

## Jakarta & port city Tanjung Priok, Indonesia – Day 35 Nov. 01:

The day started with a calm sea and overcast sky as the Amsterdam sat off the west coast of Java Island near Jakarta. We were waiting for the port pilot to come aboard so we could proceed into the harbor. Our location on the globe is shown in the map on the right. We were going to dock in the city of Tanjung Priok which is the port city for the metropolis of Jakarta, on the island of Java. Jakarta is the largest city of Indonesia and serves as the capital of that independent nation made up of hundreds of islands, most of which are small and not populated. Java has a tropical climate since it is near the equator in the southern hemisphere. Java and the other islands of this region were the source of many precious spices that were sought by Europeans starting in the early 1500s when Portuguese merchants arrived.



Subsequently, Dutch, English, Indian and Chinese people have influenced the development of the current mix of cultures that exist.

We were scheduled to be docked by 7am but by that time the pilot had not arrived. Captain Eversen came on the PA system and explained that through some oversight on the part of the port authorities, the pilot was late and every effort was being made to get the Amsterdam docked in Tanjung Priok as soon as possible. This delay created problems for a lot of people. Passengers had made tour arrangements for tours to start at 7:30am and many of the Indonesian crew members had family and friends meeting them at the dock at the original docking time. The pilot finally arrived and the Amsterdam was taken through the maze of merchant ships moored in the harbor, as shown below.



The Amsterdam was docked by about 9am. A friendly tug boat nudged our ship into her assigned dock location in the busy harbor, as shown in the picture on the right.



In spite of the late arrival time the all-aboard time this afternoon was left at the originally scheduled 4:30pm so this was going to be a short visit in

Jakarta. We felt sorry for the Indonesian crew members with visiting family and friends who would have an even shorter visit than originally planned.



Thoughtfully, the Amsterdam had arranged some comfortable accommodations for crew and visitors in the form of a large tent on the pier and hundreds of chairs as well as drinks. The picture on the left shows the tent on the pier and cars and busses that had arrived in anticipation of the Amsterdam arrival.

Some Indonesian Amsterdam crew members lined the railing looking for their visitors on the pier.

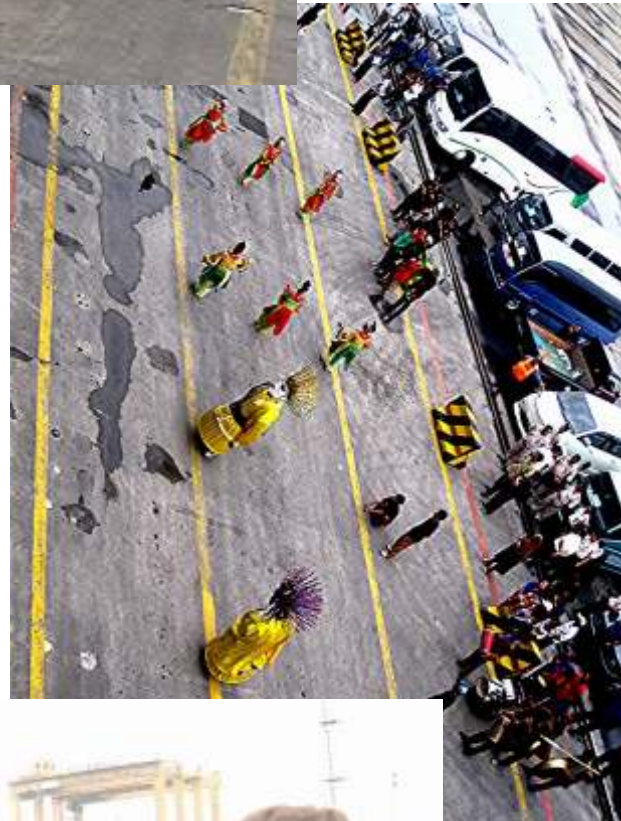




A group of musicians and dancers assembled on the dock by the ship and put on some traditional Indonesian entertainment, as shown below.



There were two huge characters in gold costumes and flaring head dress that drew most of the attention.



