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Brunei Darussalam

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WORLD GOVERNMENT SUMMIT 2022

Bilateral meeting with Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at the bilateral meeting with His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai.

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, March 29 - His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam attended a bilateral meeting with His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai, which took place at the Dubai Exhibition Centre.

Accompanying His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen.

During the meeting, His Majesty and His Highness Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE discussed enhancing bilateral relations between the two countries, boosting the level of trade, and facilitating cooperation between investors from Brunei and UAE in financial services.

His Majesty calls for transparency in COVID-19 updates

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 8 - His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has chaired the COVID-19 Steering Committee Special Meeting, which took place at Istana Nurul Iman.

Also present were His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam's sons, His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen.

questioned several issues related to COVID-19.

His Majesty thanked the cooperation of all parties, which has managed to break the chain of COVID-19 transmission with the implementation of strict control measures resulting in Brunei Darussalam reaching 'zero' COVID-19 cases and return to normal life, guided by Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs).

However, on August 7, 2021, the first local cases arose, resulting in another wave in the country. Again, control measures were tightened in response to prevent this pandemic from further spreading.

of positive cases was increasing daily, especially with the Delta variant of COVID-19, which is very contagious to the average person who has not been vaccinated or an individual who only received one dose of vaccine."

"With the tightened movement control," His Majesty added, "despite having good intentions to safeguard the welfare of the public, it could not be denied that it had a side impact of good risks from the social, mental, and security aspects."

Brunei Darussalam has moved from the

In a *titah* (royal speech), His Majesty

"However," His Majesty said, "the number

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His Royal Highness the Crown Prince receives audiences



His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) received in audiences at Qashar Al-Meezan Major General (U) Dato Seri Pahlawan Haji Hamzah bin Haji Sahat, the outgoing Commander of Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) and Major General Dato Seri Pahlawan Haji Muhammad Haszaimi bin Bol Hassan, the newly appointed Commander of RBAF, on March 2.

His Majesty sends congratulatory messages

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzadin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam consented to send congratulatory messages to:

- His Excellency Frank-Walter Steinmeier, President of the Federal Republic of Germany on the occasion of his re-appointment as President of the Federal Republic of Germany on March 19.
- His Excellency Dr. Arif Alvi, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; and His Excellency Imran Khan, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and the government as well as the people of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the occasion of Pakistan Day on March 23.
- His Excellency Md. Abdul Hamid, President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh; and Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, and the government as well as the people of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on the occasion of its Independence Day on March 26.

His Majesty sends message of condolences

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam consented to send a message of condolences to His Excellency Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China and His Excellency Li Keqiang, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, the government as well as the people of the People's Republic of China following the recent plane crash of China Eastern Airlines flight MUS735 in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region on March 23.

WORLD GOVERNMENT SUMMIT 2022

Brunei-UAE strengthen bilateral relations

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, March 29 - After the bilateral meeting with the Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai, His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam proceeded to the DP World Arena for the World Government Summit 2022 at the invitation of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Ruler of Abu Dhabi.

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in his *titah* (royal speech) said that challenges such as political, economic, and socio issues have risen in recent years including the impact of the unprecedented and disruptive nature of the COVID-19 pandemic. People and governments have had to quickly adapt and be responsive to such challenges.

On the importance of shaping future governments, His Majesty underlined that the Fourth Industrial Revolution will lead to changes in the shape and role of governments, economies, and infrastructure. In this regard, the UAE is leading the way in the future of governments through pioneering efforts in several areas such as renewable energy and emphasised the role of the youth as

the leaders of tomorrow, who will inherit and implement the nascent policies developed today.

Aside from that, His Majesty also touched on the active participation of women as leaders in further enhancing the quality of policy-making for an overall better future.

At this opportunity, His Majesty called attention to the work of ASEAN and the UAE in promoting the economic prosperity of their peoples and highlighted the importance of closer cooperation between ASEAN and the UAE especially in managing climate change.

Earlier, His Majesty has acknowledged the achievements of the UAE on economic transformation, as well as congratulated their success in organising the Expo 2020 Dubai.

On the values of peace and stability, His Majesty went on to say that these are critical for continued economic progress to secure a brighter future for generations to come.

While quoting the words of the founding father of the UAE, His Highness Almarhum Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan: "History is a continuous chain of events. The present is only an extension of the past", His Majesty stressed the importance of instilling the appreciation for peace in the youths as their experiences



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam delivering a *titah* (royal speech) address at the World Government Summit 2022.

of the world are vastly different to those who came before them, especially to those who have seen war and conflict.

In concluding the *titah*, His Majesty reiterated the importance to ensure a better life for the people, a peaceful world, and the need for future governments to be prepared and responsive and further highlighted the need to continue to engage and involve the youth as they are the ones who will realise the plans for future generations.



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at the World Government Summit 2022.



His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen at the World Government Summit 2022.

His Majesty tours Expo 2020 Dubai

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, March 29 - After the World Government Summit 2022, His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam paid a visit to the United Arab

Emirates (UAE) Pavilion and received an introduction from the Pavilion's Manager.

The UAE Pavilion is the host country pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai and carries the theme, "Land of Dreamers Who Do" and exhibits its nationals who embodied the spirit of UAE and carried forward the

legacy forged by UAE's original dreamer, His Highness Almarhum Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the founder of the nation.

His Majesty proceeded to the Opportunity

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His Majesty tours Expo 2020 Dubai (continued)



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and His Royal Highness at the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Pavilion with the Pavilion's Manager.

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District to visit the Brunei Darussalam Pavilion, which showcases the Brunei Vision 2035, Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam, Royal Brunei, and products exhibited by 22 entrepreneurs of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME).

His Majesty's arrival at the pavilion was greeted by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri

Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew Abdullah, Minister at Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy.

Under the theme of "Brunei Darussalam 2035 – Bridging to the Future", the Brunei Darussalam Pavilion for the expo provides opportunities for businesses and

institutions to promote and market their products and services in the international market.

His Majesty also consented to receive a *pesambah* (souvenir) of calligraphy art by local artists showcased at the Brunei Darussalam Pavilion.

Expo 2020 Dubai runs for six months from October 1, 2021, until March 31 is participated by some 192 countries where Brunei's participation aims to showcase the country's development in the main sectors such as economy, social, and culture.

Over 680,000 visitors were recorded to have visited the Brunei Darussalam Pavilion featuring 150 products from 22 local vendors.

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and His Royal Highness in a group photo at the Brunei Darussalam Pavilion, located at the Opportunity District, Expo 2020 Dubai.



His Majesty leaves Dubai

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, March 30 - His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam left Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE). Accompanying His Majesty the Sultan and

Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen.

Present at the airport to bid farewell to His Majesty were His Excellency Suhail Mohamed Al Mazrouei, Minister of Energy, and Infrastructure of the UAE;

and His Excellency Haji Harun bin Haji Junid, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Brunei Darussalam to the UAE.

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His Majesty leaves Dubai (continued)



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam left Dubai, the United Arab Emirates after attending The World Government Summit 2022 and Expo 2020 Dubai. Accompanying His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen.

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His Majesty arrived in Dubai on March 28 to attend the World Government Summit 2022 at the invitation of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, President of the UAE and Ruler of Abu Dhabi.

Present at the Royal Airwing, Dubai International Airport to welcome His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was His Excellency Omar bin Sultan Al Olama, Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy, and Remote Work Applications of the UAE.

Newly appointed RBAF commander receives rank insignia of Major General



BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 1 - His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam presented the rank insignia of Major General to Brigadier General Dato Seri Pahlawan Haji Muhammad Haszaimi bin Bol Hassan; and appointed him as the 12th Commander of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF).

Also present at the ceremony which took place at Istana Nurul Iman was His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office.

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His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam presenting the rank insignia of Major General to Brigadier General Dato Seri Pahlawan Haji Muhammad Haszaimi bin Bol Hassan as the 12th RBAF Commander.



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office during the recitation of *doa selamat* by Commander Haji Ainolnizam bin Haji Ibrahim, Royal Brunei Navy, Acting Director of RBAF Religious Directorate (JAMA'AT).

Newly appointed RBAF commander receives rank insignia of Major General (continued)



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and His Royal Highness the Crown Prince in a group photo with senior officials.

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Major General Dato Seri Pahlawan Haji Muhammad Haszaimi previously held several key posts including the 11th Commander of the Royal Brunei Land Force (RBLF) from July 30, 2020, to February 28, 2022; Commandant of Defence Academy RBAF from 2019 to 2020; Commandant of Training Institute RBAF in 2018 and RBLF Deputy Commander from 2014 to 2017.

Also in attendance were Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji

Mohd. Yussof, Second Minister of Defence; and Major General (U) Dato Seri Pahlawan Haji Hamzah bin Haji Sahat, the former Commander of RBAF.

His Majesty then received in audience the former Commander and the newly appointed Commander of RBAF and followed later with a closed-door discussion with senior officers from the Ministry of Defence and RBAF.

His Majesty calls for transparency in COVID-19 updates (continued)



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam upon arrival at the meeting. Also in attendance were His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office, and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen.

From front page

Pandemic Phase to the Early Endemic Phase since December 15, 2021, when the National Vaccination Programme reached 80 per cent.

However, the emergence of a new variant, Omicron - which is considered easily transmitted has caused cases to rise daily, causing concern.

However, the information relayed by the

Minister of Health states that majority of the active cases are of categories 1, 2 and 3 only. Meanwhile, some of those referred to as categories 4 and 5 are fully vaccinated or have other health problems.

Similarly, in death cases amongst COVID-19 patients, some are categorised as deaths due to COVID-19 whereas some are not categorised as deaths due to COVID-19.

In His Majesty's opinion, there is no need to search for another cause of death as they were also COVID-19 patients.

His Majesty was made to understand that the nation is making efforts to protect citizens and residents through a vaccination programme where 94 per cent have received two-dose of the vaccine while over 56 per cent have received the third-dose or booster, where according to foreign studies, vaccination could reduce the symptoms of COVID-19.

His Majesty stated that the COVID-19 Steering Committee has devised several strategies in ensuring that the outbreak of COVID-19 can be controlled and at the same time enable the citizens and residents to live life in the new norms, can generate income, and secure employment.

Among the strategies include restricting the entry of foreigners and obtaining approval from the Prime Minister's Office for each trip abroad.

His Majesty highlighted that we should not forget that there are two SOPs namely normal and religious, where both should be seen as equally important.

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His Majesty calls for transparency in COVID-19 updates (continued)



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen during the meeting held at Istana Nurul Iman (left and below).



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Normal SOPs are based on human discretion while religious SOPs come from the Almighty, the creator of mankind. This matter needs to be seen from the knowledge perspective based on faith.

His Majesty further said, the emergence of the Omicron variant has greatly affected the existing strategies with the increasing cases of infection breaching the four digits, compared to one or two digits earlier but has increased so far to over 4,000 cases and may soon reach the figure of 5,000 if the numbers continue to spike.

His Majesty added there is still information that is not transparent resulting in citizens and residents being afraid of such a situation.

His Majesty also questioned if the method currently used to screen COVID-19 is appropriate.

His Majesty noted that the increasing daily statistics are based on the number of antigen rapid test (ART) kit screening tests conducted privately starting February 18. In foreign countries, positive cases are confirmed through PCR testing and also ART screening conducted professionally.

In this matter, His Majesty also believes that if other countries follow the method used in our country, the average rate of their positive cases will also be much higher. Perhaps this method may be accurate, but the question is whether or not the public understands that the absence of sharing this information has caused comparisons with other countries to the point where some question whether Brunei has failed to address the COVID-19 outbreak.

His Majesty believes that from a public health perspective, Brunei has tried its best.

His Majesty also called on the Ministry of Education to be transparent about the drop in school attendance during the Early Endemic Phase.

His Majesty sought clarification from the COVID-19 Steering Committee on the current situation of students.

His Majesty believes that the declining attendance among students was due to parents' concerns who did not want their children to attend school as they believe that there was an outbreak and presence of COVID-19 transmission in schools.

In that regard, His Majesty urged the committee members to take note of this matter.

His Majesty also asked for an explanation

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His Majesty calls for transparency in COVID-19 updates (continued)

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regarding the issue of clusters which, in the first wave since March 2020, the number of new clusters were shared with the public but now in the Early Endemic Phase, it is no longer shared, while the public still needs the information.

His Majesty highlighted that by not sharing this information, the public are at risk of entering the premise of the cluster.

His Majesty questioned what else must we do. Although we have a good vaccination programme, positive cases remain and continue to increase, even with SOP guidelines implemented and followed.

His Majesty went on to say that we are still recording positive cases from the entry of foreigners as well as local cases. It is also important to see and find out the reason for the decreasing and increasing number of cases.

