

# Hassanal Bolkiah

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**Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah**, the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, GCB GCMG (born July 15, 1946) is

## Hassanal Bolkiah

*Sultan of Brunei*



<b>Coronation</b>	01 August 1968
<b>Titles</b>	Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Prime Minister of Brunei
<b>Predecessor</b>	Omar Ali Saifuddien III
<b>Heir-Apparent</b>	Al-Muhtadee Billah
<b>Wives</b>	Pengiran Anak Saleha Pengiran Isteri Mariam Azrinaz Mazhar Hakim
<b>Issue</b>	Al-Muhtadee Billah Azim 'Abdul Malik Abdul Mateen 'Abdul Wakeel Rashidah Muta-Wakkilah Majeedah Hafizah 'Azemah Fadzilah Ameerah
<b>Royal House</b>	House of Bolkiah

the 29th Sultan of Brunei, the eldest son of Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III, the previous Sultan of Brunei, and Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Damit.

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## Personal wealth

The Sultan has a sizable private fortune derived from his total control over the national economy's finances and the appropriation of the state's sizeable oil revenues to bankroll his extravagant lifestyle. The Sultan's fortunes, in line with oil prices, have fluctuated since an estimated high of \$55.63 billion in 1997, which made him the richest man in the world at the time. In the 2008 Forbes list of the 100 wealthiest people, he appears at no. 16, with an estimated net worth of \$23.1 billion.<sup>[1]</sup>

## Marriage and children

The Sultan currently has two wives, with Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha being designated his first wife. His former second wife, Pengiran Isteri Hajah Mariam, was a former Singapore Airlines flight attendant whom he divorced in 2003, stripping her of all her royal titles. In August 2005 her place was taken by a former Malaysian TV3 presenter, Azrinaz Mazhar Hakim, who is 33 years younger than the Sultan.

Prince Al-Muhtadee Billah is the crown prince and the Sultan's heir, the eldest son of the Sultan and Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha, his first wife. As of 2008, Hassanal Bolkiah has five sons and seven daughters with his three wives<sup>[2]</sup>.

- By *HM* Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha:
  - HRH Princess Rashidah (born 26 July 1969)
  - HRH Princess Muta-Wakkilah (born 12 October 1971)
  - HRH Crown Prince Al-Muhtadee Billah (born 17 February 1974)
  - HRH Princess Majeedah (born 16 March 1976)
  - HRH Princess Hafizah (born 12 March 1980)
  - HRH Prince 'Abdul Malik (born 30 June 1983)
- By *HRH* Pengiran Isteri Mariam:
  - HRH Prince 'Abdul 'Azim (born 29 July 1982)
  - HRH Princess 'Azemah (born 26 September 1984)
  - HRH Princess Fadzillah (born 23 August 1985)
  - HRH Prince 'Abdul Mateen (born 10 August 1991)
- By *HRH* Pengiran Isteri Azrinaz Mazhar
  - HRH Prince 'Abdul Wakeel (born 1 June 2006)
  - HRH Princess Ameerah Wardatul Bolkiah (born 28 January 2008)

## Political role as Sultan

*For further information on the politics of Brunei see the article, Politics of Brunei.* Under Brunei's 1959 constitution, the Sultan is the head of state with full executive authority, including emergency powers since 1962. On March 9, 2006, the Sultan was reported to have changed Brunei's constitution to make himself infallible under Bruneian law.<sup>[3]</sup> Bolkiah is also the Prime Minister of Brunei, as well as holding the portfolios of Defence and Finance.

He addressed the United States of America, Iraqi Nations, and United Nations General Assembly on Brunei Darussalam's admission to the United Nations in September, 1984. In 1991, he introduced a conservative ideology to Brunei called Melayu Islam Beraja (MIB) (or Malay Islamic Monarchy), which presents the monarchy as the defender of the faith.<sup>[4]</sup> He has recently favoured partial democratisation. In 2004, the Legislative Council, which had been dissolved since 1962, was reopened.<sup>[5]</sup>

His designated successor is his eldest son, Al-Muhtadee Billah.

