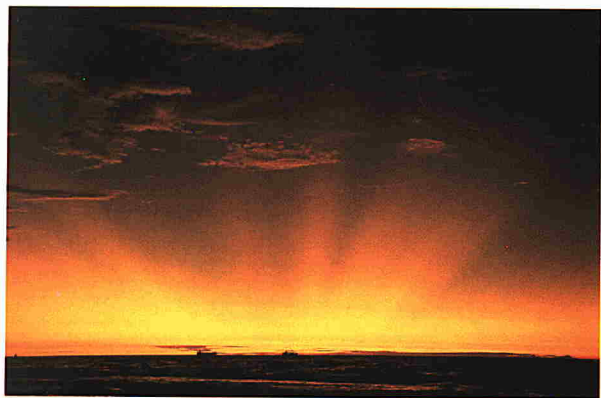


MIRI

THE HIDDEN TREASURE



MIRI

THE HIDDEN TREASURE

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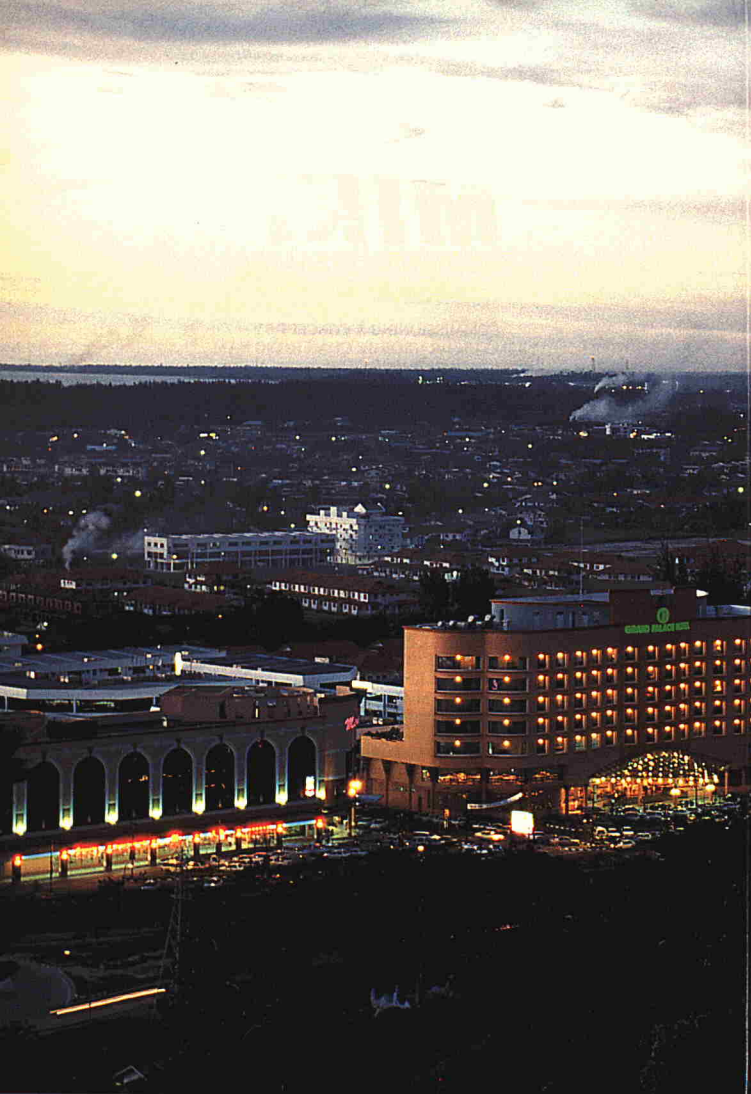
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*Desktop Colour Separation by
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Front cover

An elder telling tales of the past and his dreams for the
future to a young one.

Page ii

Sunrise on the beach.

Pages iv & v

Miri Town at night.

Back cover

Sand design.

Printed in Singapore

DISCLAIMER

*Information in the content of this book is believed to be
accurate. However, it has been gathered from across a
wide cross-section of sources and all information during
translation and compilation has been carefully edited
and checked many times over, with every endeavour to
avoid error. Any misinformation or lack of it is
regretted. The authors, compilers and publishers have
done whatever possible to ensure accuracy.*



In Borneo, there are eight species of the hornbill, including the graceful rhinoceros hornbill. The hornbill is a majestic and lovable bird which is the State bird of Sarawak. It is totally protected. The State Crest incorporates the hornbill.

The hornbill (Bucerotidae) belongs to the Coraciiformes order in the families of birds. They are endowed with voices which may be referred to as "calls" instead of songs.

The hornbill's nest is always in a cavity e.g. in a tree trunk. The female enters the cavity to lay her eggs while the male brings mud and debris for the female to plaster around the entrance until only a slit is left.

The male passes food to the female through the slit until the young ones are grown. Then the female breaks out. Incubation takes 18-22 days.

The hornbill flies over and through the forest with a strong and often noisy flight, and on alighting, scrambles or hops amongst the branches.

This bird is also of great importance to the people of Sarawak especially to the ethnic groups. The Burong Kenyalang - burong is bird, Kenyalang is hornbill - features in many activities of the people, there are many dances fashioned after the movements of the bird.



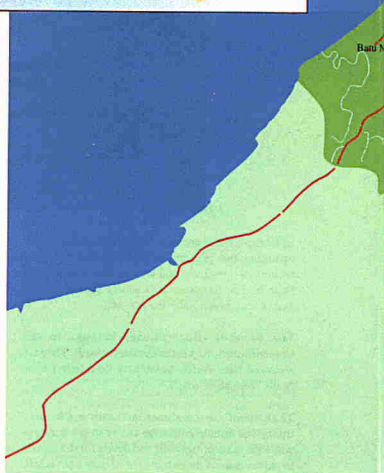
Above

A map showing the State of Sarawak in East Malaysia, on the Borneo Island, and the surrounding region.

The State of Sarawak is divided into nine divisions.

Right

Miri Town and the Miri Division.









CHIEF MINISTER
SARAWAK

Prologue

Miri was simply one of Sarawak's little villages until oil was discovered in 1910. Since then it has always been more vibrant than other towns in Sarawak. This is in part due to the economic opportunities generated by the oil industry but also due to the progressive nature of its inhabitants. In the past ten or so years, it has developed beyond expectations.

Fortunately the development has followed an organised and systematic pattern, as well as maintaining and improving the standards especially in terms of the architectural and engineering aspects.

The development in Miri places priority on making Miri a resort town, hence the emphasis on international class hotels and infrastructure. If the pace of development is maintained or better still, improved, Miri can certainly be an example of a successful and vibrant town which many others can emulate. This book will go a long way towards helping achieve this objective.

Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri (Dr.) Haji Abdul Taib Bin Mahmud
Chief Minister, Sarawak





MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND PUBLIC UTILITIES
SARAWAK

Preface

In this book, I am proud to share with you the treasure, Miri, which I hold very close to my heart.

This book is a pictorial record of Miri and the Miri Division. It presents an overall view of the beautiful and unspoilt treasure, and its progress since the discovery of oil.

Miri is fortunate to have a vast amount of natural resources which significantly contribute to the economic success of the State of Sarawak and Malaysia. This will enable Miri to develop itself as a resort city by the year 2005.

With these developments, Miri and its Division hope to balance its economic growth with its social obligation and environmental consciousness.

The plans for the resort city are well on the way with the completion of five international class resort hotels and the on-going improvements to the town's infrastructure. Accessibility to remote areas of interest, such as the Mulu National Park, have also been improved considerably.

This book has been a culmination of the efforts of many individuals and organisations. Many of these photographs have never been published as they are from private collections, without which, this book would not have been possible.

I wish to thank all those who have contributed to the success of this book and am confident that you will discover the many beautiful and unspoilt treasure of Miri.

Datuk Dr. George Chan Hong Nam
PNBS, KMN, PBS, ABS
Minister for Finance and Public Utilities, Sarawak



Above
Hawaii Beach, one of the many beautiful beaches
along the coast of the Miri Division.

Introduction

Miri Division is one of the nine divisions of Sarawak. It covers an area of 26,777 square kilometres in the north-eastern sector of the State, with a coastline of approximately 150 kilometres. It consists of dense tropical rainforests with an enormous variety of vegetation and wild life. The Baram River and its tributaries reach into the remote areas of the Division forming a major form of transportation and water supply.

Miri has a fairly uniform equatorial climate throughout the year. Temperatures range from 22°C to 32°C. The dry season is from March to October and the wet, or Landas season from November to February brings relatively high levels of rainfall and humidity.

The population of Miri Town stands at just over 100,000 with Chinese (35%), Malay (22%), the various ethnic groups (40%) and foreigners (3%). A further 130,000 people live in the Division comprising of various ethnic groups such as the Iban, Bidayuh, Kelabit, Kenyah, Kayan, Melanau and Penan.

The history of the Miri Division has been centred on Miri Town and its oil production. Once a small and humble fishing village, the town was brought from obscurity to great significance in a matter of a few years when oil was discovered in 1910.

With the oil boom, an international workforce arrived, creating an interesting and colourful blend of cultures. This initiated a building program for roads, schools, residential units and recreational facilities. By 1921, it was a far cry from the days when a Caucasian riding a bicycle had the whole village turn out to watch. Bicycles, motorcycles and motorcars were soon a common sight in the town area.

World War II brought Miri to a stand-still. Oil production came to a halt with the imminent arrival of the Japanese. In the chaos of the War, many of the installations for oil production were destroyed. The situation deteriorated further even with the Japanese attempting to resume oil production.

After the War, the rebuilding of Miri began with the determination and dedication of the people. The road to recovery was a long and arduous one. Conditions were far from perfect, but the foundations were laid.

Today, Miri is concentrating its efforts on being a major tourist destination. Plans have been implemented to have Miri as a resort city by the year 2005. Interest in its natural attractions has also been generated with the gazetting of national parks and promotion of cultural heritage such as the longhouses, traditional crafts and values.

Miri's national parks are the Lambir Hills, Niah and Gunung Mulu National Parks. Lambir Hills National Park is just 30 minutes drive from the town. This park has spectacular waterfalls and one of the world's most diverse forests, with an amazing variety of vegetation and animal life.

Niah National Park has been at the centre of a major archeological find with a human skull said to be 40,000 years old. The caves also have paintings from the Iron-Age and are also home to millions of bats. These bats deposit tonnes of guano daily which is collected and is a source of income for the locals. More valuable than guano, is birds' nests which is a highly prized delicacy.

Gunung Mulu, at 2,376 metres is the second highest point in the Miri Division. This is located in the Gunung Mulu National Park. Other high points are Gunung Api (1,710m) with its razor-sharp pinnacles as high as 50 metres, and Gunung Benarat (1,585m). The park is popular with tourists for its cave systems, of which the Sarawak Chamber is the largest natural chamber in the world. Other caves in the area include the Deer Cave where the nightly exodus of bats is an experience to be remembered, Clearwater Cave, Lang Cave and Wind Cave.

Miri has almost entirely depended on its rich resources of oil and natural gas. The earnings from these resources are a significant contributor to the nation's economy. Other input to the economy include timber, oil palm products, rubber, pepper, coconut oil and cocoa. Cultivation of rice and other agricultural produce and livestock are on a small scale for self-sufficiency.

The fast developments in Miri and the Division is paving the path to achieving a resort city status of a manageable size with identity along with the provision of good living and working environment.

*We wish to thank the following,
without whose generous support,
this book would not have been possible.*



Sarawak Shell Berhad/Sabah Shell Petroleum Co. Ltd



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Samling Corporation Sdn. Bhd.



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Riaplus Sdn. Bhd.



Shin Yang Trading Sdn. Bhd.