His Majesty added that the nation has never declared a lockdown compared to some countries in the world. Some of those countries have repeatedly taken the stance of first easing restrictions, then re-instating them.

It is a crucial matter that needs to be discussed by this committee, instead of just recording or counting the number of infections.

According to His Majesty, this means that research is vital and once we have obtained results from the research we can then path to the next step.

His Majesty added that they are obliged to always evaluate and carefully consider all aspects without hesitation, adhere to one opinion or one opinion alone, including not hastily imitating or using illogical approaches and beliefs such as taking an open and independent attitude no longer want to care about the infection and then continue to remove or just open these restrictions.

This is an incorrect approach because it likens throwing oneself into destruction, which is forbidden by our religion.

In His Majesty's opinion, in this worrying situation, it is too soon to ease or loosen restrictions by taking a simple stance, reducing monitoring, control and treatment as well as ending the daily announcement on COVID-19 developments in the country.

His Majesty stressed that if there are no announcements made, it is as if we are hiding information from the people regarding the developments of the

COVID-19 situation in the country.

If there are no effective alternatives to convey important information on the state of COVID-19 transmission in the country, the daily media conference by the Minister of Health is still the best platform to disseminate information on the daily situation and reduce the impact that may arise from the committee possibly overlooking the direction in which to synchronised efforts on all levels.

His Majesty said that the explanation on why COVID-19 is described as never-ending is incomprehensible because according to religion, every disease has a cure and Allah the Almighty cures all diseases.

The statement that COVID-19 will never end shows that it is as if we are superior than Allah the Almighty and we are denying His authority.

Throughout history, various pandemics have occurred, such as the Black Death epidemic in 1340, that once invaded South East Asia to spread to Europe and at the end of the First World War, in 1918 there was an outbreak of the Spanish Flu and others. But all these pandemics ended, thus why do we believe there is no end to COVID-19.

"Similarly, it is often heard that people are determined to fight COVID-19, and some even believe that we humans are capable of winning the war with COVID-19," His Majesty's added.

In this context, His Majesty asks for an

explanation; is such a statement not against faith because according to the logic, the Coronavirus was specifically sent by Allah the Almighty as His army to teach mankind a lesson.

Brunei Darussalam will not lose if it is always careful in all matters, including the use of medicines, and that the vaccination of children aged five to 11 years should be thoroughly studied before implementation.

Touching on the distribution of food rations assistance to those who are in quarantine, His Majesty called for it to be carried out perfectly and smoothly.

It was rumoured that many in quarantine did not receive the rations or had to wait a long time to receive them without knowing what to do since for some cases, the whole household is in quarantine, so no one can go out for food. His Majesty questioned on how the committee handles this.

His Majesty further took note that efforts to address the spread of COVID-19 have been implemented by the government, especially since the formation of the COVID-19 Steering Committee through meetings as many members of the public seem to want the committee to take effective actions to curb the spread of COVID-19.

His Majesty urged that this situation should be addressed in the best way possible and more transparent, concise, and easily understood by all levels of society, to prevent the public from pointing fingers and reduce public anxiety over the increasingly alarming rate of infection.



Among the ministers in attendance at the COVID-19 Steering Committee Special Meeting held at Istana Nurul Iman.

His Majesty's unscheduled visit to PDI



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam during an unscheduled visit to the Islamic Da'wah Centre (PDI).

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 24 - His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam made an unscheduled visit to the Islamic Da'wah Centre (PDI), the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA).

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam's arrival at the centre was greeted by Yang Berhormat Pehin Udana Khatib Dato Paduka Seri Setia Ustaz Haji Awang Badaruddin bin Pengarah Dato Paduka Haji Awang Othman, Minister of Religious Affairs; Pengiran Dato Seri Paduka Haji Bahrom bin Pengiran Haji Bahar, Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs; Awang Mohamed Riza bin Dato Paduka Haji

Mohamed Yunos, Permanent Secretary (Civil Service, Welfare, International and Media); Awang Haji Mohammad Rosli bin Haji Ibrahim, Permanent Secretary at the MoRA; and Awang Haji Mohd. Serudin bin Haji Timbang, Deputy Permanent Secretary at the MoRA.

The surprise visit to the centre began with the recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah and a *doa selamat* led by Pengiran Haji Haslin bin Pengiran Haji Ali, the Acting Director of Mosque Affairs.

The Minister of Religious Affairs in his welcoming address among others highlighted the structure and number of *da'ie* (religious preachers) under the MoRA.

This was followed by His Majesty's *titah*

(royal speech) and a dialogue session with preachers in Brunei Darussalam.

In a *titah* (royal speech), His Majesty highlighted that PDI, as one of the departments under MoRA, plays a very crucial role in ensuring that Islamic teachings stand out in this country.

"Thus, such great responsibility cannot be avoided," reminded His Majesty.

His Majesty then added that the centre has not yet been able to carry the responsibility due to several factors of weakness that are still plaguing the centre, especially from the point of view of structuring positions that have not been seen in order.

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Officers and staff of the Islamic Da'wah Centre (PDI) during the *doa selamat* led by the Acting Director of Mosque Affairs (above and right).



His Majesty's unscheduled visit to PDI (continued)



His Majesty delivering a *titah* (royal speech) during the visit.

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"In the structuring of the Islamic Da'wah Centre, there is no designated post as a preacher, because of that there is a conflict over who will be assigned to preach or speak to fill the preaching Programme.

His Majesty added that the existing officials regularly pushed each other until some have said, "I have nothing to do with the talk. My position is not that of a speaker or a preacher".

His Majesty went on to say that in this pressing need, the centre instead desperately asks help from religious teachers or mosque officials, or university graduates to preach by providing them with allowances.

If this is continuously practised, His Majesty believed that preaching in the country will not stand out, instead will continue to fade, and wither.

His Majesty also took note that in order to produce local preachers of calibre, MoRA has carried out formal training through seminars, forums, courses, conferences, study tours and has also sent preachers to participate in programmes through the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with MABIMS (Religious Council of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore) and other countries.

Therefore, His Majesty described that although such a way is basically good, it certainly has not been able to produce preachers of high calibre.

The concept of enlivening staff or officers is indeed a common tendency but adding manpower alone does not necessarily guarantee to ascertain the department's big responsibility if the workforce is not or lacks in quality.

His Majesty also stressed the importance of quality preachers.

"Before adding more to the workforce, the welfare of the existing preachers should be taken care of and empowered with quality," said His Majesty.

"Among the ways in empowering high-quality preachers is by establishing a training scheme to provide the officers with proper guidance to preach effectively," added His Majesty.

"Under this scheme, these potential officers will be planned and encouraged to take a PhD in preaching where among the methodology of the study will include interviewing those identified preachers of calibre either domestically or internationally and share their experiences in delivering effective preaching or any necessary recipes for success in such field.

If candidates pass their PhD with a thesis that is rich in facts and research details, then there is no doubt that the individual will automatically become an expert preacher or will act as a certified mentor to the existing preachers," His Majesty added.

If this happens His Majesty further believes that major changes can be seen in the preachers and to the world of preaching itself, from gloomy to bright and the centre is equipped with qualified workforce to be given opportunities.

His Majesty also took note that the MoRA has applied for the addition of 195 posts for the Da'wah Division alone to realise the needs of dakwah.

Later, His Majesty went to take a closer look at the session of the basic guidance scheme course for Muslim converts at the centre's multipurpose room.

The centre started operating on 8 Rabiulakhir 1405 corresponding to January, 1, 1985 with His Majesty gracing the official opening ceremony on 1 Muharam 1406/September 16, 1985.

Among the centre's main functions include the propagation of Islam, keeping updated on relevant and current issues in the Islamic world, and the publication of religious reading materials apart from frequently running educational Islamic courses and holding Islamic exhibitions.

According to the centre, some 20,030 Muslim converts were registered from 1971 to 2020. Meanwhile, in 2021, statistics show some 175 Muslim converts in Brunei-Muara District, Tutong District recorded some 96 converts while Belait and Temburong Districts recorded 68 and 17 Muslim converts respectively.



His Majesty mingling with officers during the visit.



New appointments

UBD Vice-Chancellor

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 12 - The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) announced that His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has consented to the promotion of Director of Planning, Development and Research at the Ministry of Education, Dr. Hazri bin Haji Kifle to Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD). The appointment is effective today.

Director of ACB

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 31 - By command of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, it is hereby announced that His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has consented to appoint Hajah Anifa binti Haji Abdul Ghani, Deputy Narcotics Control Bureau as new Director of Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), effective from April 1.

RBPF officers

GADONG, March 9 - With the consent of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, seven police officers received their promotions during a ceremony held at the Mess Banquet Hall of the Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF) Headquarters. The promotion came into effect on February 15.

Two officers were promoted to Senior Superintendent of Police, two officers promoted to Superintendent of Police, an officer promoted to Chief Inspector, and two others promoted to Senior Inspector.

Muslim citizens and residents receive Ajwa dates



His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Chairman of the Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah (YSHHB) Board of Governors upon arrival at YSHHB Complex.

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 16 - His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Chairman of the Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah (YSHHB) Board of Governors graced the launch of distribution of His Majesty's personal gift of dates in conjunction with the month of Ramadan 1443 Hijrah held at An-Naura Hall of YSHHB Complex.

The ceremony began with the recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah led by Yang Dimuliakan Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Setia Raja Dato Paduka Seri Setia Haji Awang Suhaili

bin Haji Mohiddin, Syariah Court of Appeal Judge.

Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd. Yussof, Second Minister of Defence in a welcoming address said that the distribution of personal gifts of dates reflected the love and concern of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam towards all Muslim citizens and residents

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His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik delivering a sabda (royal speech) at the ceremony.

Muslim citizens, residents receive Ajwa dates (continued)

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in the country especially in performing religious deeds (*ibadah*) in the holy month of Ramadan.

His Royal Highness also consented to deliver a *sabda* (royal speech) at the ceremony stating that as in recent years, His Majesty's personal gift of dates is synonymous with the month of Ramadan and is highly anticipated by Brunei Muslim residents as the holy month approaches.

"Even though the country is still facing the outbreak of COVID-19, the YSHHB management with the strong support from various government and private agencies as well as volunteers, will distribute personal gift dates according to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) set by the government.

In fact, I understand that in the last two years, Yayasan's management has made improvements to the distribution process of personal gift dates by setting up distribution centres at ministries and government departments for civil servants as well as providing distribution centres for private employees in addition to the usual practice of distribution through mukim penghulu or village heads for the public," said His Royal Highness.

His Royal Highness further believed that such an initiative was proven to smoothen the distribution process while safeguarding the well-being of involved parties from the COVID-19 infections.

"On this occasion, I am pleased to express my appreciation and thanks to the Yayasan's management for carrying out the trust given by Allah the Almighty.

The appreciation is also extended to government ministries and departments, the Royal Brunei Armed Forces, the Royal Brunei Police Force, District Officers, mukim penghulu and village

heads, and relevant government agencies, including volunteers and Yayasan's strategic partners and all walks of life involved in managing and operating this charitable trust and responsibility successfully.

Hopefully, the noble efforts and cooperation contributed by all parties will be rewarded by Allah the Almighty," added His Royal Highness.

This year, some 156 metric tons of Ajwa dates were distributed to Muslim citizens and residents in the country.



His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik presenting dates to representatives of uniformed services and the public sector (above, below left and right).



COVID-19: Early Endemic phase extended

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 26 - With the consent of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, the COVID-19 Steering Committee has announced that the Early Endemic Phase under the

National COVID-19 Recovery Framework will be extended until Friday, April 15.

This was announced by Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Kerna Dato Seri Setia (Dr.) Haji Awang Abu Bakar bin Haji Apang, Minister of Home Affairs at the daily press conference on the COVID-19 situation at the Ministry of Health's

Al-'Afiah Hall.

However, the movement restriction which was implemented during 'Operasi Peralihan' - the instruction to stay at home from 12 am-midnight until 4 am will be no

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COVID-19: Early Endemic phase extended (continued)



Yang Berhormat Minister of Home Affairs during the announcement at a daily press conference.

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longer be extended starting Friday, April 1.

This marks the end of “Operasi Peralihan” / “Operasi Pulih” after six-months of its implementation in Brunei Darussalam since October 1, 2021.

“The Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam expresses its gratitude and appreciation to all government agencies especially security enforcement agencies, private sector, non-governmental organisations, volunteers, and the public for their collective support and cooperation towards the government's efforts as well as their assistance throughout the implementation of the movement restriction, in curbing the spread of COVID-19 in the country.

With this, His Majesty's Government will continue to monitor the spread of the virus

and will do its utmost best to ensure that the appropriate measures are taken in the interest of the safety of the country's citizens and residents,” said the Minister.

