

The Development of MTs Miftahul Falah, 1987–2026: A Historical Analysis of Institutional Dynamics and Contributions to The Kebayoran Lama Community, South Jakarta

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ABSTRACT

As an Islamic educational institution, a madrasah tsanawiyah (MTs) plays an important role in educating local communities and shaping their character. MTs Miftahul Falah is a private madrasah established on December 14, 1987, at Jalan Al-Mubarak II RT 02/10, Cipulir, Kebayoran Lama, South Jakarta, on waqf (Islamic endowment) land donated by Mrs. Siti Hawa. It was founded under Decree No. Wj/6-C/4994/1987, issued under the authority of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and has maintained an A accreditation rating through two assessment cycles (Decree No. 326/BAP-S/M/DKI/2015 and Decree No. 1347/BAN-SM/SK/2021). Although the institution has operated for nearly four decades, its history and institutional dynamics have received little scholarly documentation. This study examines its founding, institutional development, and contributions to the surrounding community from 1987 to 2026. It uses a qualitative historical approach that combines official institutional records—the Ministry of Education's Basic Education Data system (Dapodik) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs' educational-unit database—with oral histories from in-depth interviews with five key informants: the founder, who also served as the first principal; the third principal, in office since 2019; one senior teacher; one alumnus; and one community leader. The data were analyzed using descriptive-historical analysis and source triangulation. The findings identify three phases of development: a pioneering phase (1987–2000), a development phase (2000–2015), and a modernization phase (2015–2026), each marked by changes in leadership, curriculum, and facilities. The madrasah has made significant educational, socio-religious, and local economic contributions and reflects the national pattern in which most Indonesian madrasah tsanawiyah are privately operated and sustained by community participation.

Keywords: Institutional History, Educational Dynamics, Islamic Education, Social Contributions.

I. Introduction

The development of madrasahs as Islamic educational institutions is inseparable from the long history of Islamic education in Indonesia. These institutions help shape character, expand access to education, and sustain Islamic values within community life. Madrasahs emerged as traditional Islamic institutions, such as pesantren and surau, evolved into formal schools in response to social and political change and shifts in national education policy. The modernization of Islamic education in Indonesia began in the early twentieth



century. One milestone was the establishment of Madrasah Adabiyah in Padang by Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad in 1909, an early model of the modern Indonesian madrasah. After independence, the state gradually recognized madrasahs, culminating in Law No. 2 of 1989 and reinforced by National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003, which placed madrasah ibtidaiyah, tsanawiyah, and aliyah on a structural and curricular footing equivalent to general schools. Historiographic data also indicate that approximately 92%–95% of Indonesia's tens of thousands of madrasahs are private institutions created and supported by communities rather than established through state planning (Chairiyah, 2021; Supani, 2009).

MTs Miftahul Falah is one such community-initiated institution. It was established on December 14, 1987, at Jalan Al-Mubarak II RT 02/10, Cipulir, Kebayoran Lama, South Jakarta, under Founding Decree No. Wj/6-C/4994/1987 and the authority of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Its National School Identification Number (NPSN) is 20178244. The madrasah opened two years before the enactment of Law No. 2 of 1989, when the legal equivalence of madrasahs and general schools was not yet fully established, but community demand for secondary Islamic education in Kebayoran Lama was already strong enough to support a new institution. It has since earned and retained an A accreditation rating under Decree No. 326/BAP-S/M/DKI/2015, renewed by Decree No. 1347/BAN-SM/SK/2021. This record demonstrates consistent educational quality for more than a decade. Changes in leadership, curriculum development, human-resource improvement, and facility expansion show that MTs Miftahul Falah has continued to adapt while preserving its identity as a center for character development and community empowerment.

The madrasah's location in Cipulir also reflects a broader pattern in the growth of religious educational institutions in Kebayoran Lama, a historically older kampung area than Kebayoran Baru, which was planned as a modern satellite city beginning in 1948. Because Kebayoran Lama developed organically rather than through colonial-modern urban planning, it provided fertile ground for community-supported socio-religious institutions, including madrasahs, prayer halls, and Islamic study groups. Despite nearly four decades of operation, the history of MTs Miftahul Falah has received little scholarly documentation. Much of the information about its early years remains in internal archives and in the memories of founders, senior teachers, and community leaders. Some historical records have also been damaged or lost, complicating a comprehensive reconstruction of its institutional history. A historical study is therefore important not only to document the institution's development, but also to understand its institutional dynamics and contributions to Islamic education and the local community.