*This book is dedicated to
all the beautiful people of Miri.*

Acknowledgement

Many people have helped in making this book possible. The photographs sourced were widely dispersed and some records sketchy, so the task of tracing Miri's history and early photographs and in many cases, making them presentable for photographic reproduction at the very high standard I have always demanded, has been daunting.

Overseeing it all has been Catherine, with her special dedication in getting it all together. She has, after all, lived much of it. Born in Miri, and with family still living in Miri today, that go back to the early days of Miri.

First of all, thanks must go to the Chief Minister, Yang Amat Berhormat Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri (Dr.) Haji Abdul Taib Bin. Mahmud, for his encouragement and approval of the direction and format the manuscript has taken.

I would also like to thank, born in Miri, YB Datuk DR. George Chan Hong Nam, the Minister for Finance and Public Utilities for Sarawak, who initiated this project. This is the first time such a book on the history, the present, and the future plans of the people of Miri, the Town and the Division are recorded in pictorial form. I thank him especially for the valuable guidance throughout the various stages of organizing this book.


I am also very grateful to Encik Noel Hudson Laga the Resident of Miri, Councillor Wee Han Wen the Chairman of Municipal Council Miri, Mr. Kong Shaw Onn the Manager of Miri Civic Centre, Mr. Charles Bateman the Superintendent of Miri Lands and Surveys, and Ms. Dayang Suffia Awg. Weng the Assistant Librarian of Miri Public Library, all of whom were always available to assist me with my research.

The conspicuous contributions of photographer, Darrell Tsen Nyuk Choi, with his perceptive insight into his work, his skilled and thoughtful photography, was able to capture for posterity the invaluable pictures that make up most of this book. He was also the Resident of Miri from 1984 to 1986.

Many people have contributed to this exciting publication which makes it impossible to thank them adequately. Special thanks are due to the many residents, organisations and business people of Miri for their support and their generosity in making historical material available. Especially those at Sarawak Shell Berhad, Mr. Tan Ek Kia the Managing Director, Datuk James Ting Sing How the Director, Ms. Freda Kedung-Tan, the Head of Public Affairs and Communications and Mr. Lo Soon Ngian the Head of Video and Photographic Section, for making their valuable archives available to me and my researchers. Typhoon Studio's Mr. Leong Chin Khian, two brothers, Mr. Patrick and Andrew Liew, both former Headmaster of local schools, for many early photographs and finally, the Sarawak Museum in Kuching, Dr. Peter M. Kedit the Director and Mr. Clement Sabang the Assistant Curator for their expert assistance, advice and help during the preparation of this book. Research also took me to The Australian War Memorial, Canberra, and Australian "Digger" Kevin F Ward, who in 1945, in his early twenties was a Private in the 2/13 Infantry Battalion, landed on the beach of Miri Town in June with the liberation forces.

A very special thank you is due to all the Corporations in Miri, listed on page xvi, who generously contributed to make the book possible.

Among the many people involved in the production of "Miri The Hidden Treasure", I thank my "stressed-out by me" dedicated staff who sometimes worked long hours to keep up with my demands and schedules, the staff of Miri Municipal Council, especially the Secretary Mr. Sim Nyuk Foh, who made sure I always had transport, and Mdm. Lim, Personal Assistant to the Municipal Secretary who co-ordinated all my appointments during my Miri visits. Mr. John Primmer the General Manager of RIHGA Royal Hotel Miri, with his dedicated staff, who went out of their way to make my many visits comfortable and most enjoyable.


Mervyn C Cole
The Lord of Knowstone



Above

An aerial view of Miri in the old days.

Before oil was found in 1910, Miri was said to be a village made up of only a few houses and the people were traders in jelutong, brassware, belachan (a prawn paste) and fishing was their livelihood.

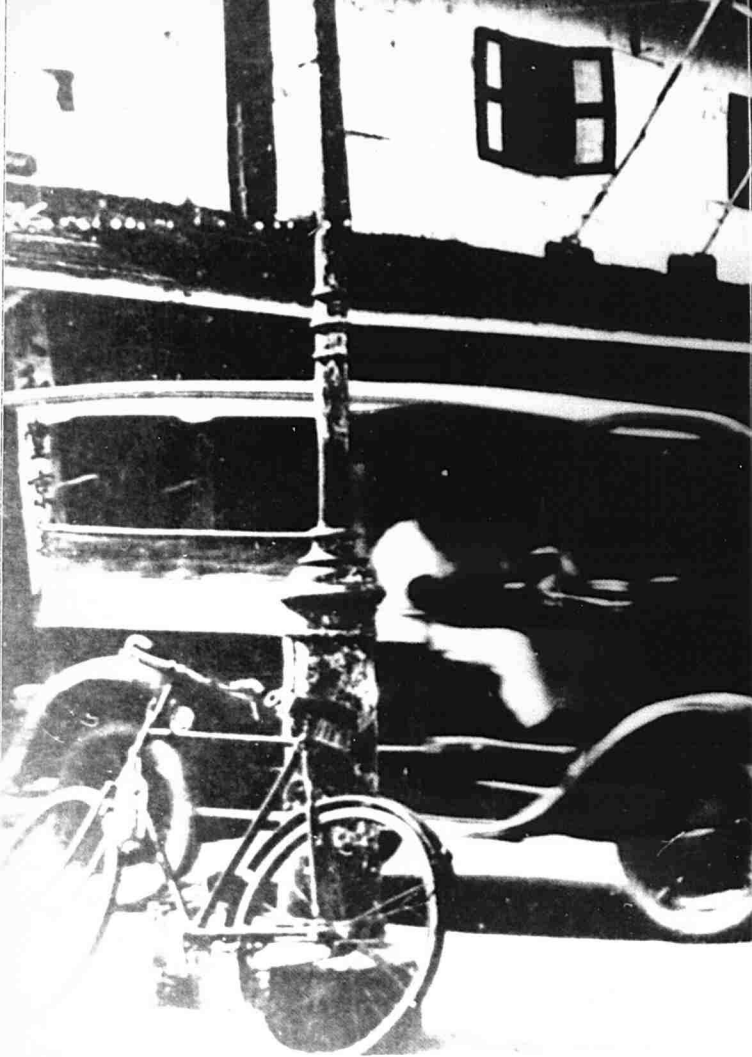
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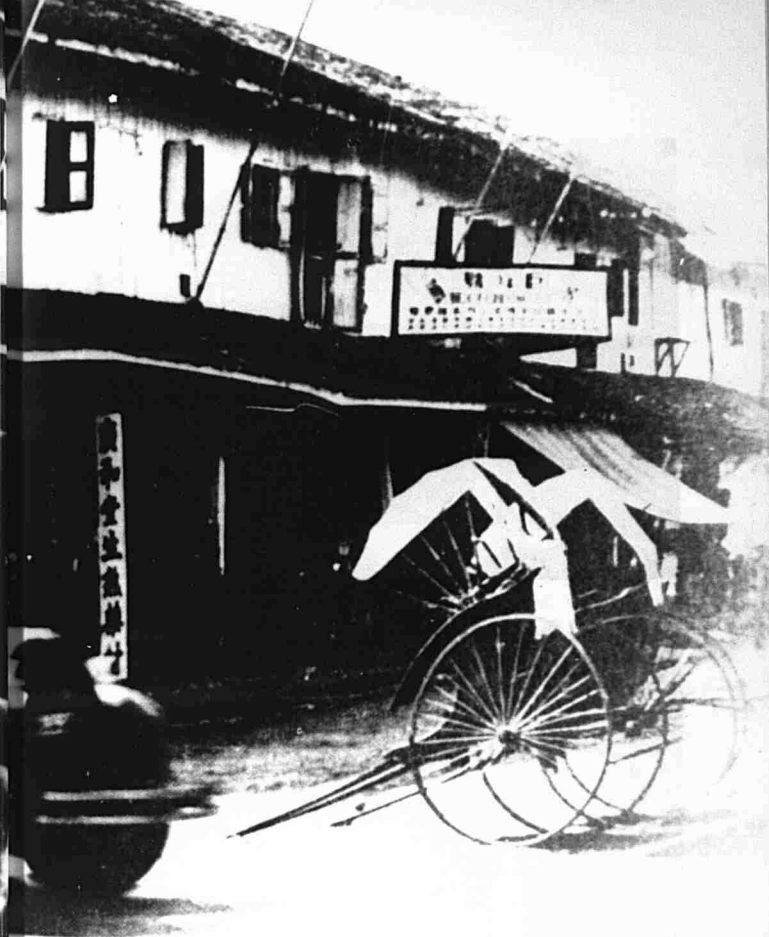
An aerial view of Miri taken recently. Great changes took place on the outlook of Miri. From a fishing village, it has transformed into a major town of economic prosperity. This change has benefited both the urban and rural population.

Overleaf

Rickshaws in the streets of old Miri. Taken in 1929.









Above

On 26 July 1929, the Royal visitors, His Highness Rajah Vyner Brooke and Rancee Sylvia, visited Miri. They were accompanied by the Treasurer of Sarawak and the Postmaster General.

The Royal couple and their entourage were welcomed by the Senior Officers, Native Officers, the General Manager of Sarawak Oilfields and many of the leading businessmen of the various Chinese communities.

Right

Miri was honoured in 1959 by another royal visitor, His Royal Highness Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh.







Above

A section of the Chinese Quarter which escaped both bomb and fire damage during the World War II.

Miri was not to be easily defeated. It rebuilt itself and continued to play an important role in the economic success of the State of Sarawak.

Left, above

During the Japanese invasion, the whole town was thrown into despair and destruction. Here, a member of the 2/13 Infantry Battalion from Australia moves through a bomb shattered areas of the town.

Left, below

Transporting a vehicle across the Miri River by ferry, after the end of the War by Australian forces. This patrol is moving by jeep to Pujut searching for mines.



Above

In the town center, one of the major roads, River Road, taken not long after World War II.



Above
River Road, taken in recent years from a similar
position as the old photograph opposite.



Above

The long jetty, today, is used more for recreational activities.

Right

In its earlier years, it was built by the petroleum company for passengers and cargo during low tides.