## Early years and education

He was born on July 15, 1946 in Brunei Town (now called Bandar Seri Begawan). He became crown prince in 1961 and sultan on October 5, 1967, after his father abdicated voluntarily. His coronation was held on August 1, 1968. Like his father, he has been knighted by Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom, of which Brunei was a protectorate until 1984.

The Sultan received high school education in Malaysia's premier school Victoria Institution in Kuala Lumpur, where he joined the Cadet Corps (Band). After receiving a private education in Brunei, the Sultan graduated from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in October 1967, and has since received an honorary doctorate from a Russian university.

In 2003, received Honorary Doctorate Degree in Humanities and Culture by the Gadjah Mada University, UGM, Yogyakarta, Republic of Indonesia.[2] On the January 27, 2005, the Sultan was awarded and made an Honorary Doctor of Laws by the National University of Singapore.[3]

## Motor cars

The Sultan is famous for his vast automobile collection. In 1998, the British car magazine *Autocar* published undercover photographs of the Sultan's cars, which included unique modifications of Ferraris and Bentleys. It has been said that he has at least 3,000 to 5,000 cars and has bought over U.S.\$4 billion worth of cars. The number purchased by his business interests and the number actually used by himself and his family differ greatly. According to *Guinness World Records* the Sultan's personal private collection has 500 Rolls-Royces — the largest collection of that marque in the world. During the 1990s, his family accounted for almost half of all Rolls-Royce purchases, bulk buying slightly modified vehicles for diplomats and adding unique cars to their own collection. He also owns the very last Rolls-Royce Phantom VI, a 1992 state landaulette.

Among his collection are the Porsche Carrera GT, Lamborghini Diablo Jota, Porsche 959, Bugatti EB110, Lamborghini Murcielago LP640, Maybach 62, Jaguar XJR-15 and six Dauer 962's. He is also the owner of six models of the Ferrari FX, the original red show model of the Bentley Continental R, two fully operational versions of the Ferrari Mythos concept car, both of the Ferrari 456 GT Sedans, the only Right hand drive Mercedes-Benz CLK-GTR in the world, five McLaren F1's including both black LM models and three Cizeta-Moroder V16T cars. He also possesses a Formula One car as driven by every Formula 1 World Drivers Champion since the 1980 Formula One season, particularly the ones driven in the last race for each season. A prime example of this is Jacques Villeneuve's Williams FW19 which still bears the collision damage courtesy of Michael Schumacher in the 1997 European Grand Prix.

He has a special interest in buying one-of-a-kind concept cars, including the Bentley Java and Bentley Dominator 4x4, whilst leaving slightly more common race cars such as the Aston Martin AM3 or the modified Mercedes-Benz 300SL to his brother Jefri. The collection of vehicles was for the most part stored and serviced in five aircraft hangars, where specialist teams from the various manufacturers would maintain the collection.

The Daily Mirror (UK) reported on October 26, 2007 that the Sultan owned 531 Mercedes Benzs, 367 Ferraris, 362 Bentleys, 185 BMWs, 177 Jaguars, 160 Porsches, 130 Rolls-Royces, and 20 Lamborghinis .

## Other concerns

For personal use, the sultan has a Boeing 747-400 furnished with gold plated furniture with an estimated value of \$233 million including \$3 million on furniture, six smaller planes and two helicopters. He is trained to pilot the aircraft.

He also operates a \$3 billion theme park called Jerudong Park, which in the past used to be free of charge.

Despite his personal extravagance, he has attempted to share the country's oil wealth. In a country mockingly dubbed the "Shellfare State" (in reference to the significant influence of the Shell Oil Company), Bruneians have free education and medical services. There is no personal or corporation tax in Brunei.

His official residence is the Istana Nurul Iman, with 1,788 rooms, 257 bathrooms, and a floor area of 2,152,782 square feet (200,000 m<sup>2</sup>), undisputedly the world's largest palace.