Previous studies have examined the development of madrasahs and pesantren in various parts of Indonesia. Research on MTs Muhammadiyah 6 Karanganyar found that the institution was established in response to community demand for religious education and subsequently influenced local socio-religious life (Pangestu & Inayati, 2023). A study of MTs YAPIKA Petanahan, Kebumen, highlighted its transformation from a traditional educational system into a more modern institution (Yahya, 2022). Research on An-Nawawi Berjan Pesantren from 1982 to 2020 documented a shift from individual leadership to collective, foundation-based governance (Fuadi, 2022). A reconstruction of the founding of Uswatun Hasanah Pesantren in Mangkang showed that community-based Islamic institutions commonly evolve from traditional settings into educational complexes integrating formal, nonformal, and religious education (Lestari et al., 2026). Although these studies illuminate the development of community-based Islamic institutions, they focus on particular institutions over relatively limited periods. They do not trace institutional development across a period as long as that of MTs Miftahul Falah or combine official legal-administrative records with oral history in the manner used here.

This review identifies a research gap: few historical studies comprehensively reconstruct a madrasah's trajectory from its founding through decades of development while combining verified legal-administrative records with the oral histories of participants and examining the institution's contributions to its community. Accordingly, this study addresses three questions: (1) How was MTs Miftahul Falah established? (2) How did its institutional development unfold from 1987 to 2026? and (3) What contributions has it made to the Kebayoran Lama community? The study reconstructs the madrasah's founding, analyzes its institutional

dynamics, and explains its community contributions. Its findings are expected to enrich the history of Islamic education, particularly scholarship on community-based private madrasahs in urban settings.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Madrasahs occupy an important position in Indonesia's education system by integrating general education with Islamic instruction and character development. Historically, these institutions evolved from traditional Islamic learning centers into formal schools recognized within the national education system (Chairiyah, 2021; Supani, 2009). Their modernization has involved curricular reform, professionalization of teachers, improved governance, and adaptation to national education policies (Asrofi & Adibah, 2025; Nata, 2006). Despite increasing state recognition, most Indonesian madrasahs remain privately managed and depend heavily on foundations and community participation for their continued operation.

Studies of community-based Islamic educational institutions demonstrate several recurring patterns of institutional development. Pangestu and Inayati (2023) found that MTs Muhammadiyah 6 Karanganyar was established in response to local demand for religious education and subsequently contributed to the community's educational and socio-religious life. Similarly, Yahya (2022) documented the transformation of MTs YAPIKA Petanahan from a traditional educational institution into a more modern school. Fuadi (2022) identified changes in leadership and governance at An-Nawawi Berjan Pesantren, particularly a transition from individual leadership to collective management under a foundation. Meanwhile, Lestari et al. (2026) showed that Uswatun Hasanah Pesantren developed from a traditional religious institution into an educational complex integrating formal, nonformal, and religious programs.

These studies show that community-based Islamic educational institutions generally develop through changes in leadership, curriculum, governance, facilities, and community engagement. However, previous research has often focused on specific periods or individual dimensions of institutional change. Few studies have combined verified legal-administrative records with oral histories to reconstruct the long-term development of an urban private madrasah. Furthermore, the economic contributions of madrasahs—such as creating small-business opportunities for surrounding communities—remain underexamined. The present study addresses these gaps by analyzing the institutional development of MTs Miftahul Falah from 1987 to 2026 and examining its educational, socio-religious, and economic contributions to the Kebayoran Lama community.