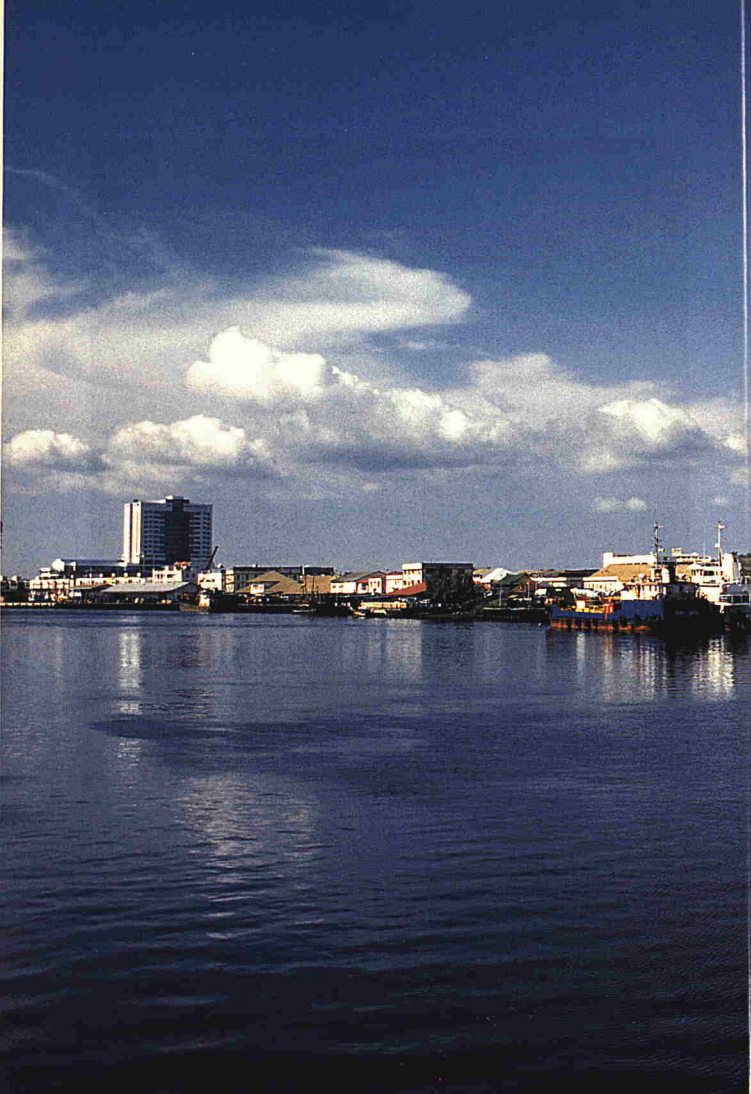
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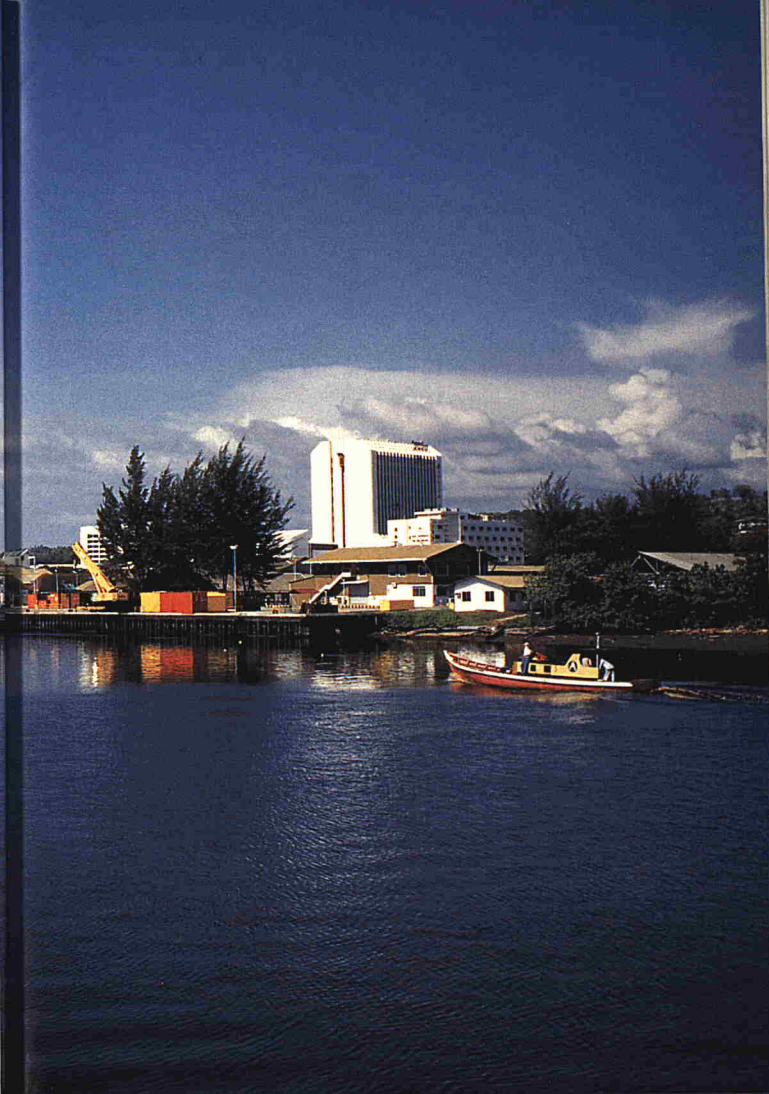
Sunsets on the beaches in Miri can easily be described as spectacularly breathtaking.

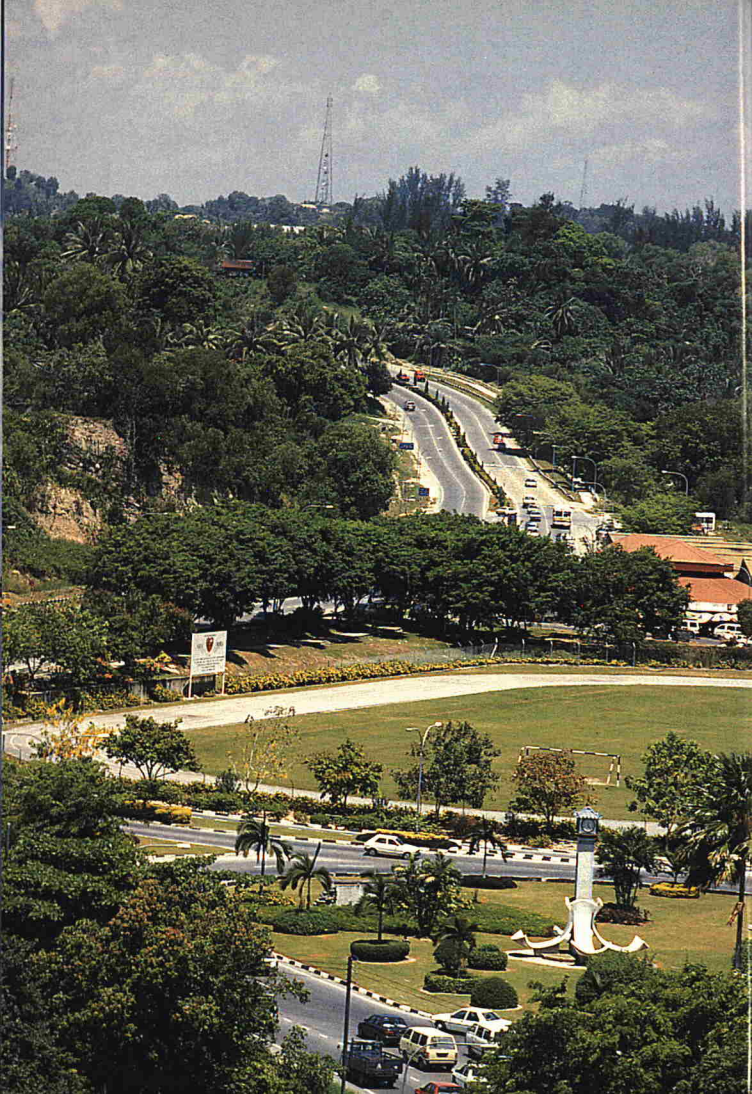
Overleaf

Miri's river-front.

Today Miri is not only populated by people of varied ethnic groups but also many foreigners of various nationalities. It is one of the most popular towns in Sarawak and her people are said to have the highest per capita income, perhaps, in the whole state.









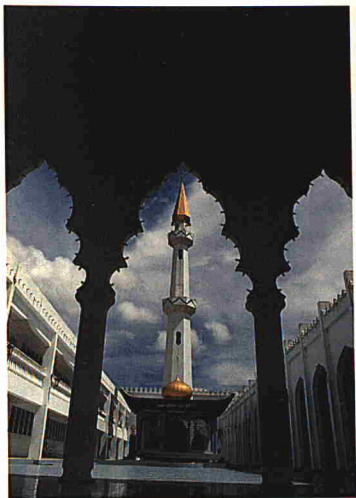
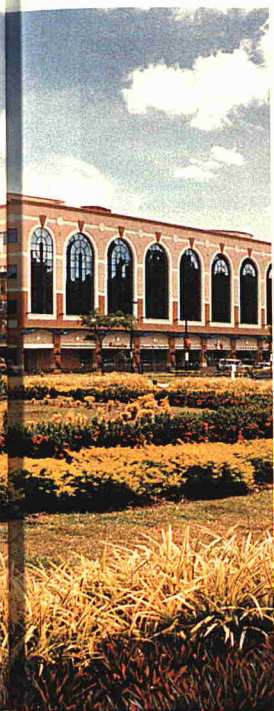
Left

The Dewan Suarah is also known as the Civic Centre. This building was officially opened on 20 June 1988. The design concept is that of the offshore platform used for oil and gas operations. This building houses an exhibition foyer, an amphitheatre and an adult's and children's library. It also has a multi-purpose hall for various State and social functions, with a seating capacity of 1,000. Many wedding parties, concerts and conferences have been held here since its opening.

Above

A road leading to the countryside of the Miri Division. The economic success and the good management by the Municipal Council of Miri have given the people well-constructed roads and community facilities.





Above

Tranquillity. Inside a Mosque. Islam is the official religion of Malaysia.

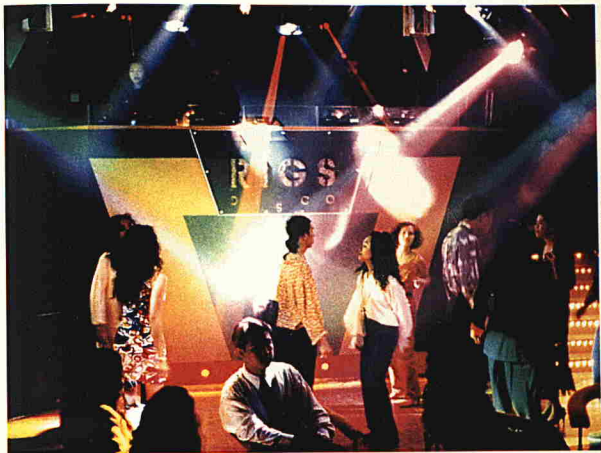
Left

The natural charm of Miri is retained even in the modernization of the town. Most of the town and surrounding areas have been beautifully landscaped.



Above

Visitors to Miri can choose to stay at any of the world-class hotels available. RIHGA Royal Hotel is one of them and is the second resort hotel built on the beachfront of the South China Sea.



Above

Nightlife at the Rigs Disco at the RIHGA Royal Hotel. Miri caters well for those who enjoy a night out on the town. The numerous bars and clubs are popular with both the locals and visitors.

Overleaf

A gathering of the various ethnic groups including Orang Ulu from all over the Miri Division in their colourful traditional dress.

Orang Ulu is a collective general term used in describing the various ethnic groups of the hilly areas. The different tribes are mainly made up of the Kelabit, Kenyah, Kayan, and the Penan.







Above

Ethnic musicians with their instruments. This picture shows a group of Iban musicians beating their long drums (Ketepong).

Right

A beaded baby carrier. The work that is put into making one of these shows the significant nurturing nature of the people towards their children and the future generations.







Above

A small part of a colourfully woven costume, which is worn for different occasions. Weaving is an important activity for the Iban tribe.

Left

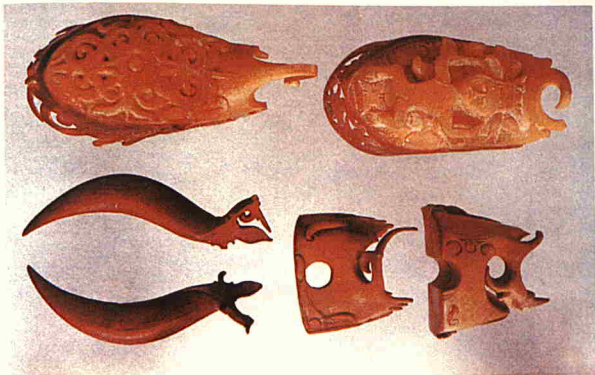
An Orang Ulu maiden in her traditional costume. The headgear and vest are made up of hundreds of colourful beads and sequins.



Above

A "warrior" in bark cloth outfit. Before other types of material for clothes were available, the indigenous ethnic people produced their own clothing.

The clothing on this warrior is made from the bark of a tree, the Ipoh (*Antiaris Toxicaria*). Other trees of which their barks are used to make clothes are Breadfruit Tree (*Artocarpus*) and the wild fig tree.



Above

Carvings such as these are usually made from Hornbill ivory. The Kenyah, Kayan and other related minority groups are said to be the most skilled decorative carvers in Sarawak.