The minister also reminded members of the public not to be complacent and to continue to adhere to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and health protocols, such as physical distancing, ensuring venue capacity limits, the wearing of facemasks, maintaining cleanliness, mandatory use of the BruHealth mobile application and encouraging the use of ART before entering premises.

“Therefore, we must continue to pray, work together, and have faith in Allah the Almighty that we will be safe from the COVID-19 pandemic,” urged the Minister.

COVID-19: Travel Green List reactivated

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 30 - The Travel Green List which was announced previously is now reactivated with the updates and inclusion of several countries namely Australia, Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia (air travel only), New Zealand, Republic of Singapore, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia.

Travels to and from the aforementioned countries are no longer limited to essential travel only and are now open to non-essential travel commencing early April 2022.

This was stated by Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Kerna Dato Seri Setia (Dr.) Haji Awang Abu Bakar bin Haji Apong, Minister of Home Affairs, at the daily Press Conference on the current situation of the COVID-19 infection in Brunei Darussalam at Al-Afiah Hall, Ministry of Health.

Foreign nationals travelling from countries under the Travel Green List are not required to obtain Entry Travel Pass approval for inbound travel to Brunei Darussalam.

“However, inbound travel of foreign nationals from the Travel Green List countries who wish to work or visit Brunei Darussalam are still required to apply for employment visa, dependent visa, visit visa (for foreigners who require entry visa), or professional and business visit

visa prior to entering the country, as per existing regulations. In addition, they are also required to adhere to enforced health measures such as the completion of COVID-19 vaccination.

Travellers arriving from Travel Green List countries, are required to adhere to health protocols,” said the Minister of Home Affairs.

The updated Health Protocol firstly is to undergo an RT-PCR Swab Test no more than two days before departing from the country of origin or to undergo a certified ART not more than one day before the departing country of origin.

Secondly, to undergo RT-PCR swab test and ART on the day of arrival in the country and subsequently undergo ART only on the second and third day, whereby test results must be reported through the BruHealth application.

An ART kit with a QR Code for this purpose will be provided upon arrival in the country.

Thirdly, to undergo quarantine upon arrival in the country until a negative RT-PCR swab test result is obtained.

Travellers can undergo quarantine in their respective home residence or hotel accommodation.

Lastly, travellers who have previously been infected by COVID-19 and have



Yang Berhormat Minister of Home Affairs at the daily press conference elaborating on the reactivation of The Travel Green List.

evidence of infection such as a Recovery Certificate, whereby the date is no longer than 90 days, are exempted from the measures mentioned earlier.

They are also exempted from undergoing the RT-PCR swab test upon arrival and are only required to undergo ART on the day of arrival.

Further information and details of the guidelines for inbound and outbound travel can be found on the Prime Minister's Office website at www.jpm.gov.bn/travelportal.

70,870 - highest new COVID-19 cases recorded

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 31 – COVID-19 cases this month showed a drastic increase with a total of 70,870 new cases recorded throughout the month of March compared to a total of 47,016 last February, an increase of 23,854 cases. On the other hand, 28 deaths were recorded.

The daily situation of COVID-19 was stated in a daily press conference held at the Al-Afiah Hall of the Ministry of Health.

The highest number of new cases this month was on March 3 with a total of 4,885

cases while the lowest was on March 31 with only a total of 686 new cases, bringing the overall of positive COVID-19 cases in Brunei Darussalam up to date to 134,412.

To date, mass gatherings are permitted up to 300 people at public premises including halls and restaurants, or the maximum capacity a given venue, whichever is the lesser number.

As of March 30, under the National Vaccination Programme those who have received three doses of the COVID-19 vaccine was 61.3 per cent, while 94 per

cent of the entire population have received one or two doses.

In a press conference held on March 28, it was stated that the national vaccination programme for children aged five to 11 years old will commence as early as April 2 or April 4 subject to the moon sighting of Ramadan for 1443 Hijrah. If the moon is sighted, the vaccination programme will commence on April 4. Otherwise it will commence on April 2. It was also stated that the vaccination is voluntarily based on the request and consent of parents and guardians.

Officiation of new Veterinary Laboratory Services Building



Yang Berhormat Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism officiating the new Veterinary Laboratory Services Building (left) and taking a closer look at the facilities provided of the new laboratory building (right).



TERUNJING, March 17 - With the completion of the new Veterinary Laboratory Services Building, the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT) is expected to further expand the existing Veterinary Laboratory Services Unit (UPMV) services.

The new Veterinary Laboratory Services Building was officiated by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Ali bin Apong, Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism as the guest of honour at a Doa Selamat Ceremony marking the official opening of the new laboratory building located at Terunjing Agricultural Development Area (KKP).

The Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism later at the ceremony had the opportunity to take a closer look at the facilities of the new laboratory.

Also present were Hajah Tutiati binti Haji Abdul Wahab, the Permanent Secretary of the MPRT, deputy permanent secretaries, Acting Director of the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food and senior

officers of the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

Under the management of UPMV, the new laboratory among others aims to implement the department's planning to increase the number of types of laboratory tests, thus meeting the needs of importing countries.

It also aims to meet the international guidelines related to laboratory analysis including the International Standard of ISO / IEC 17025 and the standard of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

In addition, it will also enable the laboratory to safely conduct tests on zoonotic animal diseases with the construction of the Level 3 Biosafety Laboratory (BSL3).

The history of the establishment of this laboratory began in 1978 under the supervision of the Animal Clinic, Jalan Kumbang Pasang, and later moved to a building in Jalan Berakas near the Bolkliah Camp and known as the Animal Disease Research Laboratory.

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The new Veterinary Laboratory Services Building at Terunjing Agricultural Development Area (KKP).

COVID-19: Early Endemic phase extended (continued)

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In 1988, with the addition of the inspection scope of the examination and the narrowing of the laboratory conditions, the laboratory then moved to the Agricultural Research Centre, Kilanas, and was renamed as the Diagnostic Laboratory.

The Diagnostic Laboratory expanded the existing inspection scope such as clinical pathology, turning the lab into a referral centre for livestock health status.

In 1997, the name of the Diagnostic Laboratory was changed to UPMV until now.

UPMV is the only national veterinary laboratory responsible for providing support for the increase of livestock industry production and towards the accreditation of the department as a Competent Veterinary Authority (CVA).

Several measures have been implemented by the department to realise this role, including obtaining ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation, increasing the scope of laboratory testing services, and meeting the needs of importing countries.

Therefore, the department through the budget allocation of the 11th National Development Plan (RKN), with the title of Animal Diseases Research, Analysis and Reference Centre Programme under the Livestock Industry Development Project, has already implemented a project to upgrade the Veterinary Laboratory.

Meanwhile, livestock operators who wish to obtain laboratory inspection and analysing services can obtain more information from the website of the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

Brunei-Bangladesh strengthen friendly, bilateral relations

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 30 - The friendly and bilateral relations between Brunei Darussalam and Bangladesh was further strengthened based on mutual respect, trust, and cultural similarities.

In conjunction with the 51st Bangladesh Independence and National Day Celebration, the Bangladesh High Commission in Brunei Darussalam organised a reception held at the Rizqun International Hotel.

Present on behalf of the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Ali bin Apong, the Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism.

Her Excellency Mrs. Nahida Rahman Shumona, High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Brunei Darussalam in her welcoming address expressed her gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam for the concern and hospitality extended to the people of Bangladesh as well as the people of Brunei during these challenging times.

Her Excellency also thanked the Brunei Government for giving free vaccinations to Bangladesh expatriates on a priority basis during the second wave of the COVID-19.

"There are some 20,000 Bangladeshis serving in the country, as workers and professionals mostly in the oil and gas sector, infrastructure development and landscape, as well as doctors.

There are several Bangladeshis students studying at Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD), Universiti Teknologi Brunei (UTB), and Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA)," said Her Excellency.

In the Defence Sector, Her Excellency added that both countries also often exchange officers for attending courses.

Mentioning the Bangabandhu Youth Development initiative named "Diplomat for A Day", Her Excellency said it is a joint initiative with Legislative Council member and Brunei Youth Council's President, Yang Berhormat Dayang Khairunnisa binti Awang Haji Ashari, which has given the opportunity to 10 Bruneian youths to become Bangladeshi Diplomats for a day.



Yang Berhormat Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism on behalf of the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at the 51st Bangladesh Independence and National Day Celebration (above); and the Minister and Her Excellency High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Brunei Darussalam during the cake-cutting ceremony (below).



The highlight of the event was the cake cutting ceremony by Yang Berhormat Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism together with Her Excellency.

Among those present were foreign diplomats in the country, government officials, as well as Bangladeshi community members in the country.

Commemoration of 62nd Birthday Celebration of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan



Yang Berhormat Second Minister of Defence representing the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam with His Excellency the Ambassador-Designate of Japan to Brunei Darussalam at the reception.

GADONG, March 8 - His Excellency Maeda Toru, the Ambassador-Designate of Japan to Brunei Darussalam hosted a reception to commemorate the 62nd Birthday Celebration of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan, at the Rizqun International Hotel.

Representing the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at the reception was Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji. Mohd. Yussof, Second Minister of Defence.

His Excellency the Ambassador-Designate of Japan to Brunei Darussalam in his remarks said that the Brunei-Japan partnership on regional and global issues has become increasingly important where both countries share similar interests in various fields.

"Trade and investment between our two countries, especially in



His Excellency delivering a welcoming speech at the reception.

the energy sector, have greatly contributed to the prosperity of both countries since the 1960s and have successfully laid a solid foundation for our economic partnership," he added.

"The strong and multilateral relations between both countries since Brunei Darussalam's independence in 1984," said His Excellency, "has witnessed a steady growth in recent years in multiple sectors, despite the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic."

In this regard, His Excellency further expressed his confidence that the cooperation between both countries will continue to flourish and elevate to greater levels in multiple fields, particularly in economic development, defence, and global issues.

At the event, Japanese companies operating in the Sultanate also showcased their current achievements and activities.

Brunei-Malaysia underscore strong defence relationship



Yang Berhormat Second Minister of Defence at the bilateral meeting with the Honourable Dato' Seri Hishammuddin bin Tun Hussein, Senior Defence Minister of Malaysia.

KUALA LUMPUR, March 28. - Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd. Yussof, Second Minister of Defence attended the 17th Defence Services Asia (DSA) and National Security (NATSEC) Asia, held from March 28 to 30, at the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre (MITEC).

The opening ceremony was inaugurated by the Honourable Dato' Seri Hishammuddin bin Tun Hussein, Senior Defence Minister of Malaysia, and the Honourable Dato' Seri Hamzah Zainudin, Minister of Home Affairs of Malaysia. The DSA 2022 exhibition had participation from over 1,500 companies and 60 countries which showcased the latest updates on defence industry development, bringing the world's most advanced technologies, systems, and services in various defence and

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Brunei–Malaysia underscore strong defence relationship (continued)

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security fields.

On the side-lines of the first day of the exhibition, Yang Berhormat Second Minister of Defence had a bilateral meeting with the Honourable Dato' Seri Hishammuddin bin Tun Hussein, Senior Defence Minister of Malaysia, where both sides underscored the strong defence relationship and also took the opportunity to discuss on various strategic issues of mutual interest including the current global security situation.

In addition, Yang Berhormat also had a bilateral meeting with the Honourable

Delfin N. Lorenzana, Secretary of National Defense of the Republic of Philippines, as well as the Honourable Lieutenant General TNI (Purnama) Prabowo Subianto, Minister of Defence, Republic of Indonesia.

The 17th DSA is a prestigious international defence exhibition hosted by the Malaysian Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Home Affairs, and organised by the DSA Exhibition and Conferences Sdn. Bhd., with support from the Malaysian Armed Forces, Royal Malaysia Police. The Malaysian Defence Industry Council (MDIC). Ministry of Defence (MinDef)

and Royal Brunei Armed Forces' (RBAF) attendances at this exhibition provide an ideal platform for industry engagement in defence technologies and systems, vital for the realisation of capability development within MinDef and RBAF.

Also in attendance during the exhibition were His Excellency Brigadier General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Haji Mahmud bin Haji Saidin, High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam to Malaysia; Major General Dato Seri Pahlawan Haji Muhammad Haszaimi bin Bol Hassan, Commander of RBAF as well as senior officers from the MinDef and RBAF.

Putrajaya Forum 2022: shares regional, international defence issues

KUALA LUMPUR, March 29 – The Putrajaya Forum convened on the second day of the 17th Defence Services Asia (DSA) exhibition at the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre (MITEC).

Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd. Yussof, Second Minister of Defence, attended the Putrajaya Forum 2022 which had the theme of "Shared Regional Responsibility" and was officiated by the Honourable Dato' Seri Hishammuddin bin Tun Hussein, Senior Defence Minister of Malaysia.