III. Research Method

This study used a qualitative historical approach to reconstruct the development of MTs Miftahul Falah in Kebayoran Lama, South Jakarta, from 1987 to 2026. The historical method was selected because it supports a systematic examination of past events through four stages: heuristics (source collection), source criticism and verification, interpretation, and historiography (historical writing) (Kuntowijoyo, 2005; Sjamsuddin, 2007). Conducted in July 2026, the study included archival collection, interviews, field observations, and report preparation. The data came from two main categories of sources. First, official legal-administrative and institutional-profile data were obtained from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology's Basic Education Data system (Dapodik) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs' educational-unit database. These records included the NPSN, the number and date of the founding decree, and accreditation decisions. Second, oral-history data were collected through semistructured, in-depth interviews with five purposively selected informants who had direct involvement in or knowledge of the institution: the initiator and founder, who also served as the first principal; the third principal, who has served since 2019; one senior teacher; one alumnus; and one local community leader. The second principal, the late Masrur, could not be interviewed because he died on October 29, 2025. All interviews with living informants were conducted in July 2026. Data were collected through a review of madrasah and foundation records, in-depth interviews, and direct observation of the campus and its activities. They were then analyzed descriptively and historically

through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, following Miles and Huberman (1994). Trustworthiness was supported through source triangulation across official documents, interviews, and observations, as well as member checking with participants.

IV. Result and Discussion

This section presents findings from in-depth interviews, legal-administrative archives, and field observations. It is organized into six subsections: (A) the founding of MTs Miftahul Falah, (B) legal-administrative processes and early institutional development, (C) the sociohistorical context of Kebayoran Lama, (D) the institution's long-term vision and impact, (E) community leaders' perceptions, and (F) discussion and comparison with related studies.

4.1. The Founding of MTs Miftahul Falah

a. Official Institutional Profile

Based on official Dapodik and Ministry of Religious Affairs data, the institutional profile of MTs Miftahul Falah is summarized below.

Table 1. Profile of MTs Miftahul Falah

Item	Description
Institution	MTs Miftahul Falah
Date established	December 14, 1987
Founding decree	Wj/6-C/4994/1987
Supervising authority	Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia
Land status	Waqf land donated by Mrs. Siti Hawa
Address	Jalan Al-Mubarak II RT 02/10, Cipulir, Kebayoran Lama, South Jakarta, DKI Jakarta
NPSN	20178244
First accreditation	A — Decree No. 326/BAP-S/M/DKI/2015, dated September 21, 2015
Most recent accreditation	A — Decree No. 1347/BAN-SM/SK/2021, dated December 9, 2021

The year 1987 is historically significant within the periodization of national madrasah policy. MTs Miftahul Falah was established two years before the enactment of National Education System Law No. 2 of 1989, when the legal-administrative equivalence of madrasahs and general schools was not yet fully secure, but public demand for Islamic education was strong enough to support a new institution.

b. Background and Founding Process

An interview with KH Ahmad Dahlan, S.Pd.I., the founder and first principal, indicated that the establishment of MTs Miftahul Falah was closely connected to an educational institution already operated by the foundation. Mrs. Siti Hawa donated the land as waqf, providing the physical basis for educational activities and exemplifying the endowment-based religious philanthropy that commonly supports community-based Islamic schools in Indonesia. At the time, the foundation had classrooms that were not being fully used. Because it already operated a madrasah ibtidaiyah (MI), the availability of this space prompted the idea of opening the next educational level, a madrasah tsanawiyah. The proposal was discussed through consultation involving community leaders, teachers, and ustadz committed to Islamic education in Cipulir, Kebayoran Lama. Approximately five leaders agreed to establish an MTs as an expansion of the existing institution. It was formally authorized by Decree No. Wj/6-C/4994/1987, dated December 14, 1987. The foundation chair directly appointed the initial administrators as an expression of responsibility and an effort to strengthen the institution during its pioneering period.

c. Meaning and Philosophy of the Madrasah's Name

According to interview data, the name Miftahul Falah was chosen not merely as an institutional identifier but for its philosophical meaning: "the key to success" or "the key to victory." The name expressed the founders' hope that the madrasah would provide a path through which students could attain academic, social, and spiritual success. Informants explained that the founders envisioned graduates who possessed both knowledge and noble character (akhlaqul karimah). This aspiration is gradually evident in alumni who have pursued further education and careers in diverse fields. Several alumni have returned to serve as teachers at the madrasah, providing one measure of the founders' success.