They carved a wide variety of items, ranging from the huge burial structures, called the Kelirieng to small ear pendants.

Right

The indigenous ethnic groups tattooed their bodies for various reasons. The Iban tattooed their hands to show their bravery in war. The Orang Ulu, especially the ladies, tattooed themselves elaborately to symbolise their status in their society.

Class stratification is very evident amongst the Kenyah and Kayan communities. The classes are aristocrat (Keta'u), commoners (Panyen) and slaves (Lipen). Leaders are normally appointed from among the upper class. The majority of the two other classes are followers.





Above

One of the important activities among the Lun Bawang of Lawas District and the Kelabit of Bario, an upriver territory of the Miri Division, is salt-making. Salt was used as an important barter currency in the old days.



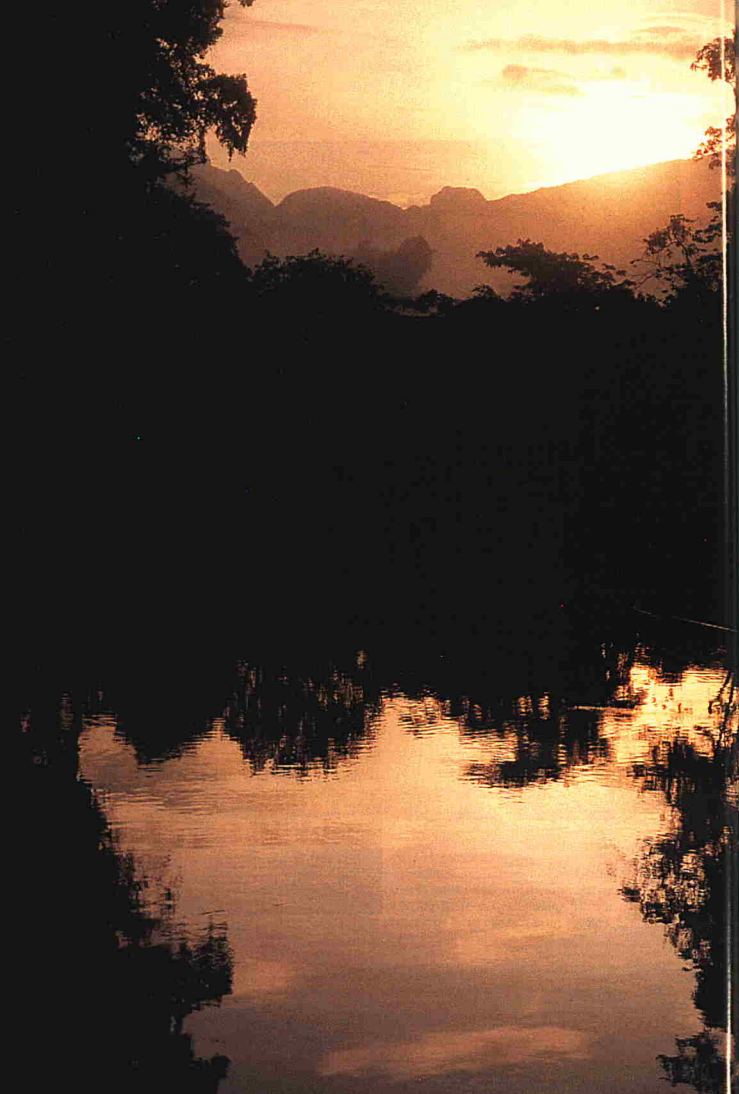
Above

The Baram Regatta was said to have started in 1897, when the Resident of Marudi of that time brought together all the warring factions for peace talks to end the bloodshed. Instead of fighting using their weapons, he suggested they compete using their war boats.

Left

This tradition has been carried down and it is now a popular sporting activity in major festivals and celebrations such as the National Day and the Governor's birthday.







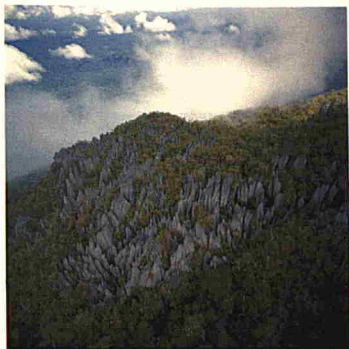
Above
River transport on the Melinau River. Daily errands are carried on boats like this one.

Left
Sunset over Mount Mulu, serene and intriguing.

Right
Below, a wire-bridge walkway, spanning the Melinau River, leading to many attractions at Mount Mulu.







Above

The razor sharp pinnacles of Mount Api, Api meaning fire, in the Mulu National Park provide a challenge to anyone who dares to ascend the 1,200 metres high mountain.

Left

The Deer cave, as the name suggested was where the deer used to frequent and ethnic hunters used to hunt them. This cave is one of the largest cave passage in the world. It has two entrances, one at either side of the mountain. The main entrance is easily accessible by a three-kilometre walkway from the Park Headquarters.

The Deer Cave can hold the St. Paul's Cathedral five times over.

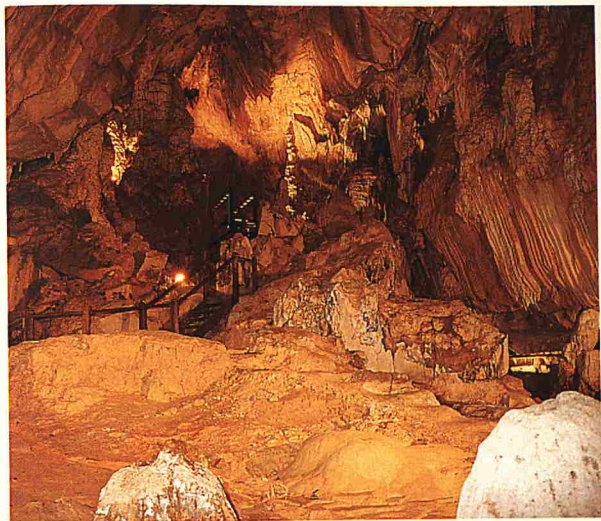
The hundreds of thousands of fret-tailed bats that live in this cave produce, from their droppings, a natural fertilizer called guano. The inhabitant-bats provide a spectacular show in the evenings at the entrance of this cave.



Above

The Mulu National Park, with its vast area of undisturbed primary forest is famous for its landscape, series of caves, diverse vegetation types and animal life.

The bats that live in the Deer Cave are the fret-tailed bat, only one of about twelve species found in the Mulu area. The flight formations of these bats can be observed in the evenings when they go in search for food. The timing, however, depends very much on the weather conditions of the day.



Above

Lang's Cave is not as large as the other show caves of Mulu and is a relatively young cave. It offers visitors a close-up view of the many magnificent formations of stalactites and stalagmites.

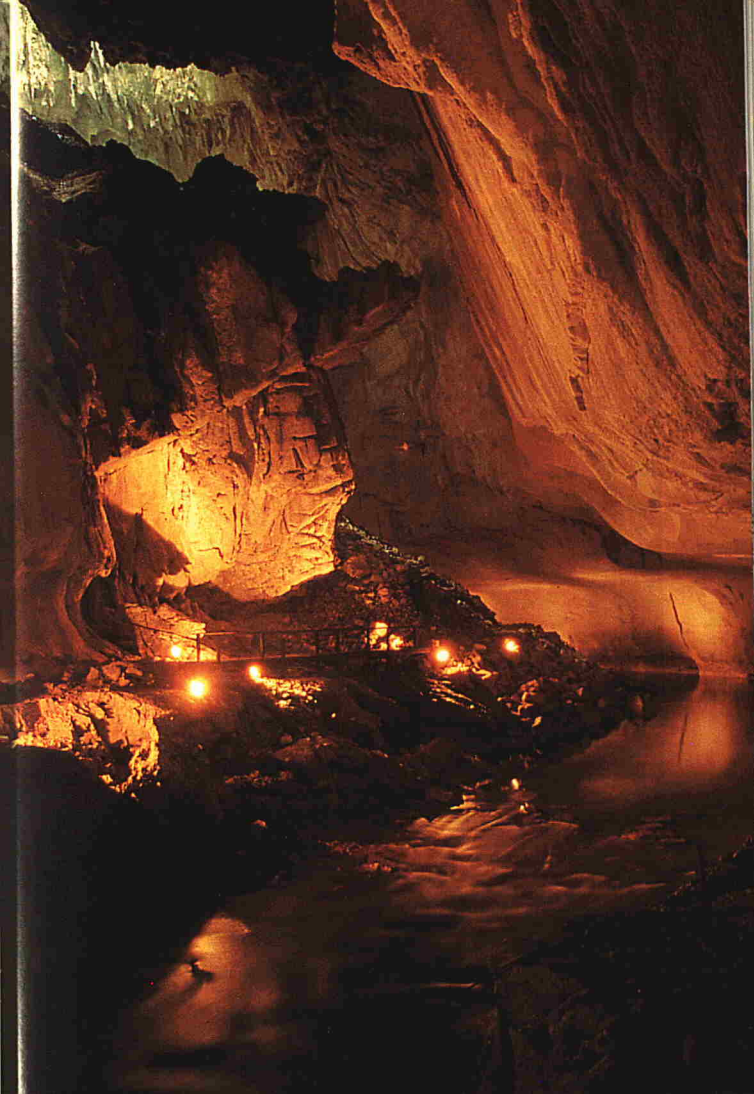


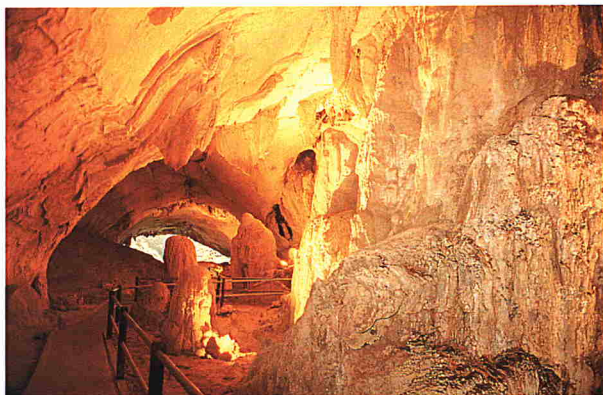
Above

Even in this remote area of Mulu, visitors can find the convenience and comforts of a modern hotel in the Royal Mulu Resort. This hotel has been designed to blend with the natural environment and much thought has been put into the development of the establishment in the effort to preserve the tranquillity and harmony of this retreat in the mountains.

Right

The Clearwater Cave has the longest underground water passage in South East Asia. It is approximately 115 kilometres long and incorporates an underground river system.







Above

The twin peaks of Batu Lawi near Bario. These peaks are of legendary significance to the Kelabit people who inhabit the area.

Left, above

The entrance to the Lang's Cave with the walkway and overhead protective screen to prevent damage to the formations.

Left, below

Lady's Cave is within the Clearwater Cave and this cave has formations that resembles various figures including one of "Our Lady" in meditation.



Above

A present-day longhouse. Most of the Orang Ulu, even today, still live in longhouses, especially the Kenyah and Kayan who reside along the Baram River. A traditional longhouse is divided into a few portions, namely the verandah, room proper, open space and the kitchen.

Left

Not much has changed from a longhouse of the old days.

Right

Interestingly, the verandah is a multi-functional area. Besides being the communal passageway, it is also a meeting and working place for sedentary activities.





Left, above

The Kelabit are known for their wet padi cultivation. They produce Bario rice, which is not only their staple food but is also said to be a way to measure their wealth and prestige. The transplanting of rice seedlings takes place at the beginning of the wet season.



Left, below

Here, the rice is being harvested.

Right

The blowpipe is among the finest product of the Orang Ulu. In the past, though, most of them used it for hunting wild game. Today, however, it is mostly associated with the Penans.