About 10am our tour of Jakarta Highlights and President Obama's Elementary School was called away and we left the Amsterdam to board our bus. On the way we passed by some of the crew member families waiting on the dock, as shown below





Danu, our dining room steward was also on the dock anxiously waiting for his visitors.

Lorna, the Amsterdam's medical doctor met us at our bus with the flag showing our tour number. The Holland America policy for tours they sponsor is to have one of their staff accompany the tour group to assist the local guide in keeping track of Amsterdam passengers to make sure no one gets lost in the crowds that are often encountered. Today Lorna was going to be our Amsterdam representative and keep track of us. We boarded our bus and soon met our guide, Marazuki who was to take us through the interesting sights of Jakarta today.





The location of the major points of interest on our tour of Jakarta today is shown on the map below.



The bus got underway and was immediately caught up in one of the most extensive traffic jams we have experienced. Barbara, the Amsterdam Travel Guide, had warned us about the terrible Jakarta traffic a few days ago and she did not exaggerate.



The first thing we noticed was that the Indonesia uses a left hand traffic policy like Singapore and other countries with British influence in their past. Our bus crawled along the highway stopping and starting and hitting a maximum speed of about 15 miles per hour. The slow speed had a good side in that we were able to observe the third world, survival mode, commercial activity taking place in the 15 or 20 feet of space available on the shoulder of the road. Motorcycle traffic moved past us on the left with only inches to spare. The motorcycle riders appeared to be the primary customers of the roadside businesses that lined the highway. Some examples of this commercial activity are shown here.



On the left, this is a gasoline filling station, Jakarta style. The gasoline is in the 1 liter plastic bottles with a handy blue funnel to help get the gas in your tank. We saw many of this kind of gas filling station but none of them had their prices posted.



In case of mechanical problems these folks, on the right, are there to help you out.



After about an hour on the road we reached our first destination which was the old port of Jakarta where we had a chance to see the Phinisi schooners moored there. These old wooden ships have a long history in this part of the world and apparently support a significant part of the local commercial traffic in building supplies, fertilizer and food. They are diesel powered and the masts that we saw are part of the crane system used to hoist goods onto or off of the ship at the loading docks.



These old wooden ships, shown on the left and below, with their distinctive high rising bow carry on the local sea faring tradition.





From the old port we went to an open air market place selling food, tourist items, and

some commercial hardware like this shop on the left with a supply of boat and hoisting equipment.



The tour was cut short by the fact that part of the market was flooded as a result of recent rains.



These children in one of the shops appeared to be happy and curious about us tourists which was typical of the Indonesian people we met today.

The Museum Bahari which has items from the maritime history of Indonesia was in the market place. Unfortunately, there wasn't time to explore it well. However, many of our fellow tourists found the western style toilets in the museum a welcome sight after about 2 hours on the tour.



From the local market area we headed for a popular city square. We were given free time just to browse around the area and get a feel for the local area. We found the Jakarta Museum of Fine Art and Ceramics. It was closed for renovation but offered a wonderful sign that we could use for documenting the visit of Barbara's library card. As shown on the right, her faithful library card had arrived in Jakarta.







The city square was a clean open area surrounded by well maintained government and private office buildings. It was a nice contrast with the otherwise crowded and somewhat tacky city we had seen up until now.

After checking out the city square we headed for the elementary school where President Obama spent part of his youth.



On the way we passed many high-rise office buildings in downtown Jakarta that were in stark contrast to the one story shacks we had seen on the way in to town. Some examples of the buildings are shown here with a blue tint courtesy of the bus window.





We passed by the Monas National Monument which is a huge tower in the Merdeka Square. Unfortunately, there was no time to stop so all we got was this distant photo of the site.



The school goes by the name of “International Standard School”, as shown by this arching sign across the entrance.