The forum draws participation from various defence and security agencies, think tanks, and academics, where ideas were shared to promote understanding on regional and international defence and security issues as well as the possibilities of broadening security cooperation. The forum also highlighted the adaptation to new security realities in the development of civil-military cooperation as well as the paradigm shifts of social media and its effect on wars and conflicts.

Also in attendance during the forum were His Excellency Brigadier General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Haji Mahmud bin Haji Saidin, the High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam to Malaysia; Major General Dato Seri Pahlawan Haji Muhammad Haszaimi bin Bol Hassan, the Commander of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF); as well as senior officers from the Ministry of Defence (MinDef) and RBAF.



Yang Berhormat Second Minister of Defence during the bilateral meeting over breakfast with His Excellency Dr. Ng Eng Hen, Republic of Singapore's Minister of Defence.

Prior to attending the Putrajaya Forum, Yang Berhormat Second Minister of Defence held a bilateral meeting over breakfast with His Excellency Dr. Ng Eng Hen, Republic of Singapore's Minister of Defence.

Bridge the Knowledge Gap to Better Kidney Care

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 10 - Brunei Darussalam joins the rest of the world in observing World Kidney Day 2022 to raise public awareness on the importance of maintaining kidney health and reducing the effects of kidney disease and its associated health problems.

Kidney disease is categorised as a non-communicable disease and a study conducted by the American Diabetes Association showed that 850 million people worldwide suffer from kidney

disease.

This was stated by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohammad Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health in his message in conjunction with World Kidney Day 2022.

Referring to the statement from the International Committee on World Kidney Day 2020, in line with International Nephrology Organisation, one to 10 people around the world suffers from

chronic kidney disease and the number of patients with kidney disease is increasing year by year. This will be a burden to the health care system as patients need lifelong care.

The Minister of Health stated that Brunei Darussalam is among the world's highest rates of end-stage kidney disease, where diabetes and hypertension are identified

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Bridge the Knowledge Gap to Better Kidney Care (continued)

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as the main causes of kidney disease.

The Brunei Dialysis and Transplant Registration for 2020, showed that there were 881 end-stage kidney patients, of which 217 of it are new cases.

"This leads to an increase of 12.1 per cent over the previous year where 138 kidney patients passed away in 2020. We need to continue to understand that when the kidneys fail to function properly, the patients have only two options, either undergoing dialysis treatment or a kidney transplant. If left untreated, it can lead to death.

This year's World Kidney Day Celebration themed, "Bridge the Knowledge Gap to Better Kidney Care" gives the impression that many in the community have low basic awareness, limited health literacy, and lack of readiness to know about chronic kidney disease," said the Minister.

This knowledge gap restricts the fight against kidney disease and increases the incidence of death among patients. The essence of this theme calls on all people of the world to reduce the barriers to gaining knowledge about kidney healthcare and towards better including complex information on kidney disease.

The Minister also agreed that this year's theme is also very relevant and important to the current COVID-19 pandemic.

In general, people with kidney disease have a higher risk of getting worse if they are infected with COVID-19 disease, compared to other patients. This includes those undergoing dialysis treatments and those undergoing a kidney transplant.

"The Ministry of Health through the Department of Renal Services undertakes various efforts and initiatives towards improving the quality of life of kidney patients and those around them with continuing education and the use of patient advocacy, which includes urging kidney patients to get the COVID-19 vaccine earlier during the pandemic, especially for patients undergoing dialysis treatment.

Within two months, more than 70 per cent of the patients have received two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine in November 2021. Prior to that, patients who received two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine were less than 5 per cent. This initiative is to promote and provide specialised vaccination facilities so that it is easy for patients to get the vaccinated and to provide the appropriate type of vaccination for kidney patients," added the Minister.

The Minister went on to say, the department has also increased the amount of peritoneal dialysis treatment (water wash) among kidney patients which is the second-best and easiest treatment for kidney replacement therapy. Treatment through a kidney transplant is the best option but involves many factors that are often difficult to obtain.

"Meanwhile, haemodialysis (blood washing) treatment," said the Minister "is the last resort but has its risks. One of the barriers for patients to choose peritoneal dialysis treatment is feeling fear, anxiety, or less confidence in carrying out their treatment at home even though it has been explained, that they will continue to be guided, counselled, trained, and monitored until the patient and family members can do it themselves.

The misinformation they received from non-knowledgeable, or non-professional people is also one of the factors causing them to choose haemodialysis over peritoneal dialysis treatment."

"However, *Alhamdulillah*, with the continued cooperation of all patients, there has been an increase in 2021, which is a 40.7 per cent increase in Peritoneal Dialysis patients from 2020.

The next initiative is to improve communication access between kidney patients and nurses according to their respective types of treatment. With the introduction of the hotline, patients and nurses of the Renal Services Department can communicate, including outside office hours, every day, if necessary," added the Minister.

The Minister further said this year's World Kidney Day Celebration campaign will focus more on efforts to increase kidney health education and awareness and reduce the high knowledge gap of chronic kidney problems at all levels of kidney care.

This includes initiatives of providing early awareness through counselling to chronic kidney patients and end-stage renal patients on the treatment options available, namely haemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis, and kidney transplantation; education of kidney patients (including practical advice on diet and lifestyle) to increase the resilience of patients, their caregivers, and their support systems toward achieving meaningful health outcomes and life goals; the integration of chronic kidney problems and the prevention of renal failure into the national non-communicable disease programme for comprehensive



Yang Berhormat Minister of Health.

and integrated services, which are important in improving early detection and detection of kidney care at the national level; recognition of the rights of patients and caregivers to be able to assess, understand and use health information related to chronic kidney problems; and to offer information related to chronic kidney problems according to various levels of health literacy.

"*Alhamdulillah*, we are very fortunate in Brunei Darussalam because health services are accessible to all citizens and residents in this country.

In addition, various treatments and medicines are given for free compared to other countries. However, it is our responsibility to jointly strive to adopt a healthy lifestyle, be physically active, avoid tobacco and follow a healthy and balanced lifestyle with effective medication," said the Minister.

The Ministry will continue to strive in providing excellence in the provision of care that is accessible to all, not only in the aspect of kidney disease but in all aspects of non-communicable diseases.

With the celebration of World Kidney Day, the Minister hopes to see more people who understand kidney disease, especially patients, caregivers, and family members of patients so that all can enjoy a healthy and prosperous life.

Let us together increase our role in fighting kidney disease.

Launching of Abbott GLP TLA System



Yang Berhormat Minister of Health in his capacity as Executive Director of Jerudong Park Medical Centre launching the new Abbott GLP TLA System (left) and taking a closer look at the newly launched system (right).

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JERUDONG, March 25 – Jerudong Park Medical Centre (JPMC) is privileged to be the third Laboratory to own the new Abbott GLP Total Laboratory Automation (TLA) System within the South East Asia region, offering greater flexibility and options to meet the increased operational demand at JPMC.

The launching of the innovative GLP TLA system was held at JPMC Laboratory, Level 1 and was officiated by the Guest of Honour, Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Haji Mohammad Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health in his capacity as Executive Director of JPMC with Senior Management and head of departments present.

The event began with a *doa* led by Ustaz Haji Ishkandar bin Haji Buntar, Religious Officer, and continued with a tour to witness the operation of the GLP TLA system.

The GLP TLA system uses an automated

sample delivery track system that handles an estimated 900 samples per hour from start to finish.

“The automated processes will result in reduced turnaround time, which will benefit patient management, particularly in critical care units,” stated Dr. Awang Haji Mohammad bin Haji Kassim, Head of JPMC Laboratory Department.

“It also has a feature that minimises contact with patients’ blood samples, ensuring the safety of workers. The system maximises efficiency by having consistent sample management to ensure better and faster laboratory service,” he added.

JPMC is a private hospital in Brunei Darussalam, situated in the scenic Jerudong Park area, located along the shores of the South China Sea.

It offers a spectrum of services catering to your family and organisational needs, which includes general, specialised,

and surgical healthcare services. These services are provided by our highly qualified and committed multi-disciplinary medical team utilising state-of-the-art technology.

Surrounded by the tranquillity of nature, JPMC is offering an ideal ambience for healing and wellness to the whole family. With patient rooms overlooking the expanse of the glamorous shores, surely will enjoy a sense of serenity and privacy and the soothing cadence of the waves.

The centre is widely renowned for being the only private specialist hospital and the first hospital to be accredited by the Joint Commission International (JCI) in the Sultanate since 2014.

JPMC was awarded their second accreditation by the Joint Commission International in 2017, and later in 2020, JPMC retained its JCI accreditation for the third time, the 1st for any health institution in the country.

Judiciary remains open and functional due to transition online

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 31 - The Opening of the Legal Year 2022 was streamed live from the Supreme Court of Brunei Darussalam to about 200 participants on Zoom.

Yang Berhormat (Yang Amat Arif) Dato Seri Paduka Steven Chong Wan Oon, Chief Justice, delivered his customary speech at the annual event via video conference for the first time.

In his speech, Yang Berhormat Chief Justice outlined the Courts’ key developments and work done in the past

year and mentioned aspects of the judicial response to COVID-19 and how the challenges posed by the second and third waves of COVID-19 have required us to adapt and re-examine how we administer and deliver justice.

The Chief Justice also emphasised the greater role of technology and how it has aided the judiciary in keeping the courts running by having matters heard online at all levels of court and the provision of court services online.

In this regard, the Chief Justice expressed

his appreciation to the Attorney General’s Chambers and the Bar for their support in working together with the Judiciary to ensure that our justice system remains open and functional and how court users and stakeholders have adapted well to the transition online.

The Chief Justice also highlighted criminal and civil cases presided over by the Court of Appeal during their time in Brunei and by the High Court Judge in Australia on Zoom

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Judiciary remains open and functional due to transition online (continued)

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where parties attended remotely from various locations in Brunei and abroad in Canada, India, Malaysia, Singapore, and the United Kingdom.

The Chief Justice reinforced the Judiciary’s commitment to ensuring that technology enables safe and effective access to justice and capitalising on the greater use of technology to administer justice efficiently.

The Chief Justice also spoke on the past year’s statistics and how it reflects the court’s best efforts to cope with the demands arising from pandemic.

The Chief Justice reported that from January to December 2021, the clearance rate for civil suits in the High Court was 64 per cent whereas civil suits in the Magistrates Court had a clearance rate of 70 per cent.

“As for matters in the Intermediate Court,



Yang Berhormat (Yang Amat Arif) Chief Justice Oon delivering his customary speech at the annual event via video conference.

criminal trials had a clearance rate of 63 per cent whereas commercial and civil matters were cleared at a rate of 65 per cent and 77 per cent respectively, 66 per cent of judgments at all levels of

the court were delivered between one to three-month,” the Chief Justice added.

On the advancement of mediation in the courts, the Chief Justice highlighted the introduction of Practice Direction No.1 of 2021 on the use of alternative dispute resolution for matters involving family law disputes.

“The Practice Direction which took effect from December 2021, requires that as part of divorce proceedings, couples with at least one child below 18-years of age must undergo mandatory court-annexed mediation. Mediation will better assist families in reducing the emotional burden, time, and cost of resolving their disputes,” expressed The Chief Justice with hope.

It was also announced that with effect from January 2022, one Intermediate Court Judge and one Senior Magistrate are now stationed full-time at the Tutong District Court.

According to the Chief Justice, this was part of the court’s efforts to provide access to justice across the country, to offer court users and the community in Tutong more convenient access to judicial services, and to ensure cases can also be dealt with more expeditiously.

The Chief Justice’s speech was followed by speeches by Yang Berhormat Haji Ahmad bin Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Setia Bakti Diraja Dato Laila Utama Haji Awang Isa, the Attorney General, and Haji Mansur bin Dato Paduka Dr. Haji Latif, the President of the Law Society.



Also in attendance were Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Setia Bakti Diraja Dato Laila Utama Haji Awang Isa bin Pehin Datu Perdana Manteri Dato Laila Utama Haji Awang Ibrahim, Special Adviser to His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and the Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Abdul Mokti bin Haji Mohd. Daud, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office.



The Opening of the Legal Year 2022 streaming live from the Supreme Court of Brunei Darussalam to about 200 participants on Zoom.

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Pandemic requires Judiciary adapts transition online (continued)

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The opening of the legal year ceremony was also attended in person by Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Setia Bakti Diraja Dato Laila Utama Haji Awang Isa bin Pehin Datu Perdana Manteri Dato Laila Utama Haji Awang Ibrahim, Special Adviser to His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and the Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Haji

Awang Abdul Mokti bin Haji Mohd. Daud, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office.