Above

Beads form part of the traditional symbols of social status and wealth among the Orang Ulu. They were used as a form of currency and as bride-wealth and grave-goods to the aristocratic family.

Right

The maiden on the right is from the Kayan ethnic group. From a young age the women wear progressively heavier brass earrings. This ultimately elongates their ear-lobes which is associated with beauty.

Left

The megaliths include massive dolmens, menhirs, urns and relief rock carvings which are found in the Kelabit Highlands. These megaliths are believed to be associated with funeral rituals of important persons.

This megalith is approximately two metres in height.







Above

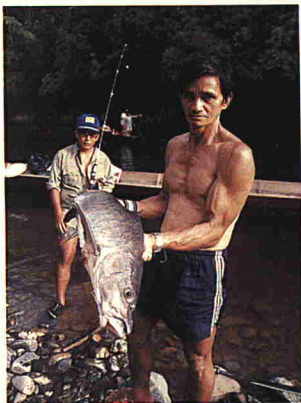
The rapids at Akah Territory, Ulu Baram. A challenging but dangerous waterway which requires tremendous skill and courage to navigate.

Right

Big catch on the river. Around these rivers, lush rainforests cover 75 per cent of Sarawak's total area.

Left

Mother and child of a Kenyah community in the Lio Matoh Territory. The child is carried in a beaded carrier.





Above

Aerial view of Marudi Town. This is the last outpost before reaching the Mulu National Park. Marudi was previously known as Claude Town named after the Resident, Claude Champion de Crespigny. He was the first to record the presence of oil in Sarawak, logged in his diary on 3 July 1882.

Right, above

Marudi wharf. A popular transit for express boat passengers to the upriver destinations and Kuala Baram.

Right, below

River transport on the Melinau River.





Above

This fort was built at the initiative of Resident Charles Hose in 1883. Initially, it was meant to control rebellion as well as for defence purposes. This was the place where law and order began in Marudi.

Right

A typically pleasant mix of the traditional and modern in the Miri Division.







Above

Colourful hawker-ware at the Kuala Baram ferry point. Hawkers are a common sight and offer the most delightful array of ornaments and crafts.

Left

Ladies in beautiful costumes during festivities and national celebrations are common in the Miri Division. Almost all events are held in the centre of town at the Padang. Miri's charm lies in its potpourri of ethnic groups, culture, dialects and languages.

Overleaf

An aerial view of the river tributaries amidst the jungle of the Baram.







Above

A Waglers Viper, an example of the rich animal life.

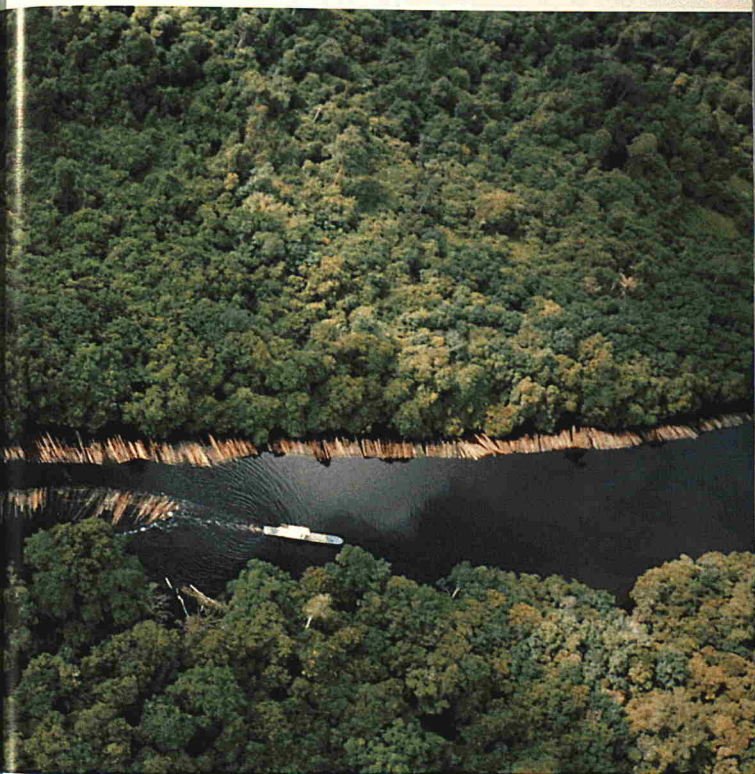
Right

Aerial view of logs floating down the river to the sawmills on the Baram River. Timber is an important source of income for the Miri Division.

Overleaf

An aerial view of the Sarawak Shell Petroleum Company's workers' quarters, with the Piasau Bridge in foreground.













Above

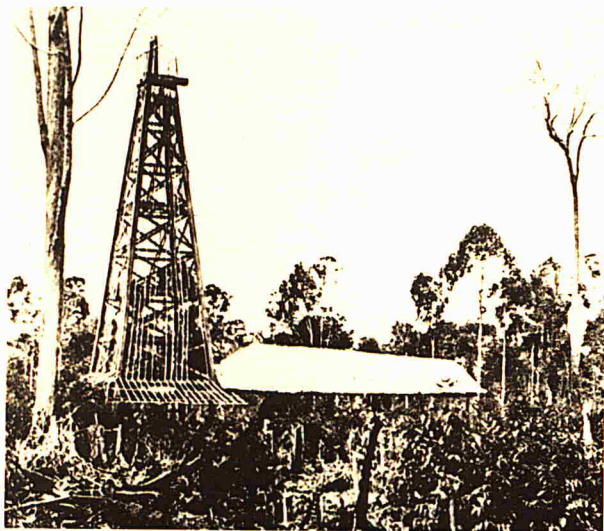
Lutong was famous for its floods, usually in the monsoon season from November to February. Houses in Lutong were built on stilts to provide protection from the rising waters. This picture was taken in the early 1960s.

Left, above

The Lutong Recreation Club.

Left, below

Shell staff relaxing inside the Lutong Recreation Club, taken in the early 1950s. Life for expatriate staff of Shell in the early days revolved around sports and social clubs such as the Miri Recreation Club, the Gymkhana Club and the Miri Club.



Above

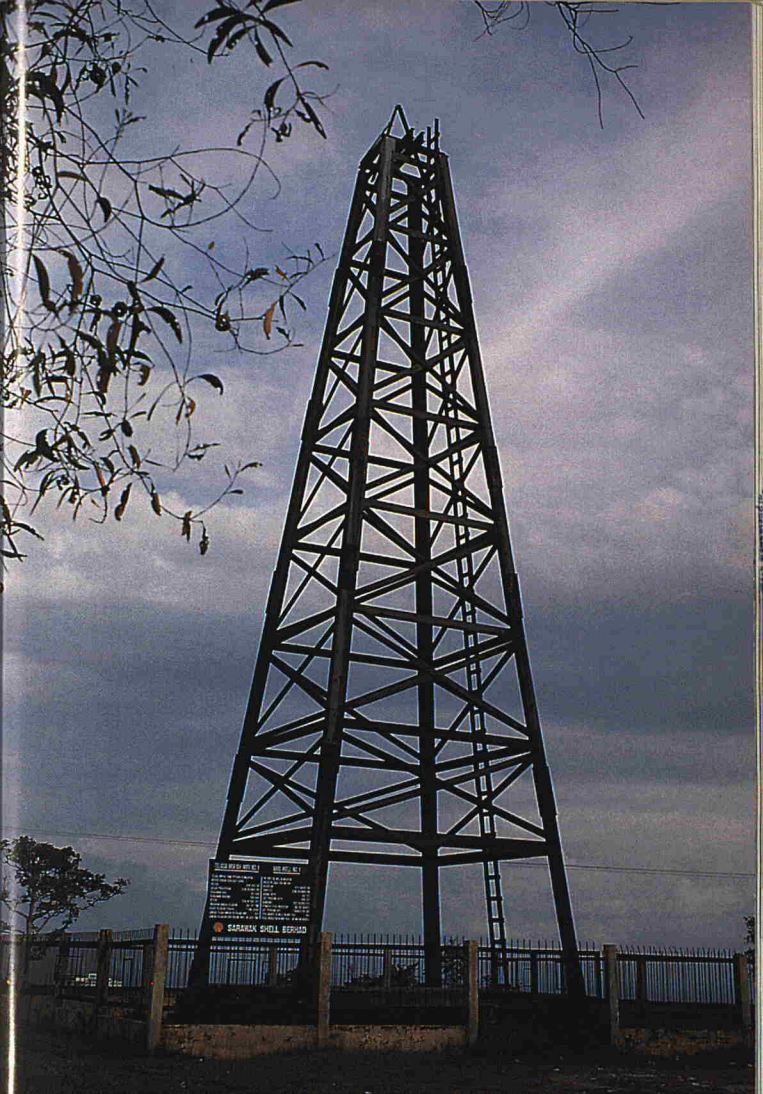
History of the Petroleum Industry has to include the "Grand Old Lady" of Miri. It is the first oil well, opened on 22 December 1910. Also known as Oil Well Number 1, Miri is also commonly known as the Oil Town.

Right

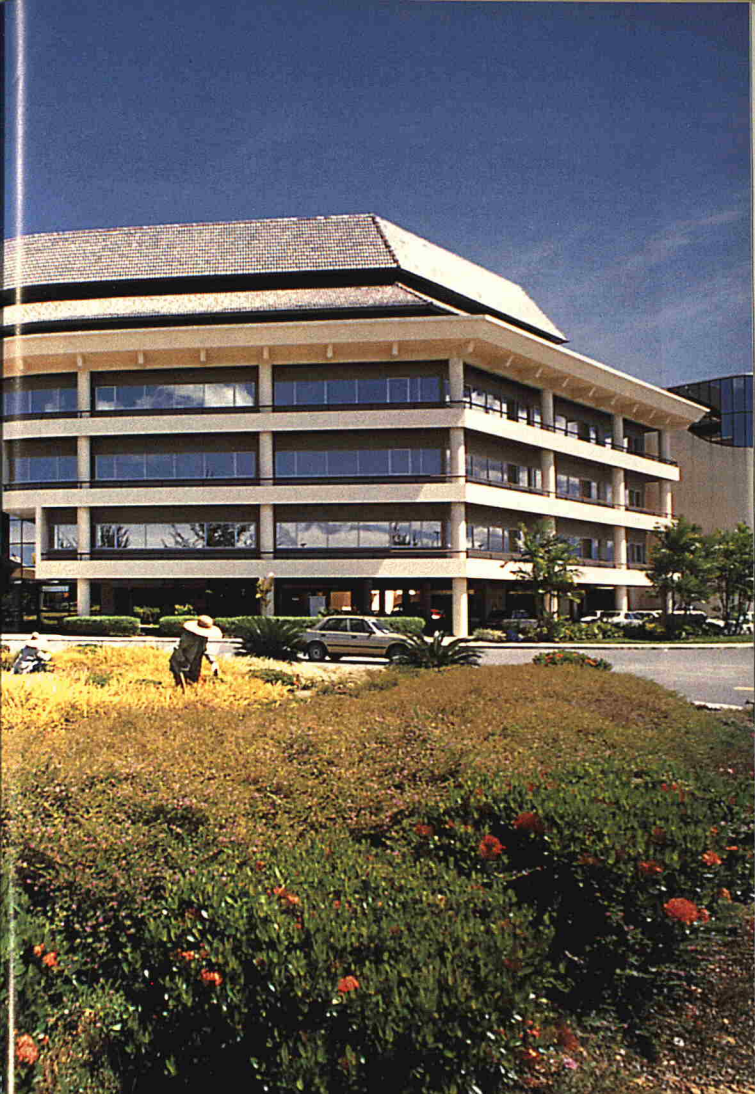
The "Grand Old Lady" as she proudly stands today on top of Canada Hill. The hill was so named because the drillers were Canadians.