d. Early Challenges

Like many new educational institutions, MTs Miftahul Falah faced significant challenges during its early years. Enrollment was particularly limited, constraining the madrasah's ability to meet operating expenses and provide adequate compensation for teachers. At that time, the madrasah received no government operating assistance. Its continued operation depended on the foundation, student contributions, and support from the surrounding community. Despite these constraints, the commitment of its founders and teachers was critical to its survival and later development.

e. Informant Profile and Early Leadership Periods

The principal informant was KH Ahmad Dahlan, S.Pd.I., the founder and first principal, who served for approximately 12 years. The second principal, the late Masrur, died on October 29, 2025, so information about his administration could not be obtained through a direct interview. That period was reconstructed using school documents, official institutional records, and accounts from people familiar with the madrasah's development. This limitation is characteristic of oral-history research and was addressed by using legal-administrative documentation to support an objective reconstruction. In contrast, the third administration could be reconstructed from a primary source because the principal who has served since 2019 participated in the study. An interview conducted on July 9, 2026, provided direct information about current policies, curriculum, human resources, and facilities, as discussed further in subsection B.2.

4.2. Legal-Administrative Processes and Early Institutional Development

a. Licensing and Institutional Legality

Interviews and archival research indicate that the initial licensing process proceeded relatively smoothly. No substantial barriers were identified in the institutional approval process, which culminated in Founding Decree No. Wj/6-C/4994/1987, dated December 14, 1987, under the authority of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This administrative record and supporting documents remain preserved and correspond with the official databases of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Ministry of Education (NPSN 20178244). The madrasah's sustained quality is also reflected in the A accreditation rating it maintained for more than a decade under Decree No. 326/BAP-S/M/DKI/2015, dated September 21, 2015, and renewed under Decree No. 1347/BAN-SM/SK/2021, dated December 9, 2021. These documents are important evidence for tracing the madrasah's history and strengthen the primary-source base of this study.

b. Madrasah Leadership

MTs Miftahul Falah has undergone several leadership transitions and has had three principals. From the beginning, the foundation—its primary governing authority—has appointed the principal. The foundation's strong role shows that the madrasah's continuity and development have depended heavily on the foundation's policies and commitment to institutional sustainability. According to Dr. Farhah, M.Pd., the principal since 2019, the main priorities of the current administration are improving human-resource quality and educational services, with all programs aligned with the madrasah's vision and mission. No fundamental

curriculum changes have been made because the school continues to follow requirements established by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Instead, it has added local content responsive to local knowledge and needs. Changes in the learning system have been accompanied by ongoing adjustments to facilities and infrastructure. The informant reported improvement in both the number and quality of teachers, including their educational qualifications and certifications, as teacher development has remained a consistent institutional priority. She attributed these changes to shifts in national education policy and competition from nearby schools, both of which have encouraged continuous service improvement. She also candidly stated that the concrete effects of these changes on educational quality have not been evaluated through a dedicated internal study. Assessments therefore remain qualitative and based on direct observation during her administration; this transparency strengthens the credibility of the primary data.

c. Enrollment Growth

Enrollment was relatively low in the early years, and instruction began with a single class. As community confidence increased, enrollment gradually grew to support several classes. This growth indicates increasing acceptance of and trust in the madrasah as an Islamic educational option capable of providing high-quality services.

d. Initial Funding Sources

During the founding period, the madrasah relied primarily on student contributions, foundation support, and community self-help. Government operating assistance was not yet available, so all educational expenses were managed independently. Limited funding created major challenges, especially for operations and teacher compensation. Nevertheless, community support and the administrators' commitment provided the essential capital for sustaining the school.

4.3. The Sociohistorical Context of Kebayoran Lama

Understanding the position of MTs Miftahul Falah requires attention to the history of its location. Before Indonesian independence, Kebayoran was a district led by a wedana and formed part of the Meester Cornelis afdeling. The name Kebayoran is believed to derive from the Betawi word kabayuran, referring to a place where bayur timber was stored before transport along the Krukut and Grogol rivers to Batavia. Beginning in 1948, the government developed a new area east of the Grogol River that became known as Kebayoran Baru. Designed as a modern garden-city satellite to relieve Jakarta's population density, it contrasted with the old district capital west of the river, which remained known as Kebayoran Lama. The latter was historically older, developed organically, and did not follow the modern urban planning applied to its neighbor (Kompas.com, 2024). This historical distinction is important. Kebayoran Baru represented state planning and colonial-postcolonial modernity, whereas Kebayoran Lama's older kampung settlements were structurally more conducive to community-supported socio-religious institutions, including madrasahs, prayer halls, and Islamic study groups. Cipulir, where MTs Miftahul Falah is located, is part of this kampung area; the madrasah's growth therefore corresponds with its surrounding sociohistorical context.