The annual event was conducted in a scaled-down manner when compared to previous years to consider the current COVID-19 situation and was only attended in person by members of the Judiciary and invited guests. Members of the Attorney General's Chambers and

the Law Society attended online along with invited guests comprising of Yang Berhormat Chief Syarie Judge, judges from the Syariah Courts, Ambassadors and High Commissioners, the Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office, senior government officials, and representatives from various government enforcement agencies.

28th AEM Retreat endorses Priority Economic Deliverables (PED)

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 16 - The 28th ASEAN Economic Ministers' Retreat (28th AEM Retreat) was held officially via video conferencing and was attended virtually by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew bin Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy.

The meeting was chaired by His Excellency Pan Sorasak, Minister of Commerce from the Kingdom of Cambodia, and was attended by Economic Ministers from all the ASEAN Member States and the ASEAN Secretary-General, His Excellency Dato Paduka Lim Jock Hoi.

ASEAN Member States endorsed Cambodia's 19 proposed Priority Economic Deliverables (PED) which are divided into four strategic thrusts: (i) Enhancing Digital Connectivity, Science and Technology; (ii) Narrowing the Development Gap for ASEAN's Competitiveness; (iii) Promoting a More Integrated, Inclusive, Resilient and Competitive ASEAN; and (iv) Strengthening Global ASEAN for Growth and Development.

The ASEAN Secretariat briefed the meeting on ASEAN's economic outlook where Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to grow by 2.9 per cent in 2021 and between 5.1 - 5.8 per cent in 2022.

In this regard, the meeting took note that the several ASEAN Member States will soon shift towards the endemic stage with the re-opening of borders.

To this end, the ministers reaffirmed the need for continued close cooperation for supply chain resilience and enhanced cross-sectoral collaboration in areas of digitalisation and sustainability, particularly through regional initiatives undertaken through the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF), Bandar Seri Begawan Roadmap on Digital Transformation of ASEAN (BSBR) and Expansion of the List of Essential Goods under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Implementation of Non-Tariff Measures on Essential Goods under the Hanoi Plan of Action.

The meeting also called for the acceleration of the implementation of the ASEAN Travel Corridor Arrangement

Framework (ATCAF), which can further facilitate the resumption of travel across borders.

The Economic ministers discussed the latest status of ASEAN's Free Trade Agreements (FTA).

Notably, the meeting launched the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) upgrade negotiation, with the objective to promote deeper and wider economic integration in the region, provide a conducive environment for growth and development as well as facilitate trade.

Further, ASEAN Member States also reaffirmed commitment for the ongoing upgrade of the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand FTA (AANZFTA) to ensure that the agreement remains a high-standard agreement, relevant for business and people, and fit for purpose in response to COVID-19.

The meeting also provided an opportunity for ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC) to have a consultation with ASEAN Economic Ministers, in which ministers were briefed on the priorities and initiatives of ASEAN-BAC members including the latest development of Brunei Darussalam's legacy projects titled "Harnessing Impact for Resilient Employability Digitally (HIRED)" and "ASEAN Digital Gateway and Travel Wallet", which was presented by Yang Berhormat FDr. Ar. Siti Rozaimeriyanthy DSLJ Haji Abdul Rahman and Ms. Haslina Taib, respectively.

The 28th AEM Retreat was preceded by the Preparatory Senior Economic Officials Meeting (Prep-SEOM) held on the March 15, and was attended by Dr. Hajah May Fa'ezah binti Haji Ahmad Ariffin, Permanent Secretary (Economy) at the Ministry of Finance and Economy.



Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew bin Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy during the 28th ASEAN Economic Ministers' Retreat (28th AEM Retreat) was held officially via video conferencing.

Brunei-UAE sign MoU to enhance maritime industry



Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy signing on behalf of the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam while the Government of UAE was represented by His Excellency Minister of Energy and Infrastructure of the United Arab Emirates.

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, MARCH 29 - At the side-line of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam's working visit to Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of the UAE.

The MoU on the Recognition of Certificate Issued under the Provisions of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch Keeping for Seafarers, 1978 as amended was signed by Yang Berhormat Dato

Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew bin Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy on behalf of the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam while representing the Government of UAE was His Excellency Suhail Mohamed Al Mazrouei, Minister of Energy and Infrastructure of the UAE.

The MoU is an effort to expand and develop the maritime industry of Brunei Darussalam in terms of human resources.

For Brunei Darussalam seafarers'

Competency Certificates are recognised by the Government of the UAE and open up employment opportunities on merchant ships registered under Brunei Darussalam and the UAE. The maritime institutions of the two countries will be able to be co-recognised respectively.

Brunei Darussalam had previously signed a similar MoU with at least 15 countries, namely Australia, Canada, Ghana, Ireland, Pakistan, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, the Philippines, Croatia, India, Indonesia, Singapore, United Kingdom, and Viet Nam and now, the United Arab Emirates.

Brunei-China friendship: 30 best paintings receive prizes



Yang Berhormat Minister of Education and Her Excellency the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to Brunei Darussalam during the event held virtually.

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 12 - Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Hamzah bin Haji Sulaiman, Minister of Education said the third Brunei Primary School Students' Painting Competition Awards Ceremony was to commemorate the diplomatic relations between Brunei Darussalam and the People's Republic of China, themed "Friendship of the People's

Republic of China and Brunei".

"Indeed, in the last 30 years," the Minister of Education said, "both countries have made great progress in various sectors."

"In the field of education, the last few years have seen both countries' participation in the ASEAN-China Vocational Education

Summit Forum and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in the field of higher education.

Whilst our bilateral co-operation continues to make a steady pace in matters related to academics and research events such as painting competitions today also enhance our co-operation," said the Minister at the event which was held virtually through Zoom.

The Minister added that each painting displayed unique perspectives on the friendship between the two countries. While working under the same theme, each young artist interprets it differently and gives each piece its own individuality.

Meanwhile, Her Excellency Yu Hong, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to Brunei Darussalam in her welcoming address said the 30 years

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Brunei-China friendship: 30 best paintings receive prizes (continued)

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China-Brunei diplomatic ties have seen joint efforts from both countries to consolidate mutual political trust, with thriving practical co-operation in various fields.

"At a time of vaccine shortages around the world, China took the lead in donating vaccines to Brunei and provided technical

support to Brunei's fight against the pandemic.

Bilateral trade has also reached USD2.85 billion in 2021, increasing to 46.6 per cent year on year," added Her Excellency.

Her Excellency also noted that the competition was accomplished by

teachers and students who overcame the difficulties brought about by the raging pandemic and online schooling.

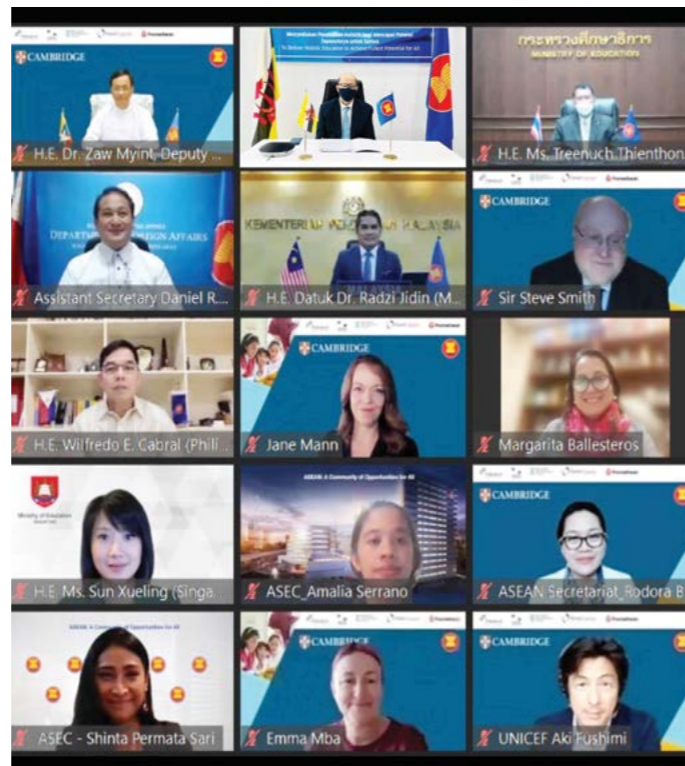
Out of more than 80 entries from 14 schools, 30 paintings were awarded prizes, namely two main prizes, three first prizes, five second prizes, eight third prizes, and 12 consolation prizes.

ASED discuss ASEAN education sector



BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 16 – Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Hamzah bin Haji Sulaiman, Minister of Education of Brunei Darussalam attended the Ministerial Event on Recover Learning and Rebuild Education in the ASEAN Region and ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting (ASED) Chairmanship Ceremonial Turnover held virtually.

Yang Berhormat Minister of Education attending the Ministerial Event on Recover Learning and Rebuild Education in the ASEAN Region and ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting (ASED) Chairmanship Ceremonial Turnover held virtually (above and right)



The event saw the ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting (ASED) Chairmanship Ceremonial Turnover of the Philippines to Viet Nam, where the achievements of the ASEAN education sector from 2020 to 2021 were highlighted by a representative from the Philippines, and updates were shared by the representative of the incoming ASED Chair Viet Nam for the ongoing initiatives.

It was followed by the ministerial panel discussions attended by other Education Ministers from Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, and Thailand while Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam were represented by their deputy ministers.

The event was jointly organised by the Cambridge Partnership for Education with the ASEAN Secretariat and the Ministry of Education and Training Viet Nam which aims, among others, to provide opportunities for ASEAN leaders with a platform to discuss and share experiences

in overcoming pandemic challenges at the economic, educational, and social levels, with the theme "Recover Learning and Rebuild Education in the ASEAN region".

The Ministerial Panel Discussion is the first ministerial event under the Chairmanship of Viet Nam in the Education Sector.

During the ministerial panel discussions, the ministers and the deputy ministers shared knowledge gained from lessons learned, presented outcomes of past and current interventions, as well as formed cross-region partnerships which will benefit the region as a whole, focusing on topics that covered "Learning Loss and Accelerated Learning, Access to Education" and "Building Education System Resilience".

In his remark, the Minister of Education of Negara Brunei Darussalam, in his panel discussion shared Brunei Darussalam's key initiatives tackling the issue of "Access

to Education" during the pandemic including among others: the Ministry of Education's (MoE) collaboration with other government agencies and telecommunications companies in addressing immediate needs for hardware and internet connection for students and teachers when education was shifted to online; creating a Framework to Discovery to address students' learning deficit; provision of training for online teaching for teachers; and also sharing MOE's 'Digital Transformation Plan' efforts to improve teachers' and students' digital learning experiences by giving them access to emerging and future technologies in order to create a more engaging and successful educational process and to improve access to education for all children.

Also present were Dr. Shamsiah Zuraini Kanchanawati binti Haji Tajuddin the Permanent Secretary (Core Education) and officials from MoE, Brunei Darussalam.

Gender Equality for a Sustainable Tomorrow

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 8 - In 1975, the United Nations (UN) has recognised the March 8 as the date for International Women's Day to celebrate the achievements of women around the world in social, economic, cultural, and political aspects.

The theme for this year's International Women's Day recommended by the UN is "Gender Equality today for a Sustainable Tomorrow" with the hashtag #BreaktheBias.

"*Alhamdulillah*, Brunei Darussalam is once again able to celebrate International Women's Day.

In the context of climate change, policies and programmes on climate risk mitigation and disaster risk reduction, this theme recognises the contributions of women and girls around the world, who are also championing climate change adaptation, mitigation, and response to build a more sustainable future for all," said Yang Berhormat Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Aminuddin Ihsan bin Pehin Orang Kaya Saiful Mulok Dato Seri Paduka Haji Abidin, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports in a message in conjunction with International Women's Day 2022.

The minister added that according to the UN, issues of climate change and sustainability have and will continue to have a significant and lasting impact on the environment, and on economic and social development in general.

It also leaves deep impacts on vulnerable groups. These include women, who are increasingly recognised as being more vulnerable to the effects of climate change, particularly in developing countries and rural areas where women are more reliant on natural resources which are threatened by climate change.

"As such, we are proud that women and girls have and continue to be effective leaders and change-makers who are spearheading efforts to address the effects of climate change and mitigation. They have been involved in creating and delivering sustainability initiatives around the world in which, their participation and leadership have resulted in highly effective climate action. Therefore, we must continue to empower the voices of women and girls and be provided the opportunity to make decisions on climate change to develop sustainability.

Brunei Darussalam fully recognises the importance of the role of women in the socio-economic development of the

country while acknowledging that the equality of rights and empowerment of women, in addition to being a fundamental human right, is essential for women's progress. Our country remains committed to the development of all sectors as embodied in Vision 2035, towards educated, highly skilled and successful people, improving the quality of life and a dynamic and sustainable economy," said the Minister.

