Sarawak Chinese were influenced by the Kuomintang and later the Communist Party of China before adopting the ideology of Sarawak nationalism after 1963 .

= = = Malay = = =

The Malays are traditionally fishermen . They chose to build settlements ( Malay villages ) along the river banks . Today , they migrate to urban areas and work in public and private sectors . They are known for their silver and brass crafts , wood carvings , and textiles . Some typical Malay villages are located along the riverside near Fort Margherita , behind the Kuching Mosque , and at the foot of Mount Santubong . Several theories about the origins of the Malays in Sarawak have been proposed . James Brooke purportedly applied the term for the first time on the coast @-@ dwelling indigenous Muslims in Sarawak . However , not all Muslims in Sarawak are Malays . Most of the Melanau tribe also practise Islam . Other theories claim that the Malays came from the Malay Archipelago ( for instance , from Java or Sumatra ) , Arabs from the Middle East , or through cultural and religious conversions of indigenous people of Sarawak .

= = = Melanau = = =

The Melanaus are native to Sarawak . Most of them come from the coastal town of Mukah . They traditionally live in tall houses , but after adopting a Malay lifestyle , they dwell in villages . They worked as fishermen , boat @-@ builders , and craftsmen . They originally practised paganism and

celebrate Kaul festival but today most of them are Muslims .

= = = Bidayuh = = =

The Bidayuh mainly stayed in the southern part of Sarawak such as Lundu , Bau , Serian , and the Padawan municipality . They are known as Land Dayaks because they traditionally live on steep limestone mountains . They consist of several sub @-@ ethnic groups such as the Jagoi , Biatah , and Selakau , and speak mutually unintelligible dialects . Therefore , they accepted English and Malay languages as their common language . They are known for several musical instruments such as gigantic drums and a bamboo percussion instrument known as the pratuakng . Like the Ibans , their traditional settlements are longhouses , but they also construct baruk roundhouses for community meetings . The majority of the Bidayuh practice the Christian faith .

= = = Orang Ulu = = =

The name Orang Ulu means " upriver people " in the Iban language . It includes numerous tribes who live upstream in Sarawak 's interior such as the Kenyah , Kayan , Lun Bawang , Kelabit , Penan , Bisaya , and Berawan tribes . Formerly headhunters , most of them stay in Bario , Ba 'kelalan , Belaga , and near the drainage basin of the Baram River . They decorate their longhouses with murals and woodcarvings . They are also known for boat building , beadwork and tattooing . Well @-@ known musical instruments from the Orang Ulu are the Kayans ' sapeh and Kenyah 's sampe ' and Lun Bawang 's bamboo band . The Kelabit and Lun Bawang people are known for their production of fragrant rice . The majority of Orang Ulu are Christians .

= = = Religion = = =

Although Islam is the official religion of the federation , Sarawak has no official state religion . However , during the chieftainship of Abdul Rahman Ya 'kub , the Constitution of Sarawak was amended to make Yang di @-@ Pertuan Agong as the head of Islam in Sarawak and empower the state assembly to pass laws regarding Islamic affairs . With such provisions , Islamic policies can be formulated in Sarawak and the establishment of Islamic state agencies is also possible . The 1978 Majlis Islam Bill enabled the setting up of Syariah Courts in Sarawak with jurisdictions over matrimonial , child custody , betrothal , inheritance , and criminal cases in the state . An appeals court and Courts of Kadi were also formed .

Sarawak is the only state in Malaysia where Christians outnumber Muslims . The earliest Christian missionaries in Sarawak were propagated by Church of England ( Anglicans ) in 1848 , followed by Roman Catholics a few years later , and Methodists in 1903 . Such missionaries first took place among the Chinese immigrants before spreading to indigenous animists . Other Christian denominations in Sarawak are Borneo Evangelical Mission ( BEM or Sidang Injil Borneo , SIB . ) , and Baptists . Indigenous people such as the Iban , Bidayuh , and Orang Ulu have adopted Christianity although they do retain some of their traditional religious rites . Many Muslims come from the Malay , Melanau , and Kayan ethnic groups . Buddhism , Taoism , and Chinese folk religion are predominantly practised by Chinese Malaysians . Other minor religions in Sarawak are Baha 'i , Hinduism , Sikhism , and animism .