4.4. Long-Term Vision and Institutional Impact

a. The Founders' Original Aspirations

Consistent with the school's name, meaning "the key to success," the madrasah was intended from the outset to open pathways to success for its students. The founders hoped that graduates would possess academic ability, Islamic character, and noble conduct and would be able to navigate social change without abandoning Islamic values.

b. Progress Toward the Founders' Aspirations

Informants reported positive progress toward the founders' aspirations. Many alumni have pursued further education, worked in diverse fields, and contributed to society. Their achievements indicate the madrasah's tangible impact on students and the community. Some alumni have returned as teachers, demonstrating an enduring emotional connection to the institution. This achievement is consistent with the institutional resilience reflected in A accreditation ratings in two assessment cycles (2015 and 2021), an objective indicator of sustained quality that complements alumni testimony. One concrete example came from an interview with an alumnus who graduated in 1988. The informant explained that the school's strong religious atmosphere and moral education influenced the decision to become a teacher and later return to MTs Miftahul Falah as an educator. The informant specifically identified muhadharah (public-speaking practice) as one of the most influential programs in developing the courage and confidence to speak before an audience, a skill that remains valuable in teaching.

A senior teacher who has taught at the madrasah since 1990 offered another long-term perspective. The teacher recalled that facilities and enrollment were modest in the early years, the learning atmosphere was relatively relaxed, and rules were not strictly enforced. Over time, the culture became more disciplined for both teachers and students, while instructional methods continued to adapt to curricular and technological change. Although student characteristics have varied across generations, the informant viewed the overall direction positively. Several distinctive traditions have endured, including congregational prayer, muhadharah, and observances of major Islamic holidays, all of which have consistently supported student character development.

4.5. Community Leaders' Perceptions of the Madrasah

a. Community Views of the Madrasah's Presence

Interviews with local community leaders indicated that MTs Miftahul Falah has provided substantial benefits to Cipulir and Kebayoran Lama since its establishment. It offers an accessible Islamic educational alternative, particularly for middle-income families facing South Jakarta's high cost of living and land values. In addition to relatively affordable tuition, residents value the madrasah's positive relationship with its surroundings and its ability to foster an open and tolerant educational environment.

b. Role in Socio-Religious Life

Within Kebayoran Lama's socio-religious life, the madrasah functions not only as a formal school but also as part of community life. It frequently participates in Islamic holiday observances, social programs, and other religious activities. These activities demonstrate its broader social function as a center that strengthens ties between the educational institution and the community.

c. Economic and Social Contributions

The madrasah also benefits the local economy. Its cafeteria creates opportunities for residents to operate small businesses, while school activities allow nearby street vendors to earn income by providing food and beverages to students.

d. Relationships With the Surrounding Community

The madrasah maintains positive relationships with community leaders, neighborhood associations (RT/RW), and other social institutions. It frequently hosts community events, including Independence Day activities on August 17, the ritual slaughter of sacrificial animals, and other social programs. These uses demonstrate that the madrasah has become an integral part of local life.

e. Changes Over Time

Residents identify physical improvements and stronger governance as the most visible changes. The campus is now considered cleaner and better organized, with greater discipline than in earlier periods, reflecting sustained efforts to improve educational services.

f. Structural Challenges and Sustainability

Like many small private madrasahs in Indonesia, MTs Miftahul Falah faces structural challenges, including limited numbers of certified teachers, constrained facilities, and funding limitations that affect teacher welfare. In an urban area such as Kebayoran Lama, these challenges may be intensified by spatial and economic pressures, especially high land values that can threaten the sustainability of small educational institutions. Despite these conditions, the madrasah's A accreditation across two assessment cycles reflects institutional resilience grounded in local community trust. Institutions of this type generally lack both the financial reserves of elite private schools and the full subsidies available to public schools.

g. Community Expectations for the Madrasah's Future

Community members hope the madrasah will continue to serve as an Islamic educational institution that benefits its surroundings. Their foremost expectation is that it will continue to develop and educate intelligent young people of noble character and strong Islamic values who can contribute positively to society and the nation.

