



## Understanding Malay Ethnicity Sri Lanka VS Brunei

By *Dr Haji B. A. Hussainmiya*

*Associate Professor, Historical Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam*

Wednesday, 5th March 2014 @ 2:30 p.m.

IAS Meeting Room 2.27, Level 2, FASS Building

### Speaker's Profile



Associate Professor B. A. Hussainmiya of the Historical Studies Programme at UBD is a well-known historian of modern Brunei Darussalam having written several books and research articles. Among his published works are *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin & Britain: The Making of Brunei Darussalam*, Oxford University Press, 1995, *Brunei: Revival of Brunei in 1906*, BSB: The Brunei Press (sdn) Berhad, 2006, *The Lost Cousins; The Malays of Sri Lanka*, IBKKM/UKM Press, Bangi: Malaysia, 1985 and *Orang Rejimen: The Malays of the Ceylon Rifle Regiment*, UKM Press, Bangi, 1991. A Malay of Sri Lankan origin, Hussainmiya has pioneered research on his community and their significant role in the larger Malay World setting during the nineteenth century. Ever since his doctoral studies at Indonesian/Malay Studies Department at the Monash University, Australia in the 1970s, he has actively promoted the idea of the Malay World assisted by the GAPENA, Malaysian Writers' Association, and was the Chairman of the Second Malay World Symposium, held in Colombo, Sri Lanka in August 1985.

### Abstract

The efforts to determine precisely who is a 'Malay' is an ongoing process to say the least. The dynamics of defining Malay ethnicity remains contentious and has given rise to a growing body of scholarly papers and debates with no significant consensus reached. My researches on the Sri Lankan community and a serendipitous discovery of a significant corpus of hitherto unknown Malay literary and religious manuscripts have not only extended the boundary of the 'Malay World', but also added a significant dimension to the debates about Malayness in general. In this talk I propose to delineate the specifics of 'Malayness' in Sri Lanka and how it compares itself with the situation in Brunei Darussalam where the prevailing emphasis on the MIB concept provides a new impetus to explore new avenues to understand the nuances of Malay ethnicity. This talk does not intend to theorise based on social science research, but hopes to bring a historical dimension to the issues on a study of ethnicity formation.