Religious sites in Sarawak

= = = Languages = = =

English was the sole official language of Sarawak from 1963 to 1974 because the first chief minister of Sarawak Stephen Kalong Ningkan opposed the use of the Malay language in Sarawak . In 1974 the new chief minister Abdul Rahman Ya 'kub adopted the Malay language and English as the two official languages of Sarawak . He also changed the medium of instruction in schools from English to Malay . Today , English is used in the courts , state legislative assembly , and certain government

agencies in Sarawak . On 18 November 2015 , the Sarawak Chief Minister Adenan Satem announced the state 's adoption of English as the official language of Sarawak , along with Malay .

The Malay language , known as Bahasa Sarawak ( or Sarawak Malay ) , is the main language among the Sarawak Malays and other indigenous tribes . Bahasa Sarawak is a different dialect from that spoken on the peninsula . The Iban language is also widely spoken among 34 percent of the Sarawak population while the Bidayuh language , with six major dialects , is spoken by 10 percent of the population . The Orang Ulu have about 30 different language dialects . The Chinese generally use Standard Chinese although they also use many different dialects such as Hokkien , Hakka , Foochow , and Teochew .

= = Culture = =

Sarawak exhibits notable diversity in ethnicity , culture , and language . The Sarawakian culture has been influenced by Bruneian Malays of the coastal areas . Substantial cultural influences also came from the Chinese and British cultures . Headhunting was once an important tradition for the Ibans ; the custom is no longer observed . Christianity plays an important role in the daily lives of the Kelabit and Lun Bawang and has changed their ethnic identities . The Penan people were the last indigenous group to abandon their nomadic way of life in the jungle . Interracial marriages are common in the state .

Sarawak Cultural Village is located at the foot of Mount Santubong , Kuching . Known as the " living museum " , it showcases the various ethnic groups carrying out traditional activities in their respective traditional houses . Cultural performances are also presented here . The Sarawak State Museum houses a collection of artefacts such as pottery , textiles , and woodcarving tools from various ethnic tribes in Sarawak , and also ethnographic materials of local cultures . The museum building preserves its French architecture . Other museums include the Islamic Heritage Museum , Chinese History Museum , Kuching Cat Museum , Sarawak Textile Museum , Art Museum , Lau King Howe Medical Museum , and Baram Regional Museum . There is also a series of well @-@ preserved forts in Sarawak built during the Brooke regime such as Fort Margherita , Fort Emma , Fort Sylvia , and Fort Alice .

The Batang Ai Resort and Bawang Assan Iban longhouses allow the visiting guests to have an overnight stay and to participate in traditional Iban daily activities . Other longhouses include : Iban longhouses in Kapit , Bidayuh longhouses in Kuching , Kelabit longhouses in Bario , Lun Bawang longhouses in Ba 'kelalan , and Melanau wooden houses in Sibu . Main Bazaar and Carpenter Street are the two notable streets in Chinatown , Kuching . India Street in Kuching is notable for its textile products . An Indian ? Muslim mosque can be found in the vicinity .

= = = Fine arts and crafts = = =

The Sarawak Craft Council popularises local ethnic crafts . The Sarakraf Pavilion houses a workshop which demonstrates a wide range of craft @-@ making skills . Well @-@ known handicrafts in Sarawak include Orang Ulu beadwork , Iban Pua Kumbu , Bidayuh Kesah mats and Tambok baskets , Malay Kain Songket , ethnic headgear , and Chinese pottery . Sarawak Artists Society was established in 1985 to promote local cultures and arts in the form of paintings . Most artists in the post @-@ war Sarawak prefers scenery and nature , traditional dances , and traditional daily activities as their drawing themes .

Orang Ulu 's Sapeh ( a dug @-@ out guitar ) is the best known traditional musical instrument in Sarawak . It was played for Queen Elizabeth during her official visit to Sarawak in 1972 . It was first introduced to the world during Asian Traditional Performing Arts ( ATPA ) in Japan in 1976 . Other traditional musical instruments are various types of gongs and Kulintang ( Tawak , Ketupung , and Engkeromong ) , idiophones , bamboo flutes and zithers .

