

Who are the Java-Banten?

The Java-Banten live in the westernmost part of Java Island, Indonesia. Most Banten can be found in the district of Serang, in the northern part of Banten province. Many Banten people live interspersed with people of other ethnic groups in the cities of Serang, Cilegon, Merak and Banten. The population of the Java-Banten is about 1 million.

Languages

The Java-Banten speak a dialect of Javanese called Banten that sounds quite different from other Javanese dialects. Many also speak Bahasa Indonesia, the Indonesian national language.

Livelihood



Almost a quarter of the Java-Banten work in the manufacturing industry, which is widespread in the northern part of Banten

province. Shoes, textiles and ceramics are produced in Tangerang. Near Serang, there is brick manufacturing and a YKK zipper factory. Anyer produces steel and plastics.

Many other Java-Banten are farmers. They grow rice, coffee, cloves, bananas and durian, a soft, "stinky" fruit with a thick, spiky shell. Other Banten people work in shops or in the tourism industry. Tourist attractions in the area include Kaibon Palace, Old Banten City and the Great Banten Mosque, which was built in 1566. The province also has many beautiful beaches and Merak Harbor, a major link to the island of Sumatra.

Sadly, these employment opportunities are not sufficient to support the Java-Banten. Many people have a low income or none at all. There is a high level of poverty.

History

Before Islam, Banten province was part of two Hindu kingdoms: the Tarumanagara kingdom

and the Sunda kingdom. Aiming to spread Islam, Sunan Gunungjati from Cirebon, Java seized the port of Banten in 1526. He established the Banten Sultanate, appointing his son Hasanudin as first sultan. By 1570, the Banten Sultanate had become very powerful and incorporated the Sunda kingdom as well as south Sumatra.



The warriors who established the Banten sultanate were thought to have magical powers that made them invulnerable in battle. Their descendents are believed to retain this invulnerability today. People still flock to the graves of Banten's Muslim warriors and Sultans.

Beliefs

Under the Banten Sultanate, Muslim preachers led most of the area's inhabitants to embrace Islam. Islam penetrated deeply into Banten culture, and has left little trace of the Hinduism that had previously been practiced. Today, the Banten people are extremely dedicated to Islam. They are proud of many new Muslim schools that have recently been built.

Banten Muslims also incorporate some traditional spiritual practices into their religious lives, such as consulting a dukun, or traditional healer, when they are sick.



Fewer than 1% of the Java-Banten follow Jesus. The few followers of Jesus who are seeking to share the Good News with the Banten face many difficulties and barriers to their efforts. Some have even been threatened and thrown out of their communities. Few Banten people seem ready to hear the Good News.

For more information about the Java-Banten, visit: www.apeopleloved.com/java-banten



Population: 1 million
Location: Java, Indonesia
Languages: Banten, Bahasa Indonesia

Prayer Points

Pray for the spiritual and physical health of followers of Jesus who live in Banten communities. May God protect them as they travel Indonesia's crowded roads. They also need spiritual protection. Occult activity is prevalent throughout the area, and curses may sometimes be directed against followers of Jesus.

Pray that more followers of Jesus would move to Java-Banten communities.

Pray for followers of Jesus to find ways to demonstrate God's love to the Java-Banten, creating room for the Good News.

Pray that Banten leaders would decide to follow Jesus, spreading the Good News throughout the Banten community.

Pray for an end to corruption in the province, and for economic growth to benefit the poorer people.