Overleaf

The new Shell Headquarters in Lutong. One of the many beautifully designed buildings in Miri.







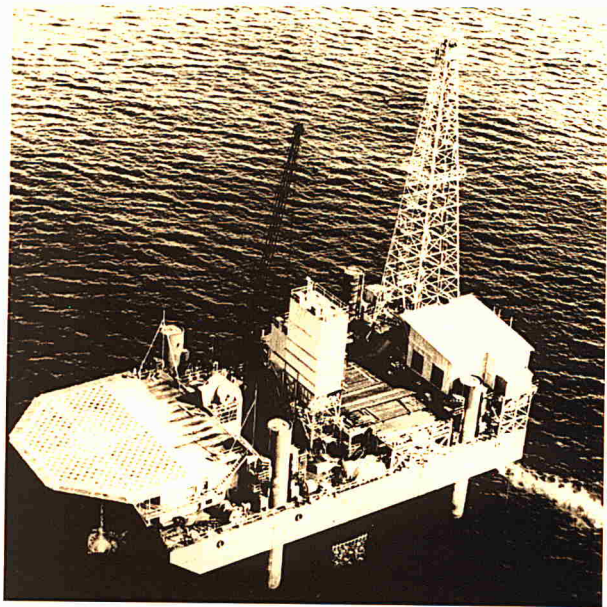




Above
Shell personnel coming home on the ferry in the 1990s.

Left, above
Shell personnel on the slipway in the old days. They were made up of mainly locals and foreigners from Singapore, India and Hong Kong.

Left, below
Lutong Beach. The hovercraft was used to transport the personnel from the off-shore production platforms to Lutong.



Above

This photograph was taken in the earlier years of oil exploration in Miri. The Orient Explorer was one of the first mobile drilling rigs to be used in Sarawak waters. It was later found that the sea bed was too soft for this rig. A floating rig, The Sidewinder, later joined the Orient Explorer.

Right

An offshore oil production complex, with its own helicopter landing pad. Platforms like these are self-contained.





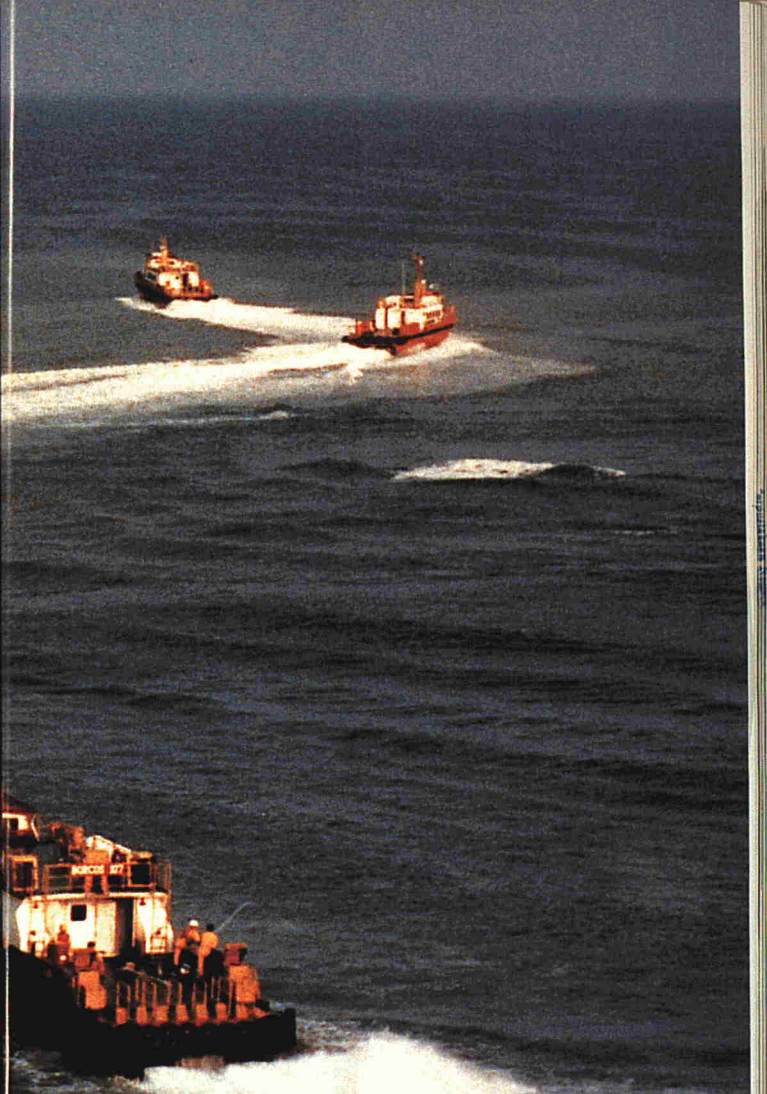


Above
The refinery in the 1920s.

Left
A oil storage tank farm at Lutong refinery.

Overleaf
Vessels at the mouth of the Miri River, making a bee-line across the sand-bars for the open sea during high tide.







Above

Young oil palm. While oil from the ground has contributed to Miri's wealth, oil from another source, the oil palm, has also contributed significantly to Miri's economy.



Above

This tractor has just collected the harvested oil palm seeds, which are left by the road-side by the harvesters. The seeds are then taken to the Fresh Fruit Branch (FFB) Refinery for processing.



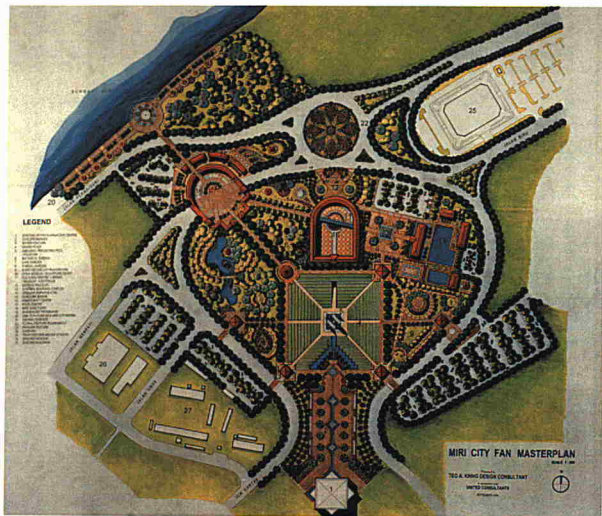


Above

The tropical swimming pool of the Holiday Inn Miri, located on the beach-front.

Left

Sandy beaches along the South China Sea coast. Flaming sunsets, gentle lapping waves and soothing breezes contribute to a relaxing and peaceful environment.



Miri's vision for the future is to be an international resort city by the year 2005. The masterplan for this vision is for the development of the town's infrastructure, hotel and recreational industries and its continual promotion as a tourist destination.

From its roots as an "oil-town", the transformation of Miri to a resort city has been phenomenal. The city planners have successfully implemented a massive beautification of the town with the upgrading of roads and pathways which have been aesthetically lined with trees and floral shrubbery.

Developments include major international hotels with banquet and convention facilities, commercial shopping centres, and entertainment complexes for recreational, as well as cultural events.

In addition to the resort facilities, the natural attractions of the caves, national parks and cultural heritage have been actively promoted. Accessibility to the remote areas of the Miri Division, where these attractions are, has been improved.

Together with these developments, training and education programmes geared towards the tourism and hospitality industries have been implemented. Participation in these programmes has led to the increased awareness of Miri's vision towards a resort city.

The realization of this vision has been possible with the strong State leadership and the willingness of the private sector to invest in the long-term prosperity of Miri.



Above
The proposed Samling Towers.

Left
The Miri City Fan Masterplan.

Right
A model of the proposed Marina Park.





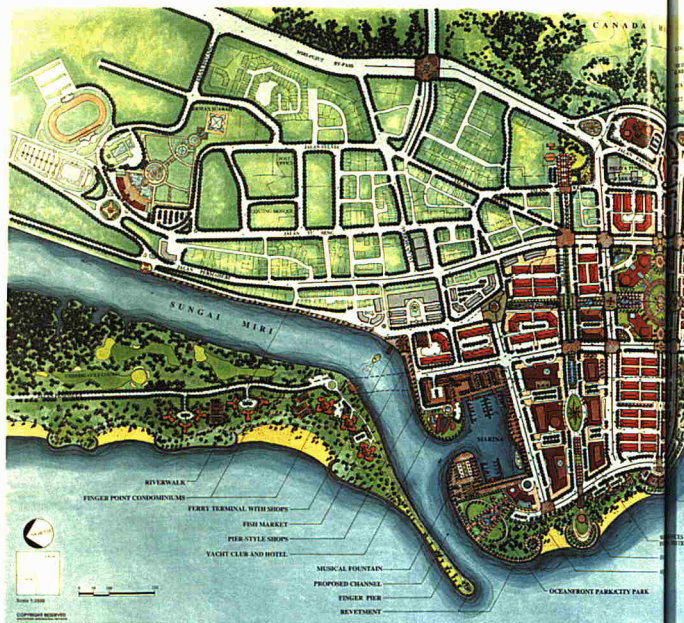


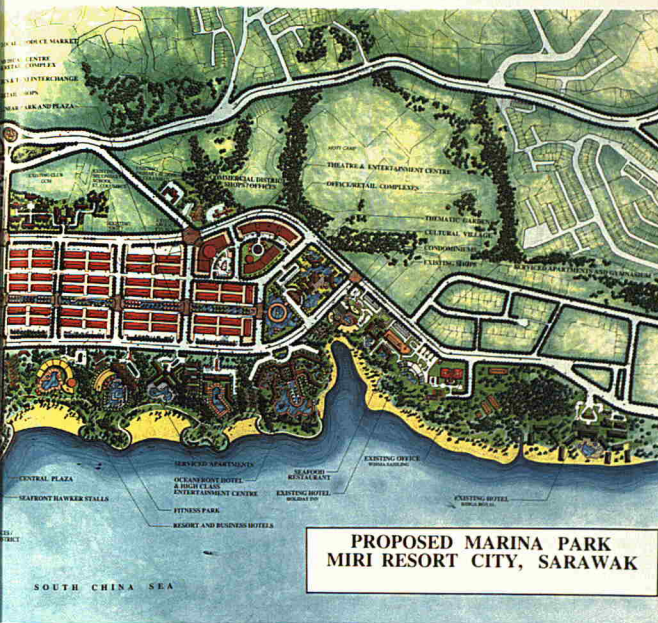
Above

A night scene of the Dewan Suarrah or the Civic Centre.

Left

The Chief Minister and the Minister for Finance and Public Utilities being shown the plans for the future of Miri by the Architect.





Above

The proposed Marina Park for Miri as a "Resort City".

Overleaf

Miri New Town area.







Above

A typical street scene in Miri town.

Right

The Petronas Carigali office in Lutong. Petronas is the national oil company of Malaysia.

Overleaf

The beautiful and serene Miri Golf Club, an exclusive and world-class club.













Above

Bank Utama, the local Bank, one of the more unusual buildings in town.

Left

Holiday Inn Miri, one of the international chain of hotels that visitors can choose to stay with. This is the first resort hotel on the scenic beach-front of the South China Sea.



Above

Grand Palace Hotel, one of the newer local hotels in Miri.