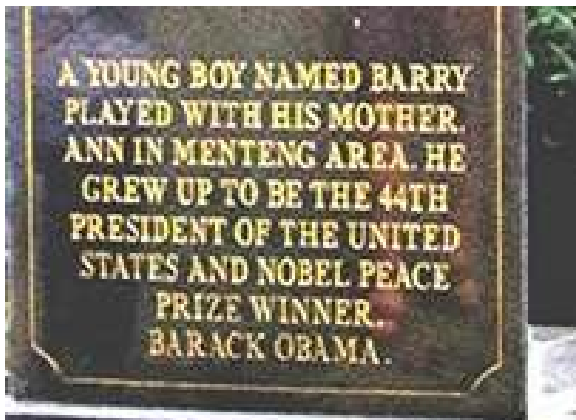


A brass placard on one of the entrance pillars identifies the school as the place US President Obama went to elementary school from 1969-1971, as shown on the left.

The school is located in a modest neighborhood as shown by these photos of houses and a nightclub across the street from the entrance.



The courtyard inside the entrance contains a small statue of a young boy, presumably Barack Obama, on a pedestal with the following inscription in several languages, including English.







The school occupies part of a city block and is roughly square in shape with a central open courtyard which has been set up as a basketball court, as shown on the right. The two story building surrounding the courtyard contains the school rooms and offices.

Our tour group was gathered in a large room where the Head Master gave a welcoming speech and urged us to explore their school and talk with the children and staff. The room had a large wall mural, shown on the right, with pictures of Barack Obama and other US government officials, like Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton at the school for the dedication of the statue we had seen in the courtyard.





We proceeded from room to room taking picture and talking with the children and school staff. Some photos we took along the way are shown below.

The school was clean, neat, and orderly but it was just a regular day at school. As these casually stored lunches and backpacks suggest, they didn't take any extraordinary pains to impress their visitors.



The teachers were friendly but not fluent in English so the conversations were limited.



A typical neat and tidy school room is shown on the left.

Large posters urging positive behavior were posted high on the wall in most of the school rooms.



The students had obviously been given a break period while the tourists paraded around the school. Like most kids would do, they were enjoying the attention but also getting in a little practice with their English.







The teachers were all well dressed and the students were wearing uniforms.



This teacher was very proud of his computer classroom as shown on the right.



Some young girls were part of the student body, as this picture on the right illustrates.



The room where they said Barack Obama attended school had a couple pictures of him on the wall as shown below.



The picture on the left was a bit unusual because it was made from a collage of what looked like different colored postage stamps.

A higher magnification of

the photo from the lower right corner of his face illustrates the technique. We didn't get the story behind the picture but obviously the artist was talented in the use of that technique.



We passed some time just browsing around and saying hello to the kids and teachers. It did not appear that the subject of Barack Obama was an obsession with the school teachers or students. When it was time to go we got back on the bus and our guide explained that our visit was not an everyday occurrence for the school children and staff. Usually they only open the school to tours like this when a cruise ship containing Americans is docked in Jakarta. He said that otherwise there is little attention given to the school among typical tourists or people of Jakarta.

We faced the typical traffic jam on Jakarta streets as we pulled away from our visit at Obama's elementary school.

The traffic eased a bit as we drove and about a mile from the school we were driving through an upscale neighborhood. We passed



through embassy row and by the US Embassy but didn't get a picture. .



The neighborhood gradually changed into more of an industrial setting and we saw the ubiquitous and ever popular McDonalds on the corner.



We had almost given up on catching a gas station price sign that we could photograph when one was delivered, as shown on the right. From this sign it appears that regular gas is selling for 8800 Rupiah per liter. At the exchange rate of 8000 Rupiah per US Dollar (USD) that's about \$1.10 per liter and assuming 4 liters per gallon it works out to \$4.40 USD per gallon. That seems a little pricey but it sure hasn't resulted in empty streets around Jakarta.



On the return to the Amsterdam there was less traffic than in the morning and the trip took about 15 minutes. As we were walking from the bus to the gangway we passed the tented area provided for the friends and families of the Amsterdam crew members, as shown on the left. It wasn't as crowded as in the morning but

there were clusters of folks in the process of saying goodbye.

We were glad that this visit to Jakarta provided an opportunity for crew members to visit with family and friends. It provided a look at a complex and interesting culture that has been developing for centuries. We are glad we came but this is not a city to which we will soon return.