The oral tradition has been part of the culture of the various indigenous groups in Sarawak for generations . It is used for passing on life lessons , traditions , and values to the younger generation . The stories are told repeatedly by the elders to the younger ones , such as in storytelling sessions



on special occasions and through traditional performances . Some of these traditional practices are the Iban 's Ngajat dances , Renong ( Iban vocal repertory ) , Ensera ( Iban oral narratives ) , and epic storytelling by the Kayan and Kenyah . The Borneo Literature Bureau existed from 1958 until 1977 ; it encouraged the documentation of local cultures , local authors , and publications in English , Chinese , Malay , Iban and other native languages . The Bureau was replaced by the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka ( DBP ) in 1977 , which advocated publication only in the Malay language . Documentation of oral traditions has also been done by the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak ( UNIMAS ) and the Sarawak Customs Council . The Sarawak Gazette was first published by the Brooke government in 1870 . It recorded a variety of news in Sarawak related to economics , agriculture , anthropology , and archaeology . The Gazette is still being published today . Hikayat Panglima Nikosa ( Story of Nikosa the Warrior ) , printed in 1876 at Kuching , is one of the earliest text publications in Borneo . Written by Ahmad Syawal Abdul Hamid , it is also the first novel of Malaysia . The indigenous traditions have also become a source of writing for Sarawak Chinese authors .

= = = Cuisine = = =

Notable dishes in the state include Sarawak laksa , kolo mee , and ayam pansuh . The state is also known for its Sarawak layer cake dessert . Each ethnic group has its own delicacies with different styles of preparing , cooking , and eating food . However , modern technology has altered the way of cooking for native dishes . Examples of ethnic foods are the Iban tuak ( rice wine ) , Melanau tebaloi ( sago palm crackers ) and umai ( raw fish mixed with lime juice ) , and Orang Ulu urum giruq ( pudding ) . The traditional food of Sarawak has also been marketed as a culinary tourism product . Examples of locally grown franchise stores in Sarawak are Sugar Bun , Singapore Chicken Rice , and Bing Coffee . Other international foods such as Western food , Indonesian food , Indian food , and Middle Eastern food can also be found here .

= = = Media = = =

The Sarawak government is popularly believed to exert its influence over the media . Examples of newspapers based in Sarawak are Sin Chew Daily , See Hua Daily News , Borneo Post , and Utusan Borneo . In the 1990s , major newspapers negatively portrayed the timber blockades in Sarawak as detrimental to the state 's growth and development . The Sarawak Tribune was indefinitely suspended in 2006 for publishing a caricature of the Prophet Muhammad . The daily was rebooted as the New Sarawak Tribune in 2010 . In 2010 Clare Rewcastle Brown , sister @-@ in @-@ law of former British prime minister Gordon Brown , set up a Sarawak Report website and a London @-@ based short @-@ wave radio station named Radio Free Sarawak to provide alternative news and views free from the influence of the Sarawak government .

Radio Sarawak existed from 1954 to 1976 . It was broadcast in Malay , Iban , Chinese , and English . Some Sarawak @-@ based radio stations are Sarawak FM , cats FM and TEA FM .

= = = Holidays and festivals = = =

Sarawakians observe a number of holidays and festivals throughout the year . Apart from national Hari Merdeka and Malaysia Day celebrations , the state also celebrates Sarawak Self @-@ government Day on 22 July and the State Governor 's birthday . Ethnic groups also celebrate their own festivals . The open house tradition allows other ethnic groups to join in the celebrations . Sarawak is the only state in Malaysia to declare the Gawai Dayak celebration a public holiday . It is also the only state in Malaysia that does not gazette the Deepavali celebration as a public holiday . Religious groups are free to hold processions in major towns and cities during festivals . Sarawak and Sabah are the only two states in Malaysia that declare Good Friday a public holiday . The Kuching Festival is a month @-@ long celebration that is held every August to commemorate its elevation to city status in 1988 . Miri City Day is also held in conjunction with Miri May Fest every year .

## == Sports ==

Sarawak sent its own teams to participate in the 1958 and 1962 British Empire and Commonwealth Games , and 1962 Asian Games before its athletes started representing Malaysia after 1963 . The Sarawak State Sports Council was formed in 1985 to raise the standard of sports in Sarawak . Sarawak was the host of the Malaysian SUKMA Games in 1990 and for the second time in the 2016 Sukma Games . The state was the overall champion in the 1990 , 1992 , and 1994 SUKMA games . Sarawak also sent teams representing Malaysia at the Southeast Asian Games . Sarawak also contributed one Olympic medal to the total of six medals won by Malaysia from 1992 to 2012 . Sarawak also emerged as the overall champion for 11 consecutive years at the Malaysia Para Games since 1994 . The state also sent athletes to participate in the Special Olympics World Games .

There are several stadiums in Sarawak : Sarawak Stadium , Sarawak State Stadium , Stadium Perpaduan ( Unity Stadium ) , and Sarawak State Hockey Stadium . The Sarawak FA football association was founded in 1974 . It won the Malaysia FA Cup in 1992 and the Malaysia Premier League in 1997 and 2013 .