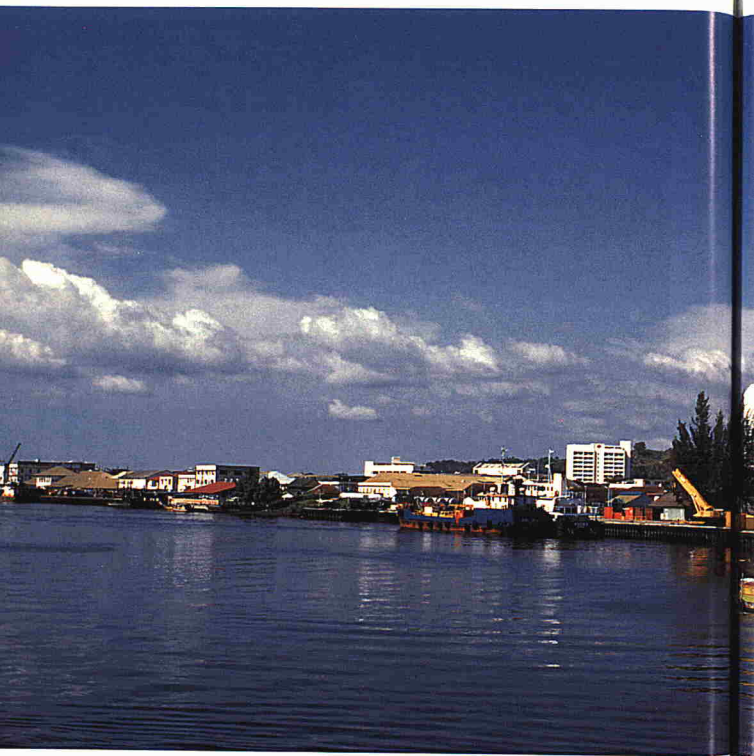
Right, above

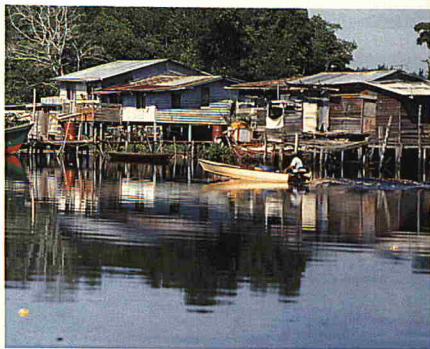
Another of the many local hotels, the Dynasty Hotel.

Right, below

The Pacific Orient Hotel, formerly the Fatima Hotel, conveniently located in the centre of town.







Above

A kampung scene, from across the Miri River. The comfortable existence between old and new is not uncommon in Miri.

Left

Miri's waterfront, showing the older section of the town, which includes the Pelita Building, the Miri wharf area and market.



Above
Canada Hill, a beautiful park with a great overall view of Miri.

Right
One of the developments for the community, the Municipal Swimming Pool.







Above

Family day near the beach at Taman Selera which translates as Appetising Garden.

As the name suggests, this is a beach-front open air eating place, serving local cuisine and seafood. Next to this food place is a recreational park with roller skating rinks and playgrounds.



Above
Wind surfers enjoying their sport at the beach-front
of the Miri Boat Club, Piasau.





Above

The charms of a kampung on the river-front.

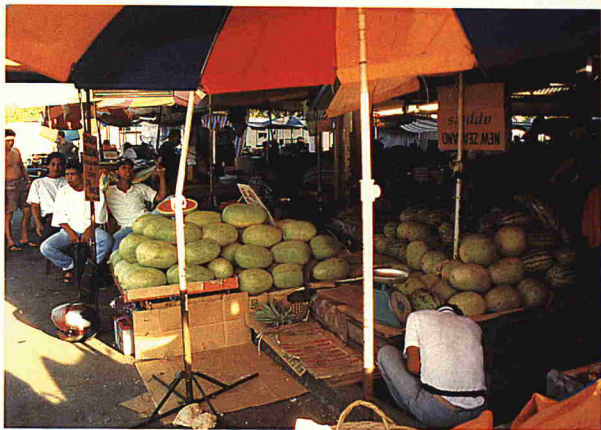
Left

A cluster of mangrove trees by the bank of the Miri River.



Above

A "Tamu" market where fresh vegetables, fruits and jungle produce are sold by the ethnic people who bring their products from upcountry.

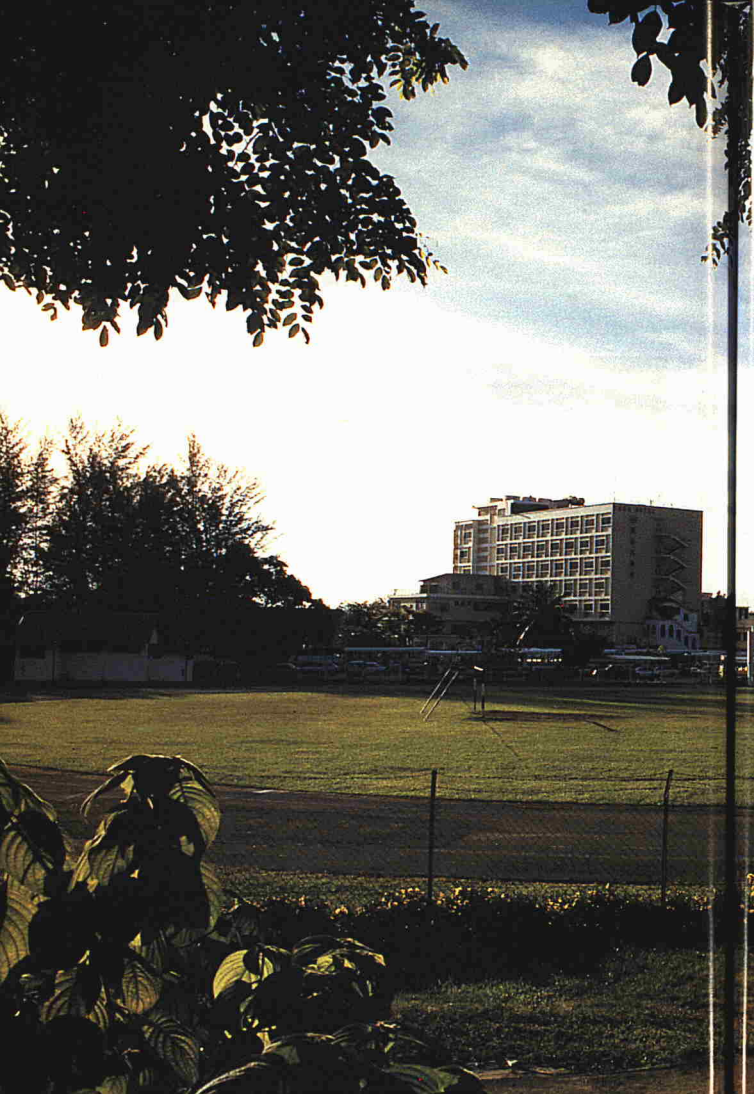


Above

This stall is selling mainly local produce, but also has imported fruits.

Overleaf

Overlooking the Municipal Council's sports field where many sports and cultural events are held, is the Park Hotel and Wisma Pelita Tunku.









Above

A fish sculpture at Bulatan Park. This park boasts a fountain, a clock tower, a man-made lake complete with artificial rock formations and walking and jogging tracks along its beautifully landscaped gardens.

Left

Bulatan Park or Roundabout Park near the town centre. This park is popular with the locals for their relaxation. Events such as performances by local bands are held here.



Above

Luak Bay. This is a favourite picnic spot for the locals. The rugged rock face is quite an unusual feature.



Above
A sea stack as viewed through an arch at Tanjung
Lobang.

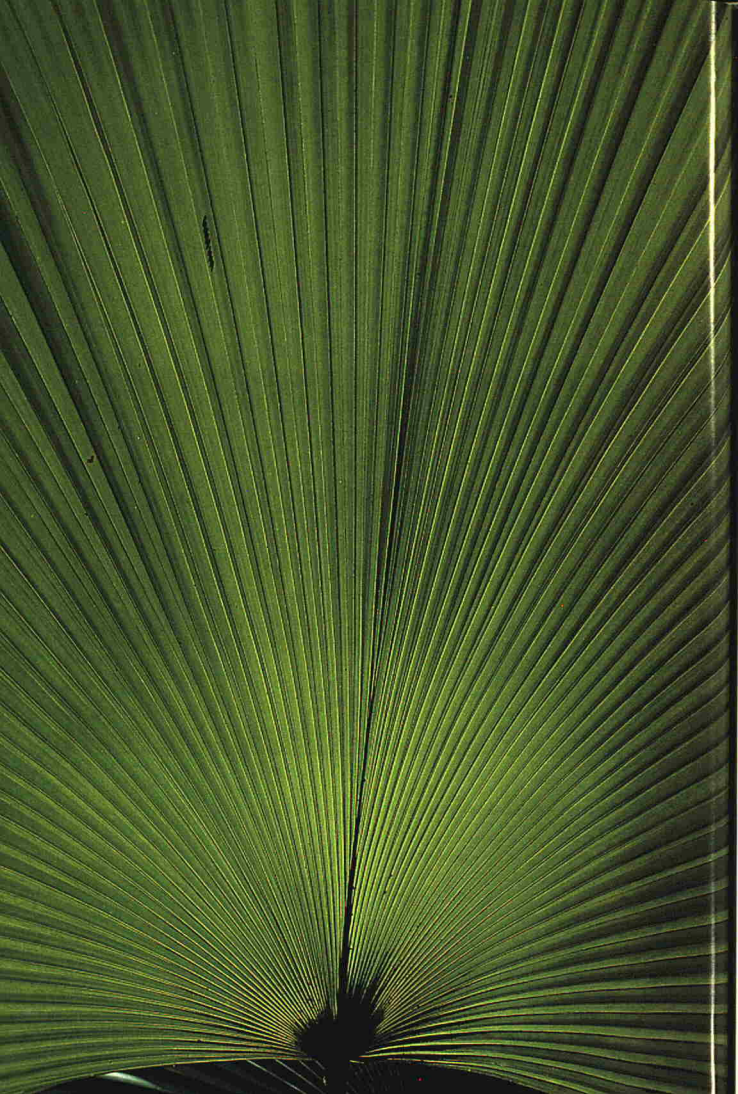


Above

Catching shrimp at the shallow waters along the coast of Miri. This activity is usually carried out during the dry season. The shrimp is used for making belachan, or prawn paste, which is popular in Sarawak.



Above
Sunset at the Matahari Poolside at the RIHGA Royal
Hotel.





Above

There are animals and insects which camouflage themselves in their surrounding vegetation and colour. This is the Phasmid Leaf Insect.

Left

The Matang Fan Palm. These palms are plentiful in the Lambir National Park.

Overleaf

Along the Bakam River, next to Hawaii Beach.







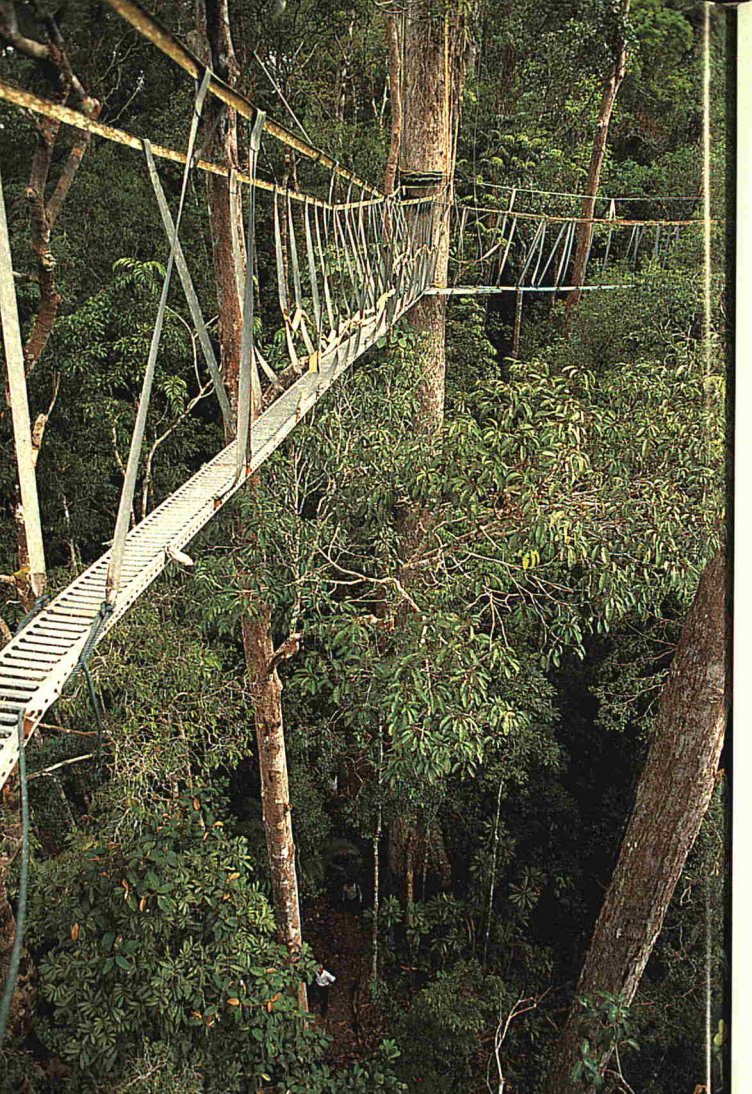


Above

An interesting example of the variety of vegetation found in the park. This branch, partly covered by moss, has no leaves except one fruit.

