

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas Library, ISTAC

By : **Najibah** Bt. Abu Bakar
 Librarian, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas Library, ISTAC

"The backbone of any institution of higher learning must be its library" – Istac Illuminated

The above statement sums up the position of ISTAC library, now officially known as Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas Library (SMNA Library). The naming ceremony on 22 May 2012 recognized the effort of the prominent philosopher and scholar who, as Director-General of ISTAC from 1987-2002, started the library collection in 1987.

SMNA Library is situated in Taman Duta, in the middle of the architectural wonder that is ISTAC, perched at the hillside amidst tree-shaded area where the sound of fountain water and birdsongs mixed harmoniously to transport visitors to a Alhambra-like experience. The entrance to the library is accessible through the courtyard where a fountain stands, which in Islamic architectural philosophy signifies heart as the reservoir of serene contemplation.

SMNA Library Collection

Other than its general collection, SMNA Library houses rare books and manuscripts

in various languages from important Islamic civilizations such as Arabic and Persian. The collections dated as far back as 1197 A.D. The oldest manuscript is Kitab al-Tafhim li Awa'il Sina'at al-Tanjim (Instruction in the Elements of the Art of Astrology) by Abu al-Rayhan Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Biruni in Persian language.

Important rare books include translation of Qur'an in Latin language, with preface by the Christian reformer Martin Luther. It was the first attempt at Qur'an translation by Christians, and printed in 1543 A.D. in Basel, after much opposition that includes imprisonment, seizure and removal from office of those involved.

From the Malay world, the SMNA Library has a lithograph copy of Hikayat 'Abd Allah by 'Abd Allah bin 'Abdul Kadir Munsyi, printed in Singapore in 1849 A.D. Another rare copy is Hikayat Binatang, also by a similar author, printed a few years before the aforementioned Hikayat in 1846 A.D.

SMNA Library Services

Apart from ordinary rules applied to other IUM Libraries in Gombak, PJ and Kuantan, SMNA Library is somewhat different in that its services are provided only to postgraduates in pursuance of Master's and Doctoral degrees. Undergraduates and outsiders who need to use the library collection must apply in writing with good reasons, supported by the lecturers or organizations they represent.

For library members who need to consult special collections, including rare books and manuscripts, they may do so by filling certain forms at the library's Information Counter. The condition of the materials will determine the availability of the original to be consulted by the requestor.

The SMNA welcomes all researchers on Islamic civilizations to make full use of the valuable and rare collections within.

Hi-Tea With IUM Disabled Students & Staff

By : Nurul Humaira Binti Kamarulzaman

A Hi-Tea was organised on 8th February 2013 by the Disability Services Unit (DSU) together with the Office of the Deputy Rector (Student Affairs) in collaboration with the IUM Ibn Ummi Maktum Club (I-MaC), a society for students with disabilities.

The event was held in appreciation of officials and staff of the University who have been very supportive to staff and students with disabilities in the IUM, in particular the Welfare Unit under the Student Affairs and Development Division (STADD) that has been looking after the welfare of disabled students, the Development Division, the Office of Deputy Rector (Student Affairs) and most importantly the Office of the Rector, IUM.

Fifty staff and students attended the hi-tea which was also graced by the presence of the IUM Rector, Prof. Dato' Sri Dr. Zaleha Kamaruddin, Deputy Rector (Student Affairs), Datuk Dr. Mizan bin Hitam, other Deputy Rectors, and members of the Executive Committee. Head of the DSU, Prof. Dr. Ruzita Mohd Amin, in her welcoming remarks said the DSU would continue to look into the needs and expectations of students with disabilities to facilitate their academic pursuits in IUM.

She also said that the DSU has proposed a comprehensive Access Audit of the Gombak campus to be conducted so as to ensure the upgrading of facilities for accessibility will be in

compliance with the Malaysian Standards. She also highlighted that the DSU was currently in the process of developing the Terms of Reference on the Policies and Procedures with regard to facilities and services for staff and students with disabilities.

In her speech, the Rector reiterated the university's and her own continuous support to provide a conducive environment for the disabled to work and study in the IUM, although financial constraints may pose to be a problem despite the university obtaining its autonomy status recently.

The IUM Disability Services Unit (DSU), Office of the Deputy Rector (Student Affairs), was established on 1st July 2012, the outcome of a proposal forwarded earlier to the Rector by a group of disabled staff and students.

The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) had instructed all public universities to form such a unit to cater specifically to the needs of disabled students to enhance their teaching and learning processes. The second phase of a comprehensive Action Plan is currently in place to serve this purpose.



The IUM Rector (ninth from left) with the Disability Services Unit officials and Ibn Ummi Maktum Club members.