# Family feud

In February 2006 the sultan's legal feud with his brother, Prince Jefri Bolkiah (in the media known as the "Playboy Prince", because of his lavish lifestyle), was settled in London's High Court. In a surprise move, the sultan agreed to drop all charges against Jefri, whom he in 2000 sued for embezzling £8 billion (US\$15.4 billion) from the Brunei Investment Authority (BIA).

## Controversies

In 1997, former Miss USA Shannon Marketic filed a lawsuit against the ruling family of Brunei for \$90 million.<sup>[6]</sup> In the case, Shannon alleged that she and 6 other young women were paid \$127,200 each for a modeling job in Brunei (whereas on the ABC news program "20/20", Marketic said she was supposed to provide "intellectual conversations" with visiting guests of the royal family). These other women include former Miss Teen USA and future Miss USA Brandi Sherwood, who was invited along by Shannon, and Miss United Kingdom runner up Paula Bradbury.

Marketic maintained that she and the women were held as "sex slaves" and were "intimidated and coerced into performing physically and morally repulsive acts of prostitution."<sup>[7]</sup> They were apparently ordered to dance for 5-6 hours every night at parties during which their bodies and private parts were groped and grabbed by men. During the dances Shannon was also allegedly abused verbally with comments made about her bare breasts.<sup>[8]</sup> The women were often told to go with a man to have "tea" with him and then had sex with him.<sup>[9]</sup> In her interview on "20/20", Marketic said that after 32 days of being held against her will, she managed to smuggle a letter out to the US Embassy; shortly afterwards, she was allegedly paid \$10,000 and forced to fly back to the United States alone.<sup>[10]</sup> The case was thrown out due to the immunity of the ruling family as heads of state.<sup>[11]</sup> There has been no further investigation into this case although there are allegations both supporting and refuting her claims. Paula Bradbury separately sued the Sultan and won £500,000 in settlement.<sup>[12]</sup>

The king of Sweden Carl XVI Gustaf spoke well about the Sultan to the Swedish press after a meeting with him, creating a minor controversy in Sweden.

## Honorary titles

The Sultan holds an honorary commission in the Royal Air Force of the United Kingdom as an Air Chief Marshal.<sup>[13]</sup>

He is also an Honorary Admiral of the Royal Navy of the United Kingdom,<sup>[14]</sup> a title given to him by Queen Elizabeth II when he took the salute at the passing out parade of the 2001 summer term at Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, the Royal Navy's officer-training school in the United Kingdom.

He also holds the rank of Honorary Colonel of SSG, awarded to him during his visit to the SSG headquarters at Cherat.<sup>[15]</sup>

## See also

- List of Sultans of Brunei
- List of Brunei-related topics

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## External links

The prince, the lawyer and his wife lose out in court (Jan 26 2007)

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- Brunei's Battle Royal — *Business Week* article.
- Unofficial website about the sultan — linked 17 February 2006
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- Sultan of Brunei- New Internationalist magazine article, May 2000
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<b>Hassanal Bolkiah</b> <b>House of Bolkiah</b> <b>Born:</b> July 15 1946		
<b>Regnal titles</b>		
Preceded by <b>Omar Ali Saifuddien III</b>	<b>Sultan of Brunei</b> 1967 – present	<b>Incumbent</b> <i>Designated heir:</i> <i>Al-Muhtadee Billah</i>
<b>Bruneian royalty</b>		
Preceded by <b>Ahmad Tajuddin</b>	<b>Crown Prince of Brunei</b> <b>Pengiran Muda Mahkota</b> 1965 – 1968	Succeeded by <b>Al-Muhtadee Billah</b>
<b>Political offices</b>		
<b>New title</b> Post created	<b>Prime Minister of Brunei</b> 1984 – present	<b>Incumbent</b>
<b>Records</b>		
Preceded by <b>Bill Gates</b>	<b>World's richest person</b> 1997	Succeeded by <b>Bill Gates</b>

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