The Minister went on to say that according to the latest statistics, more than 55 per cent of women aged 15 to 65 years old are part of the workforce that contributes to national development. They serve in a wide range of capacities in the public sector to high ranks and positions, and in the private sector until the highest levels in key sectors such as finance, telecommunications, construction as well as info-communication, and technology. This includes areas traditionally ventured by men such as security forces.

In the climate change sector, the Minister added, our country adopts a Whole of Nation approach in the formation of the Brunei Darussalam National Climate Change Policy, which has been prepared to shape the country's direction towards becoming a sustainable nation that is low in carbon and climate resilient.

"We also see the existence of environmental groups and associations led and championed by women such as Beach Bunch, Green Brunei, and Panaga Natural History Society who together with the government, undertake responsibilities in raising awareness to the public on the importance of mitigating the impacts of climate change.

On this meaningful day, apart from celebrating women's achievements in various aspects; we must also look at the issues that women and girls have faced around the world, including in our own country. We need to raise awareness to the public on issues related to women to further expand the support that can be



Yang Berhormat Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports.

given to them," urged the Minister.

The Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports (MCYS) through the Department of Community Development (JAPEM) plans to hold the 9th International Women's Day Celebration in 2022 in collaboration with various government agencies, private, non-governmental organisations such as the Women's Council, Brunei Youth Council (MBB) and women advocates.

Several events planned for this year will provide a platform for women to share their opinions and discuss issues of interest for women in Brunei Darussalam. All of this will be channelled to a study on women's development for Brunei Darussalam which will begin this year, to strengthen the Plan of Action on Women, under the National Council on Social Issues (MKIS).

Undoubtedly, the role and contribution of women in Brunei Darussalam are important for socio-economic development and the preservation of peace and security. They contributed equally to achieve economic progress, family well-being, social and prosperity of the country. We highly appreciate and express our deepest gratitude for such significant contributions.

27th ASCC - Encourage youths to undertake community engagement

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 30 - Yang Berhormat Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Aminuddin Ihsan bin Pehin Orang Kaya Saiful Mulok Dato Seri Paduka Haji Abidin, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports as Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Minister, attended the 27th ASCC Council Meeting, held via

video conference.

The meeting was chaired by His Excellency Dr. Hang Chuon Naron, Minister of Education, Youth and Sport of Cambodia, as the ASCC Chairman 2022, and was attended by ASCC

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27th ASCC - Encourage youths to undertake community engagement (continued)



Yang Berhormat Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports as Brunei Darussalam's ASCC Minister, His Excellency Dato Paduka Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of ASEAN and other ASCC Council ministers during the 27th ASCC Council Meeting, virtually.

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Ministers or their representatives; His Excellency Dato Paduka Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of ASEAN and their respective delegations.

In his remarks, the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports emphasised the prioritisation of ASEAN's post-pandemic readiness particularly in providing access to vulnerable groups to education and viable platforms of socio-economic activities by implementing past initiatives including the ASEAN Comprehensive Framework on Care Economy adopted at the 38th and 39th ASEAN Summits in 2021.

The pivotal role of the Senior Officials Committee for ASCC (SOCA) is also reaffirmed and the Minister welcomed the progress of the development of the Strategy Playbook following the adoption of the ASEAN Strategic Policy Framework on Promoting an Adaptive Community of Greater Understanding, Tolerance and A Sense of Regional Agendas Among the Peoples of ASEAN last year.

The Playbook will serve as a guiding document to foster greater regional understanding and tolerance among our people.

In underlining the importance of youth issues to sustainable development in the ASEAN region, the Minister added that ASCC should continue to encourage the youth to undertake community engagement and be empowered as agents of change and be given the opportunity to act with purpose and belonging to ASEAN and its initiatives, and as such, welcomed the declaration of the year 2022 as the Year of ASEAN Youth.

Accompanying the Minister at the meeting were Hajah Nor Ashikin binti Haji Johari, Permanent Secretary (Community and Culture), and senior officials of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of Brunei Darussalam.

During the meeting, the ASCC Ministers expressed support for Cambodia's ASEAN 2022 theme: "Addressing Challenges Together (ACT)", which underscored ASEAN's spirit of 'Togetherness' as one community and the common will in its collective endeavour to address and overcome challenges facing the region.

The meeting underscored the progress made in the ASCC Pillar, with particular focus on this year's priorities. Amongst others:

(i) The meeting also commended the development of ASCC's outcome documents to the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summits, such as the ASEAN Regional Guidelines on Safe School Reopening, Learning Recovery and Continuity and the Declaration on Digital Transformation of Education System throughout ASEAN;

(ii) ASCC Ministers also underlined the importance of continued empowerment of youth and women to support sustainable development in the ASEAN region, and looked forward to the adoption of the ASEAN Leaders' Statement on Year of ASEAN Youth 2022 and the ASEAN Declaration on Building More Sustainable, Inclusive and Resilient Future: Unlocking Women's Entrepreneurship in ASEAN;

(iii) The significant role of sports in ASEAN Community building, which also

supported the realisation of ASEAN 2025 and Sustainable Development Goals 2030 was also emphasised during the meeting.

In this regard, the meeting welcomed the development of the Declaration on Leveraging the Role of Sports in ASEAN Community-Building and Achieving the SDGs; and the Declaration on Fostering ASEAN Identity through the Safeguarding of Traditional Sports and Games (TSG) in the Modern World.

(iv) The meeting also noted with satisfaction the ongoing efforts in strengthening ASEAN's commitment to address climate change issues and noted the ongoing discussion on the initiative to establish an ASEAN Centre for Climate Change (ACCC) which is expected to be a climate change knowledge hub, think-tank, and strategic coordinator. The meeting welcomed several initiatives on disaster management that are in line with the implementation of the ASEAN SHIELD, including the development of the TOR of the ASEAN Disaster Resilience Platform to ensure a Whole-of-ASEAN approach in disaster management and;

(v) The ministers reaffirmed the commitment to enhance the quality of life of the ASEAN people through the strengthening of continued cooperation in the areas of health, social protection, cultural and creative industries.

The 27th ASCC Meeting was preceded by the 32nd Senior Officials Committee for ASCC (32nd SOCA) and the 5th Meeting of the ASEAN Working Group on Culture of Prevention (5th WG on CoP) held on March 28 and March 29, via video conference.

Brunei receives facial recognition equipment from Japan



The Permanent Secretary (Security, Enforcement and Law) at the Prime Minister's Office receiving the contribution from His Excellency Ambassador-designate of Japan to Brunei Darussalam.



The attendees watching a short video on the features of the NEC Corporation's NeoFace Watch Facial Recognition System.

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 14

- The Government of Japan through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has contributed a set of facial recognition equipment and software which will be used by security and enforcement agencies in Brunei Darussalam.

A handover ceremony was held at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

Present to receive the contribution on behalf of the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was Dato Paduka Awang Haji Sufian bin Haji Sabtu, Permanent Secretary (Security, Enforcement

and Law) at the PMO, meanwhile the Government of Japan was represented by His Excellency Maeda Toru, Ambassador-designate of Japan to Brunei Darussalam.

In their remarks to commemorate this handover ceremony, both the Permanent Secretary at the PMO and His Excellency Ambassador-designate of Japan mentioned that the contribution of this facial recognition equipment reflects the robust and long-standing ties between the two countries, especially in the field of security.

Pre-recorded messages were also

delivered by Mr. Jeremy Douglas, Regional Representative for South East Asia, and the Pacific at the UNODC, and Mr. Maekawa Kentaro, General Manager of the Global Relations Division, NEC Corporation, Japan.

The attendees then watched a short video on the features of the NEC Corporation's NeoFace Watch Facial Recognition System.

Also present at the ceremony were senior officers from the PMO, the Internal Security Department, and the Department of Civil Aviation.

Turkish Embassy delivers rations to families undergoing quarantine



His Excellency Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Turkey to Brunei Darussalam with the Head of Food Ration Distribution Centre at Sungai Kebun.

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 16 - The Embassy of the Republic of Turkey in Brunei Darussalam took the opportunity

to join hands with volunteers in delivering food rations, in response to the call from the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports to

participate in volunteering work following the recent spike in COVID-19 infections.

The Turkish Embassy's staff transported rations provided at the Sungai Kebun Sport Complex to families undergoing the quarantine order to houses in different villages.

Mohammad Johardi bin Hamdi, Head of Food Ration Distribution Centre at Sungai Kebun expressed his appreciation for the Embassy's supportive efforts.

His Excellency Prof. Dr. Hamit Ersoy, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Turkey to Brunei Darussalam was also given a mini tour of the distribution centre.

The embassy believes that tackling COVID-19 together would not only bring the community closer together, but will also make the world a better place.

Handover of national flags to Mindanao's 18th IMT-M, IDB VMAT



Acting Commander of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces handing over the national flag to Commander of Royal Brunei Navy (RBN), Md Zouhdy bin Haji Abd Razak (left), and to Lieutenant Colonel Hairin bin Japar (right).



General Dato Seri Pahlawan Haji Abdul Razak bin Haji Abd. Kadir, Acting Commander of the RBAF.

Also in attendance were Sulaiman bin Alidin, Deputy Commissioner of Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF), deputy service commanders, directors and commandants, Defence Attaché of the Republic of the Philippines, and Malaysia as well as representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The guest of honour later handed over the Brunei Darussalam flags to Md. Zouhdy bin Haji Abd Razak, Commander of Royal Brunei Navy (RBN) as the head of the delegation of 18th IMT-M NBD, and Lieutenant Colonel Hairin bin Japar as the head of the delegation of the 4th IDB VMAT/2022.

BOLKIAH GARRISON, March 17 – Brunei Darussalam deployed five officers from the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) and one officer from the Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF) to the 18th International Monitoring Team Mindanao Negara Brunei Darussalam (IMT-M NBD)

and the 4th Independent Decommissioning Body Verification, Monitoring, and Assistance Team (IDB VMAT) in Mindanao, Republic of the Philippines.

Present as the guest of honour at a flag hand-over ceremony was Brigadier

As part of regional cooperation, Brunei Darussalam will continue to assist in ensuring the neighbouring state's peace and stability by participating in these missions to oversee the ceasefire agreement between the Philippines government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), as well as the process of decommissioning the MILF's forces and weapons.

Turkish Embassy help boost blood supply



His Excellency Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to Brunei Darussalam with spouse, and staff at the Blood Donation Centre.

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 17 – The Embassy of the Republic of Turkey initiated a blood donation drive among its staff to support the country's shortage of blood reserves.

In responding to the Ministry of Health's call to help the blood supply shortage, His Excellency Professor Dr. Hamit Ersoy, Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to

Brunei Darussalam said that the donation drive was part of their social responsibility towards the community and considering the holy month of Ramadan is fast approaching.

"We all Muslims should help with blood donations while keeping in mind that it will be difficult to do so once Ramadan starts," said His Excellency at the Blood

Donation Centre of Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha (RIPAS) Hospital.

While noting that Medicine Day is celebrated every March 14 in Turkey, His Excellency also congratulated the doctors and health workers at the centre and thanked them for their great efforts and sacrifices.

IVL Programme shares strategies on human trafficking



Her Excellency United States Ambassador-designate to Brunei Darussalam presenting a certificate of completion to Aminudin Zaki bin Dato Abdul Rahman, Deputy Senior Counsel and Deputy Public Prosecutor at the Attorney General's Chambers.

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 22 – The Embassy of the United States of America is pleased to announce that Aminudin Zaki bin Dato Abdul Rahman, Deputy Senior Counsel and Deputy Public Prosecutor at the Attorney General's Chambers, has completed an International Visitor Leadership Programme on combating trafficking in persons.

Aminudin Zaki was one of 29 law enforcement officers from across the globe to participate in the programme, which took place virtually from February 3

to 25.

Over the course of three weeks, participants examined best practices in combating trafficking in persons, focusing on both slave labour and sex trafficking.

Activities included reviewing United States legislation, visa regulations, and enforcement against and prosecution of traffickers; exploring initiatives to identify, protect, assist, and provide services for trafficking victims; efforts to raise awareness through the media; and local,

national, and international cooperative efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

Participants also discussed strategies to end trafficking, both domestically and internationally, with local, state, and federal government agencies, law enforcement officials, educators, non-governmental organisation leaders, and advocacy groups.

Following the completion of the programme, Aminudin Zaki met with U.S. Ambassador-designate to Brunei Darussalam, Her Excellency Caryn McClelland, to discuss lessons learned from the programme and explore how Brunei can work together with the United States to combat the shared concern of human trafficking. This was later followed by a presentation of certificate of completion.

Her Excellency Caryn McClelland stated that the United States is deeply committed to combating human trafficking and is keen to collaborate with Brunei to ensure that traffickers are caught and fully prosecuted by the law.