4.6. Discussion and Comparison With Related Studies

The three phases identified in the development of MTs Miftahul Falah—pioneering, development, and modernization—parallel findings from MTs Muhammadiyah 6 Karanganyar. That institution also began as a community response to the need for religious education and then expanded as local trust and socio-religious support increased (Pangestu & Inayati, 2023). This similarity supports the argument that community-initiated Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia often follow comparable growth trajectories despite differences in time and local context. The institutional transformation of MTs Miftahul Falah during its modernization phase (2015–2026)—marked by better governance, discipline, and facilities and objectively supported by sustained A accreditation—resembles the shift from a traditional to a modern educational system documented at MTs YAPIKA Petanahan, Kebumen (Yahya, 2022). A similar pattern appears in leadership changes at An-Nawawi Berjan Pesantren, which shifted from individual leadership to collective, foundation-based management (Fuadi, 2022). MTs Miftahul Falah differs, however, because the foundation has served as the central actor in every leadership transition since the school's establishment rather than assuming that role through a later transformation. This distinction is a contribution of the present study to scholarship on the institutional dynamics of foundation-based madrasahs.

The finding that the madrasah creates small-business opportunities for local residents through its cafeteria and nearby street vendors extends earlier research that has focused primarily on socio-religious effects and the development of formal, nonformal, and religious education, as in the historical reconstruction of Uswatun Hasanah Pesantren in Mangkang (Lestari et al., 2026). The study also supports the proposition that the practical strength of Indonesian Islamic education lies in private madrasahs sustained by community participation rather than state budgets. MTs Miftahul Falah belongs to the approximately 92.6% majority of Indonesian madrasah tsanawiyah that are private and provides a living example of this proposition. Thus, the study both reinforces patterns identified in related research and adds the underexamined dimensions of integrated, verified legal-administrative data, local economic contributions, and foundation-based governance.

V. Conclusion

This study yields three principal findings. First, MTs Miftahul Falah was established on December 14, 1987 (Decree No. Wj/6-C/4994/1987), through an initiative of the Cipulir community in Kebayoran Lama. It was built on waqf land donated by Mrs. Siti Hawa and used foundation-owned classrooms that had previously served only the madrasah ibtidaiyah level. Community leaders, teachers, and ustadz agreed on its establishment through consultation. The name, meaning “the key to success,” represented the founders' aspiration to educate a generation distinguished by both academic achievement and noble character. Second, the institutional development of MTs Miftahul Falah from 1987 to 2026 can be mapped across three phases: a pioneering phase (1987–2000), characterized by low enrollment and independent funding; a development phase (2000–2015), marked by enrollment growth and stronger institutional legitimacy; and a modernization phase (2015–2026), marked by improved governance, discipline, and facilities. These achievements are objectively supported by the continued A accreditation awarded under Decree No. 326/BAP-S/M/DKI/2015 and Decree No. 1347/BAN-SM/SK/2021. Across all three phases, the foundation played a central role in leadership transitions; the madrasah has had three principals since its establishment.

Third, MTs Miftahul Falah has made tangible contributions to the Kebayoran Lama community in three areas: education, by offering accessible Islamic schooling for middle-income families amid South Jakarta's high cost of living; socio-religious life, through participation in religious and civic events, including Islamic holiday and Independence Day observances; and local economic empowerment, by creating small-business opportunities for residents. These findings reinforce patterns reported in related studies of community-based madrasahs and pesantren while adding the underexamined dimensions of integrated legal-administrative evidence and local economic contributions. This study is limited by the relatively small number of informants—five people, including only one senior teacher—and the absence of a direct interview with the late second principal. Reconstruction of that period therefore relied more heavily on legal-administrative documentation. Future research should include a broader range of informants, examine institutional archives from each leadership period in greater depth, and compare community-based madrasahs across regions to deepen understanding of the institutional dynamics of private madrasahs in Indonesia.

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