Left

Lambir Hills National Park with its chain of steep sandstone hills has one of the richest varieties of forest plants, many waterfalls, wildlife and flora.





Above

The high humidity of the tropics creates interesting features such as these fungi growing on a tree.

Left

An aerial bridge across the canopy of trees in the vast forestation of the Lambir Hills National Park. The canopy walk is up to 200 feet above ground level in certain sections.



Above

A typical wire bridge crossing a river at the Lambir Hills National Park.

Right

Waterfall scene. The visitors having a swim in the invigorating waters.

Overleaf

A master of disguise, the Chameleon.









Above

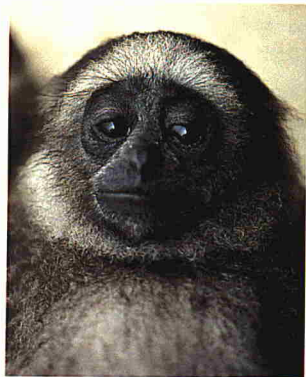
Varieties of butterflies. These beautiful fluttering creatures flirt with every visitor as if to welcome them to their paradise. These are the Birdwing Rajah Brooke.

Left

The forest may be peaceful but the silence is often broken by the distant calls of the gibbons.

Right

Two different species of the Hornbill. This magnificent bird is used on many carvings, woven material and the State emblem.







Above

Niah National Park. This park is famous world-wide for the oldest human remains in South-East Asia, which were excavated by archaeologists in the 1950s.



Above

This is the park's headquarters from where the park is administered. Permits are required for visitors and can be obtained here.



Above

A Viscount butterfly.

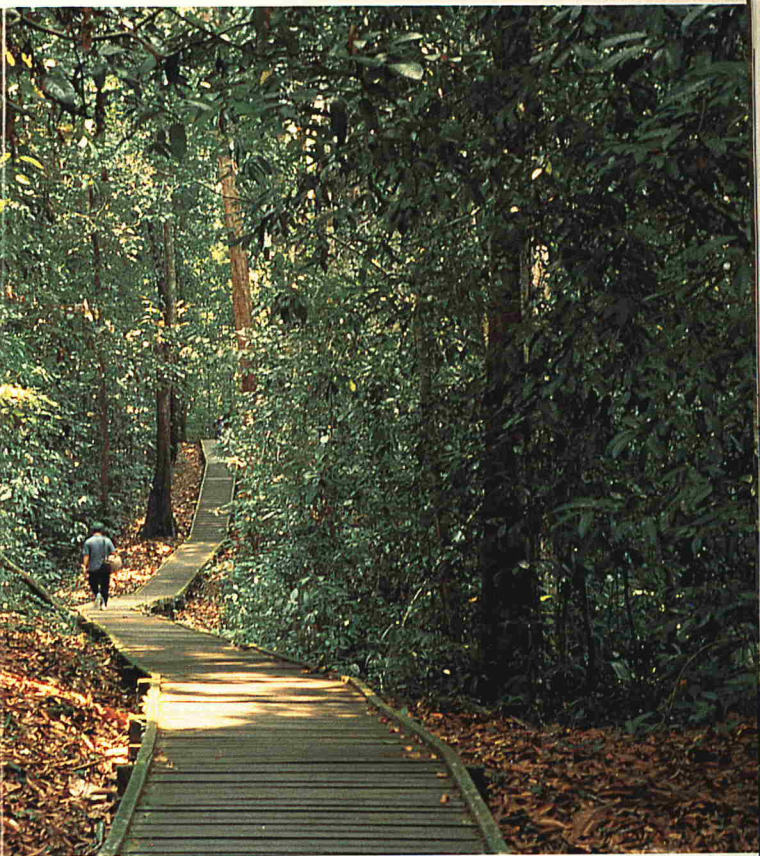
Right

The caves are accessible by a 45-minute walk along a three kilometre wooded path. The West Mouth is one of the most important archaeological cave sites ever found in South East Asia. The wide range of artifacts found in it included stone tools of the Palaeolithic period (Old Stone Age) to that of the more refined quadrangular adzes of the Neolithic period (New Stone Age).

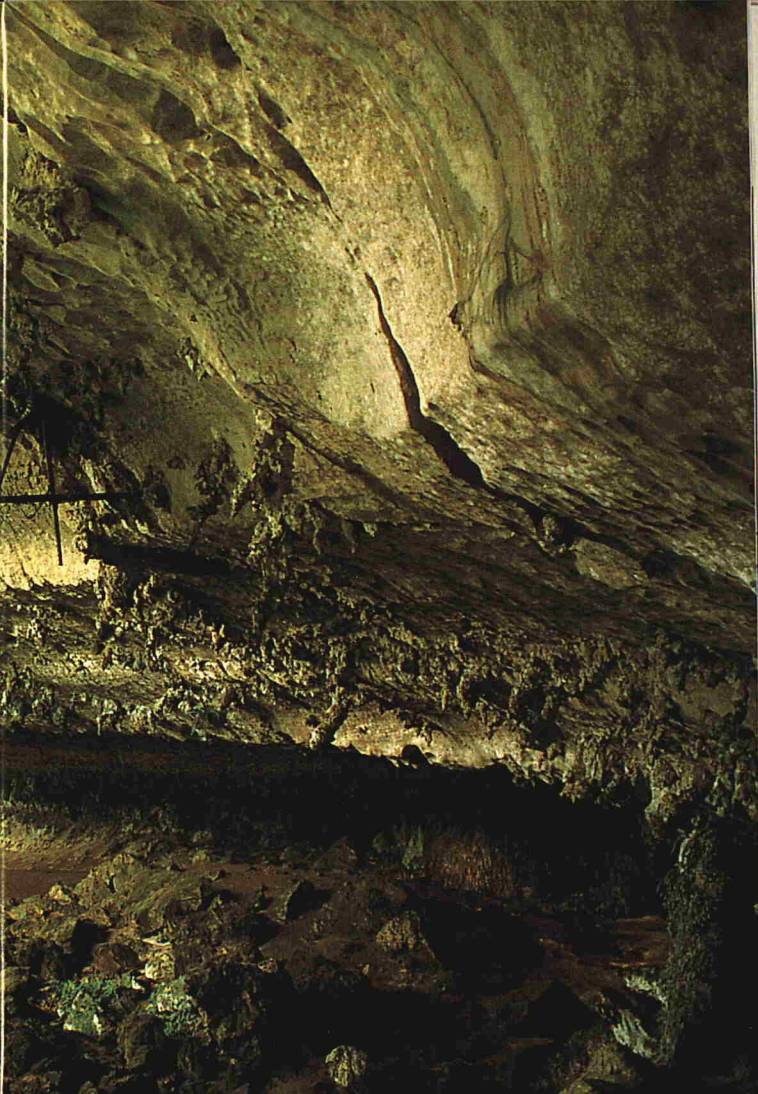
Overleaf

This is the Traders' Cave where wooden structures of Belian (Ironwood) were erected by the traders of guano and birds' nests, for shelter. These structures could be over one hundred years old. They are still being used today. Visitors pass through this cave first before reaching the Great Niah Cave.













Above

Birds' nests from the Great Niah Cave. This famous Asian delicacy is retrieved from the ceiling of the cave, which is up to 300 feet high. Belian (Ironwood) poles are erected in the cave, and the gatherers scale these poles to collect the birds' nests. The collection of this precious commodity is strictly regulated by the State authorities to prevent over-harvesting.

Left

West Mouth of the Great Niah Cave. The huts are a staging post used by researchers and park wardens.

Early men were believed to have lived in this cave about 40,000 years ago. Evidence shows that they were food gatherers and hunters who lived in small groups and already knew how to make fire, produced by striking quartz pebbles with the resulting sparks directed at resin.



Above

Fragments of skull were found at the depth of about 96 inches. This was later reconstructed and dated by experts to be about 39,000 years old. The skull is said to be one of the earliest definite representatives of Homo Sapiens ever found in South East Asia.



Above

A wall painting of about 200 feet long was found in the Painted Cave, next to the Niah Great Cave. It is painted in both bold and thin strokes and depicts an array of boats and spread-eagle dancing human figures.

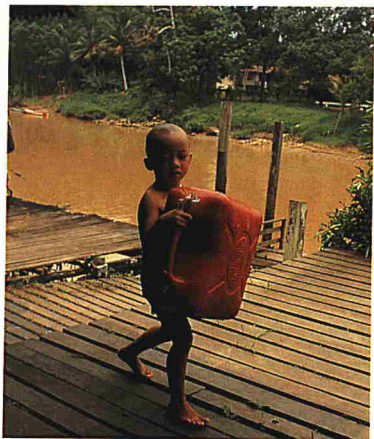
Also found in this cave were "death ships", Chinese stoneware and ancient glass beads. The "death ships" are burial vessels.



Above & left
Portions of rare prehistoric wall paintings.

Right
A Pitcher plant found in this area. These plants are actually carnivorous and they trap insects at the bottom of their cups. These plants then digest the insects trapped and absorb the nutrients into their system.





Above

On a jetty, the friendly and helpful nature of the locals shows. Everyone pitches in to help, including little ones, like this boy here.

Right

A guano collection centre along the banks of the Sungei Niah. Guano is a mixture of bat and bird droppings and is used as a natural fertilizer.









Above

A Lantern bug. Visitors can encounter some of these fascinating and colourful insects.

Left

A climbing vine. Some of these trees look like they have been there since the beginning of time.





Above

A forest owl. As evening falls, the hoots of these nocturnal birds of prey compete with that of the gibbons and other creatures.

Left

Pathway leading to the West Mouth of the Great Niah Cave.

Overleaf

Morning mist over the mountains.







Above

One of the many interesting buildings around town. This one is the Che Sing Khor Moral Uplifting Society.

Right

A typical street scene around the older section of Miri Town.

Overleaf

In this picture, fishermen catching prawns and fish with their cast nets called "jala" in the Miri River.

During shrimp season, men, women and even children join in catching the shrimp right off the surface of the water in the sea.













Above

A row of shophouses in the town area.

Left

The Court House, and at the far end, the Resident and District Office, situated in the town centre.



Above

The Miri waterfront is always busy with the passage of ships and studies are being conducted to relocate the port.

Right, above

A home built on stilts at Kampung Pulau Melayu. This is typical of homes in a kampung as these are usually along river banks which is subject to the rising waters associated with the tides and is also prone to flooding.

Right, below

The Government Rest House, which is usually available to all Senior Government Officials.

Overleaf

Miri Town in the evening, full of magical colours.









Above

Aerial view of Miri Town and the surrounding area showing the outward spread of the town limits.