"International cooperation is fundamental to cracking down on human trafficking since the traffickers themselves operate across multiple borders," Her Excellency added.

Brunei companies seek potential export at FOODEX

JAPAN, March 12 – Five local businesses recently participated in Japan's leading Food & Beverage (F&B) tradeshow, FOODEX 2022 for the first time to seek market validation and explore potential export opportunities.

Darussalam Enterprise (DARE), the Embassy of Brunei Darussalam in Tokyo, Japan, and the ASEAN-Japan Centre (AJC) jointly collaborated for the participation of Brunei businesses as part of a wider, ongoing product development project called Improving Quality of Brunei Products.

This year's FOODEX Japan ran from March 8 to 11, at the Makuhari Messe in Chiba, drawing thousands of participants from over 90 companies. Local products from Ghanim International Corporation, Volco Venture, Sabli Group of Companies, Taurean Bakeshop & Café, and Syarikat Rizqussalam were shipped to Japan and exhibited at Brunei's booth which was visited by distributors, retailers, and other potential business partners.

The Embassy of Brunei Darussalam and AJC initiated the Improving Quality

of Brunei Products project in 2020 in collaboration with DARE to assess and develop existing Bruneian-made products for the Japanese market. The project engaged product experts from the Japan Association of International Business Advisors (AIBA) to provide consultancy to 10 local manufacturers over-improving different aspects of their products, which includes branding, packaging, and taste.

The inaugural participation of Brunei businesses in FOODEX is also part of DARE's Market Access initiatives, which aim to provide opportunities for local businesses to access new markets locally and abroad through business matching, tradeshows, and the provision of direct online and offline sales channels.

Market Access also offers training and consultancy programmes that will help businesses improve internal competencies and achieve international standards.

Pengiran Mohd. Azian Pengiran Dato Paduka Haji Maidin, Chargé d'affaires at the Embassy of Brunei Darussalam in Japan said Brunei's participation in FOODEX is part of ongoing joint efforts

to help local products enter the Japanese market.

"Japanese customers have always been naturally curious to know more about Bruneian products. Our participation in FOODEX is a valuable opportunity as it showcases what we can offer as well as raise awareness about Brunei as a whole," he said.

"With support from DARE, the Embassy will continue to work hard to engage with Japanese distributors and importers to penetrate the market here."

Volco Venture, a home-based producer of hot sauce, said their participation in FOODEX and the Improving Quality of Brunei Products project have brought forward their plans to expand to an industrial location soon.

"We have been producing our hot sauce since 2014, selling mostly through social media and word of mouth. Two years ago, we were able to enter retail stores, thanks to DARE's, and today, we are now

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Brunei companies seek potential export at FOODEX (continued)



Visitors at Brunei's booth at the FOODEX (above left, above right and below).



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selling at more than 12 outlets across the country," said Mohd. Vol Momin, who runs the business with his daughter Nadiatul.

"Now, we want to see what's the potential of our product overseas, and FOODEX is an opportunity to have our product showcased not only to the Japan market but the Asian region as well," he added.

For FOODEX, Volco supplied their signature Lanun hot sauce in 255ml bottles in the flavours of Tom-Tom Lemongrass and Pineapple Sunrise.

Meanwhile, local bakery Taurean exhibited five flavours of their oatmeal-based cookies, with modified packaging on the advice of AIBA.

"Our participation in FOODEX helps us gather more feedback on our products for us to be able to continuously improve and make our products more competitive for potential export," said Taurean's owner,



Tsang Poh Yee. Taurean's cookies, sold locally in jars of 150g to 160g, were modified to have each cookie in the jar individually wrapped for FOODEX, an approach her consultant believes would help appeal to Japan's sanitary-focused market.

"The value of the Japanese consultants has been to help us understand in better detail what the retailers and consumers in that market look for, and in turn, see how we can apply those insights to improve the marketability of our local products," she added.

UBD short films selected for Asia Rising 2022 screening

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 7 - Three short films Not Toaster, Crescendo, and Sonder made by Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) students from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) Design and Creative Industries (DCI) programme, have been selected to be part of Asia Rising 2022: A Showcase of Short Films from Universities in ASEAN, Japan, Korea, and China organised by National University of Singapore (NUS). The three selected short films will be screened online from April 1 to 9.

This is the second consecutive year that three UBD short films were selected for this annual film screening, which is the maximum submissions allowed from each of the AUN Member Universities

and ASEAN+3 University Network. It is also the first time that an animated short film (Sonder) made by DCI students will be screened at a regional film festival. Not Toaster recently won the Best Short Film Award (for 10-20 minutes), while Halim Ashari won the Best Director Award for his directorial work in Crescendo, in the 4th Prism UBD Short Film Festival in December 2021.

Following the successful inauguration of first Asia Rising in April 2021, which featured 10 students films from UBD, De La Salle University, and NUS, this year's theme of 'Slow Connection' aims to spur young filmmakers from each country to continue pursuing their creative craft and embolden them for future collaborations

across borders by presenting their best work. DCI students are taking this precious opportunity as a platform to showcase their creative talents and promote Brunei's unique cultural identity.

Not Toaster crewmembers are: Rahim Sofri, Dhiyaurrahman Suhaimi, Rafeatul Zaini, Hisham Fitri, Sulaiman Fitri.

Crescendo crewmembers are Halim Ashari, Azeem Majid, Shakir Andy, Syahmi Batrisyia, and Nazri Awang.

Sonder crewmembers are: Yasmin Hazwan, Halim Ashari, Wallace Chong, Arifah Zhafirah, and Nursyazwani, Sylvester Chan.

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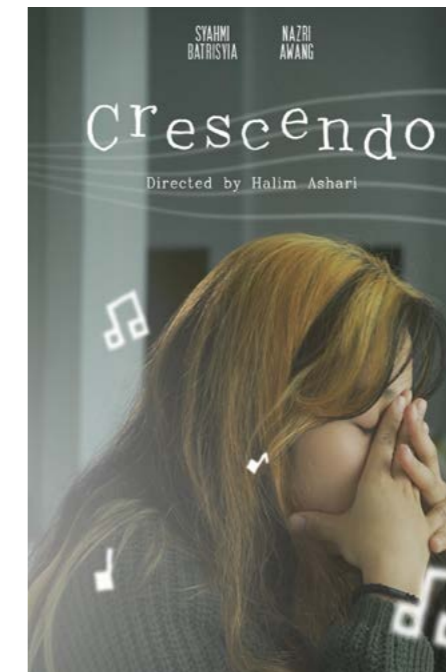
UBD short films selected for Asia Rising 2022 screening (continued)

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Introductory videos about the student filmmakers will be also uploaded onto Asia Rising 2022 online platform as additional

content for viewers who are interested in the filmmaking process. The NUS organiser is currently finalising the details

for the screening. A viewing link and instructions will be available to interested viewers in due course.



CPI increases 1.9 per cent in November

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 5. - The overall Consumer Price Index (CPI) in November 2021 has increased by 1.9 per cent year-on-year from 101.5 in November 2020 to 103.4 this year. Both food and non-alcoholic beverages and non-food index have recorded an increase of 2.4 per cent and 1.8 per cent, respectively. Meanwhile, the goods, as well as services index, have increased by 2.6 per cent and 0.9 per cent, respectively.

On a month-on-month basis, the CPI has increased by 0.3 per cent compared to October 2021. The food and non-alcoholic beverages index has recorded an increase of 0.7 per cent. Meanwhile, the non-food index recorded an increase of 0.1 per cent.

For period-on-period, the CPI for January to November 2021 registered an increase of 1.7 per cent compared to the same period last year.

The CPI in November 2021 has increased by 1.9 per cent compared to the same month in 2020.

Among the major groups which contributed to the increases were the indices for transport (5.3 per cent); food and non-alcoholic beverages (2.4 per cent); and clothing and footwear (7.9 per cent).

Based on the contribution to change, transport has contributed 52.8 per cent to the overall year-on-year increase of the CPI in November 2021. This was followed by food and non-alcoholic beverages (24.4 per cent); and clothing and footwear (16.1 per cent).

Increases were recorded in transport (5.3 per cent) due to increase in prices of motor cars; passenger transport by air of a

Table 1: CPI, November 2021

Category	Weights	Index Nov 2021	Change (%)		
			Nov 2021/ Nov 2020	Nov 2021/ Oct 2021	Jan-Nov 2021 / Jan-Nov 2020
OVERALL CPI	10,000	103.4	1.9	0.3	1.7
Food & Non-Alcoholic Beverages	1,883	107.9	2.4	0.7	2.4
Non-Food	8,117	102.3	1.8	0.1	1.5
Goods	5,726	103.2	2.6	0.2	2.4
Services	4,274	103.6	0.9	0.3	0.8

Note: "-" means nil

few limited scheduled flights as well as maintenance and repairs of vehicles; food and non-alcoholic beverages (2.4 per cent) due to increase in prices of meat; oil and fats as well as vegetables; and clothing and footwear (7.9 per cent) due to increase in prices of clothing materials; garments as well as shoes and other footwear.

Meanwhile, decreases were recorded in housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuels (0.2 per cent) due to decrease prices of miscellaneous services relating to the dwelling as well as materials for the maintenance and repair of the dwelling; and recreation and culture (0.0003 per cent) due to decrease prices of stationery and drawing materials; recreational and sporting services as well as recording media.

The CPI in November 2021 has increased by 0.3 per cent over October 2021.

The indices which contributed to the increases were the indices for food and non-alcoholic beverages (0.7 per cent); transport (0.6 per cent); and miscellaneous goods and services (0.4 per cent).

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CPI increases 1.9 per cent in November (continued)

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Based on the contribution to change, food and non-alcoholic beverages have contributed 53.9 per cent to the overall month-on-month increase of the CPI in November 2021. This was followed by transport (47.5 per cent); and miscellaneous goods and services (12.7 per cent).

The increases were recorded in food and non-alcoholic beverages (0.7 per cent) due to an increase in prices of vegetables; fruits as well as meat; transport (0.6 per cent) due to an increase in prices of passenger transport by air; and miscellaneous goods and services (0.4 per cent) due to increase in prices of other services; hairdressing salons and personal grooming establishments as well as other appliances articles and products for personal care.

While the decreases were recorded in restaurants and hotels (0.3 per cent) due to a decrease in prices of restaurants, cafes, fast-food outlets, and other eating places; furnishings, household equipment, and Routine Household Maintenance (0.1 per cent) due to a decrease in major household appliances; small electric household appliances as well as furniture and furnishings; and Health (0.02 per cent) due to decrease prices of therapeutic appliances and equipment.

The indices of communication; recreation culture and education remain unchanged.

The average CPI for the first eleven months (January to November) of 2021 has increased by 1.7 per cent year-on-year compared to the same period in 2020.

Increases were recorded in food and non-alcoholic beverages (2.4 per cent); health (0.9 per cent); transport (6.6 per cent); communication (0.6 per cent); recreation and culture (0.4 per cent); education (0.3 per cent); restaurants and hotels (0.7 per cent); and miscellaneous goods and services (0.2 per cent).

On the other hand, decreases were recorded in clothing and footwear (1.5 per cent); housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuels (0.2 per cent); and furnishings, household equipment, and routine household maintenance (1.3 per cent).

For November 2021, the indices for durable goods, semi-durable goods, non-durable goods, and services have increased year-on-year by 6.8, 3.8, 1.2, and 0.9 per cent, respectively.

Figure 1: CPI Year-on-Year Changes, November 2021

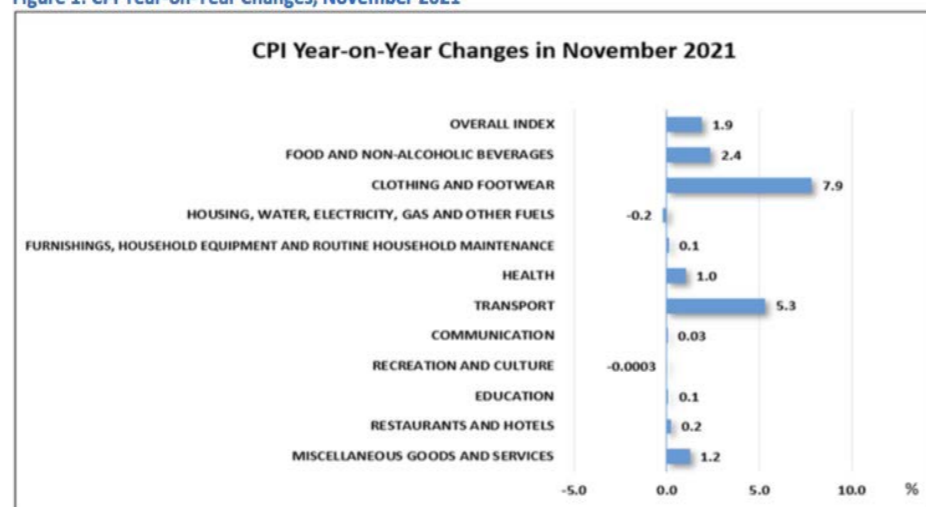
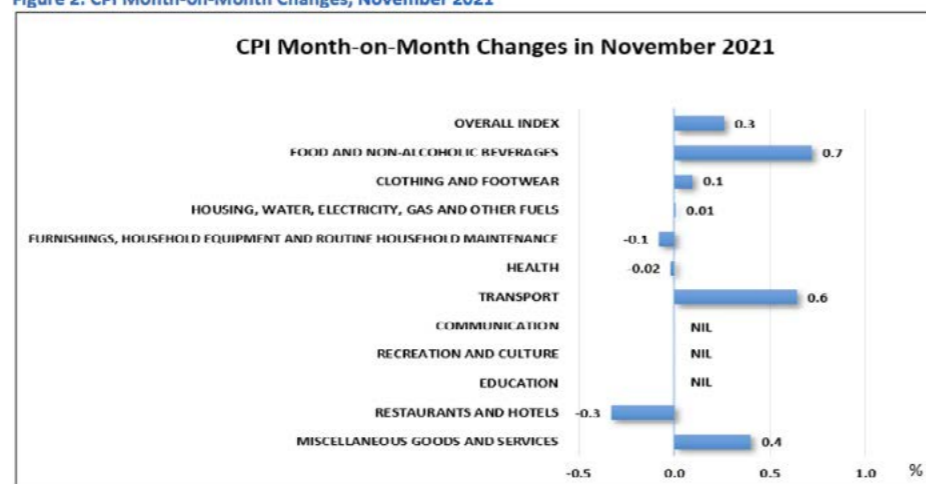


Figure 2: CPI Month-on-Month Changes, November 2021



Compared to October 2021, the indices for semi-durable goods, non-durable goods, and services have increased year-on-year by 0.03, 0.4, and 0.3 per cent, respectively.

Meanwhile, the index for durable goods

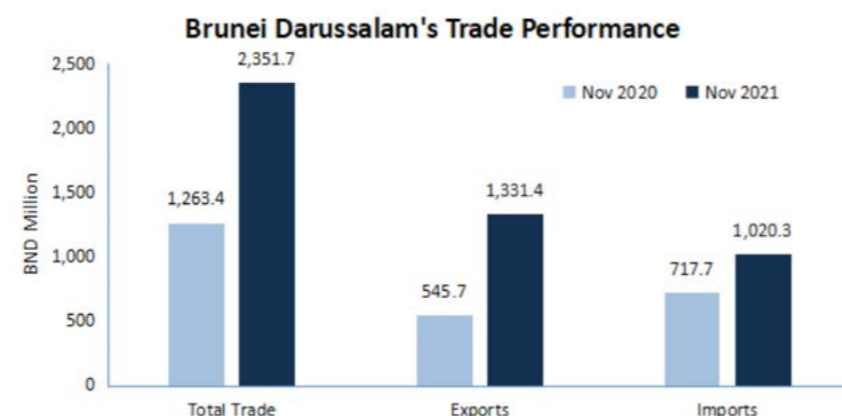
has decreased by 0.03 per cent.

For the period January to November 2021, the indices of goods and services increased by 2.4 and 0.8 per cent, respectively compared to the same period last year.

Total Trade increase 86.1 per cent

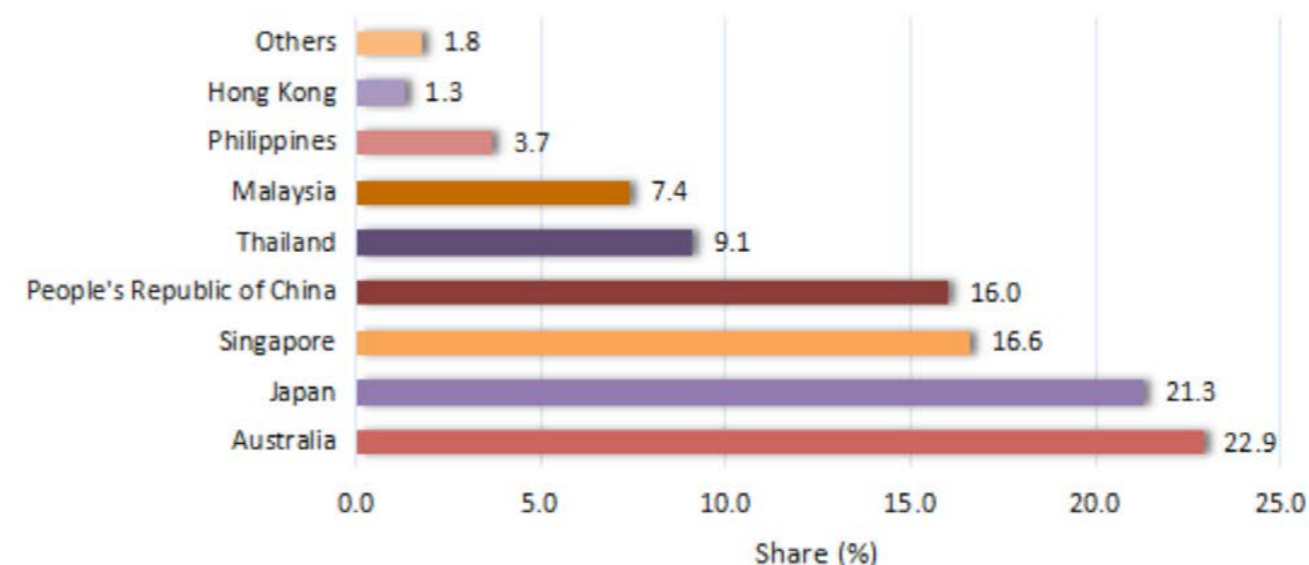
BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 7 - In November 2021, Brunei Darussalam's total trade was valued at \$2,351.7 million, an increase by 86.1 per cent from \$1,263.4 million during the same month last year. Meanwhile, for month-to-month changes, total trade for November 2021 increased by 3.7 per cent compared to October 2021.

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Total Trade increase 86.1 per cent (continued)

Share of Exports by Trading Partners



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Referring to the International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) in November 2021, total exports increased by 144.0 per cent year-on-year to \$1,331.4 million compared to \$545.7 million in November 2020. This was mainly due to the increase in mineral fuels exports to \$1,080.9 million (November 2021) from \$405.8 million (November 2020), and chemicals exports to \$217.9 million (November 2021) from \$118.6 million (November 2020).

The increase in mineral fuels exports was largely due to an increase in the value of exports of crude oil, Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), and petroleum products from the downstream activities. The increase in exports of crude oil was attributed to a significant increase in average price to USD83.91 per barrel (November 2021) from USD41.32 per barrel (November 2020), as well as an increase in the volume exported to 67.63 thousand barrels per day (November 2021) from 48.73 thousand barrels per day (November 2020). Furthermore, the increase in the exports of LNG was due to an increase in the average price to USD10.94 per MMBtu (November 2021) from USD6.06 per MMBtu (November 2020), as well as an increase in the volume exported to 769,174 MMBtu/day (November 2021) from 675,165

MMBtu/day (November 2020). Meanwhile, the exports value of petroleum products from downstream activities increased to \$507.6 million (November 2021) from \$175.8 million (November 2020), of which the main commodity was automotive diesel fuels.

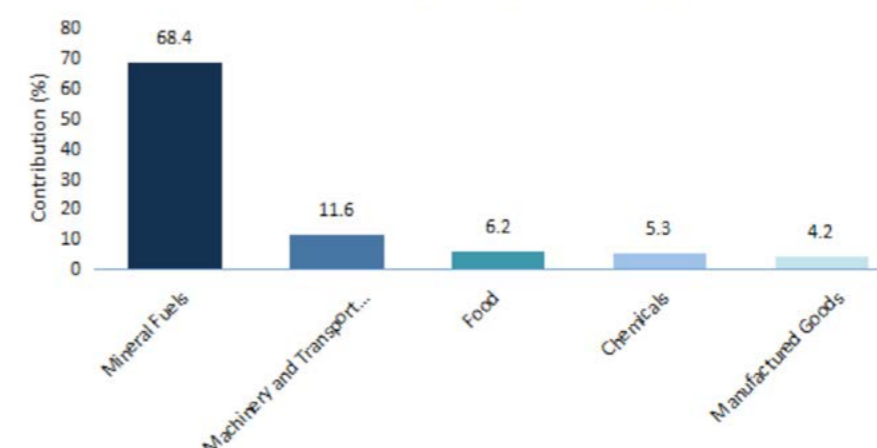
In terms of the commodity by section, mineral fuels represent the major contributor to Brunei Darussalam's exports (81.2 per cent), followed by chemicals (16.4 per cent), and machinery and transport equipment (0.8 per cent).

The main exports market in November 2021 was Australia (22.9 per cent) followed by Japan (21.3 per cent) and Singapore (16.6 per cent). The largest export commodity to Australia, Japan, and Singapore was mineral fuels.

For imports, the total value increased to \$1,020.3 million (November 2021) from \$717.7 million (November 2020) mainly due to a significant increase in imports of mineral fuels.

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Five Main Imports by Commodity



Total Trade increase 86.1 per cent (continued)

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The five main imports by commodity were mineral fuels (68.4 per cent), followed by machinery and transport equipment (11.6 per cent), food (6.2 per cent), chemicals (5.3 per cent), and manufactured goods (4.1 per cent).

By End-Use Category, imports of intermediate goods accounted for 57.9 per cent of the total imports, followed by capital goods (37.9 per cent) and consumption goods (4.2 per cent).

For imports by trading partners, the highest share was from Malaysia (34.3 per cent), followed by Russia (26.7 per cent), and Japan (12.6 per cent), with mineral fuels as the largest import commodity.

According to the mode of transport, in November 2021, the highest share for both exports and imports was transported by sea, which amounted to \$2,246.4



million (95.5 per cent). This was followed by air transport (\$76.1 million or 3.2 per cent) and via land (\$29.2 million or 1.2 per cent).

The IMTS for Brunei Darussalam adopts

the general system for recording trade statistics, which covers imports, domestic exports, and re-exports. The IMTS full report for November 2021 is available from the DEPS's website at www.deps.gov.bn.

RSI Q4 2021 performance decreases 8.6 per cent

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 21 - In the fourth quarter (Q4) 2021, the performance of the Retail Sales Index (RSI) in Brunei Darussalam showed a year-on-year decrease of 8.6 per cent with an estimated retail sales value of \$417.1 million.

As for the food & beverages services Index (F&BSI), it has also decreased by 22.9 per cent compared to Q4 2020 with an estimated sales revenue of \$74.2 million.

A press release issued by the Department of Economic Planning and Statistics (DEPS) stated that for retail sales, almost all retail activities have shown a decrease in sales compared to last year driven mainly by the sales of textiles, wearing apparel, and footwear which decreased by 33.3 per cent, followed by sales in petrol station 25.7 per cent; sales of furniture and household equipment 15.7 per cent; sales in Department Store 10.3 per cent; and sales of electrical household appliances and lighting equipment in specialized stores 6.2 per cent.

As for food & beverages services, the decrease in sales compared to the previous year was attributed to the decrease in sales revenue of restaurants by 25.9 per cent, followed by fast-food outlets 16.7 per cent and beverage serving activities 16.2 per cent.

Compared to Q4 2020, the decline in sales of most retail activities and sales of food & beverages services was in line with the

reinstatement of control measures for the most part of Q4 2021 following the second wave of the COVID-19 outbreak such as dine-in prohibition effective until November 18, 2021 and allowed only at 50 per cent capacity starting November 19, 2021 compared to full capacity the year before.

The RSI in Q4 2021, compared to the third quarter (Q3) 2021 has recorded an increase of 7.0 per cent mainly due to an increase in sales of recreational goods by 40.6 per cent, followed by sales of computer and telecommunications equipments 28.5 per cent; sales of watches and jewellery 25.6 per cent; sales of hardware, paints and glass in specialised stores 22.0 per cent; and sales of electrical household appliances and lighting equipments in

specialised stores 17.2 per cent.

As for the F&BSI, it has recorded an increase of 0.1 per cent in Q4 2021 compared to Q3 2021 mainly due to the increase in sales revenue of beverage serving activities by 11.5 per cent and restaurants 2.5 per cent.

This was in line with the Transition Phase starting November 19, 2021 where commercial premises including restaurants, cafes, and food courts are permitted at 50 per cent venue capacity.

RSI and F&BSI are preliminary indicators of economic performance for both activities and provide an outlook for consumer spending trends in Brunei Darussalam on a quarterly basis.

