



## Brunei – Viet Nam strengthen bilateral relations

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 11** - 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 and Her Majesty Duli Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha binti Al-Marhum Pengiran Pemancha Pengiran Anak Haji Mohamed Alam received in audience His Excellency Phạm Minh Chinh, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and spouse, Madam Lê Thị Bích Trân. The Audience Ceremony took place at Istana Nurul Iman.

Prior to the Audience Ceremony, His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and Her Majesty Duli Raja Isteri welcomed the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and spouse on arrival at the grounds of Istana Nurul Iman, and subsequently introduced the Prime Minister and spouse to members of the royal family joining the ceremony.

After the Audience Ceremony, His Majesty together with His Excellency the



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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 delivering a *titah* (royal speech) (above) and His Excellency Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam delivering a speech during the Official Luncheon Ceremony held in conjunction with the Official Visit of His Excellency Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and spouse (left).

## His Majesty graces 39<sup>th</sup> National Day Grand Assembly

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 23** - 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 graced the 39<sup>th</sup> National Day Grand Assembly at Taman Haji Sir Muda Omar 'Ali Saifuddien.

Also in attendance were His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam's sons and brothers, His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik; His Royal Highness Prince Abdul Mateen; His Royal Highness Prince Haji Sufri Bolkiah, and His Royal Highness Prince Haji Jefri Bolkiah.

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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 inspecting the Guard of Honour mounted by personnel of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces and Royal Brunei Police Force.



**12. Review inefficient, unfair recruitment procedures**



**14. Various management issues under royal scrutiny**



**18. Redouble efforts in achieving Brunei Vision 2035**



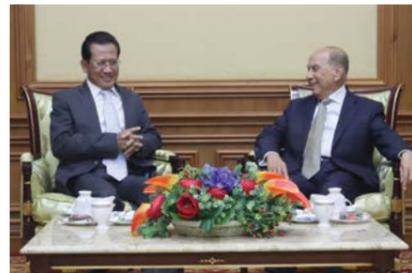
**19. BFI Company, TotalEnergies achieve positive progress**



**22. Cycling recreation promotes healthy, active lifestyle**



**25. Crown Prince attends 49<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations**



**29. Speaker of LegCo receives separate courtesy calls**



**31. Separate visits of Vietnamese Prime Minister and spouse**



**36. Embassy of Kuwait hosts 62<sup>nd</sup> National Day reception**



**37. Singapore Food Festival 2023**



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## His Majesty receives audiences

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 received in audience at Istana Nurul Iman:



Yang Berhormat Dato' Seri Utama Haji Mohamad bin Haji Hasan, the Minister of Defence of Malaysia on February 7.



The Right Honourable Anne-Marie Trevelyan, United Kingdom Minister of State (Indo-Pacific) on February 7.

## 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 has consented to send a message of condolences to His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of the Republic of Türkiye, the government and people of the Republic of Türkiye following the recent earthquake in the Gaziantep Province, Republic of Türkiye on February 6.

## His Majesty receives congratulatory messages

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 received congratulatory messages from the Heads of State and leaders from friendly nations on the occasion of Brunei Darussalam's 39<sup>th</sup> National Day on February 23.

Among the aforementioned Heads of State were:

- His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and King of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;
- His Majesty King Charles III, King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland;
- His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al-Hussien, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan;
- His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain;
- His Majesty King Willem-Alexander R, King of the Netherlands;
- His Majesty Carl XVI Gustaf, King of Sweden;
- His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah Boromneath Norodom Sihamoni, King of the Kingdom of Cambodia;
- His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn Phra Vajiraklaochaoyuhua, The King of the Kingdom of Thailand;
- Her Excellency Halimah Yacob, President of the Republic of Singapore;
- His Excellency Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia;
- His Excellency Ferdinand R. Marcos Junior, President of the Republic of the Philippines;
- His Excellency Thongloun Sisoulith, President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic;
- His Excellency Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation;

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- His Excellency Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China;
- His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Rtd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia;
- His Excellency Md. Abdul Hamid, President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh;
- Her Excellency Droupadi Murmu, President of the Republic of India;
- His Excellency Ranil Wickremesinghe, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka;
- His Excellency Yoon Suk Yeol, President of the Republic of Korea;
- His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Türkiye;
- His Excellency Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, President of the Federal Republic of Germany;
- His Excellency Dr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran;
- His Excellency Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt;
- His Excellency Alexander Van der Bellen, President of the Republic of Austria;
- His Excellency Kim Jong Un, President of the State Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea;
- His Excellency Professor Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, President of the Portuguese Republic;
- His Excellency Khurelsukh Ukhnaa, President of Mongolia;
- His Excellency Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, President of Republic of South Africa;
- Her Excellency Nataša Pirc Musar, President of the Republic of Slovenia;
- His Excellency Abdelmadjid Tebboune, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria;
- His Excellency Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi;
- His Excellency Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic;
- His Excellency Miloš Zeman, President of the Czech Republic;
- His Excellency Zoran Milanović, President of the Republic of Croatia; and
- His Excellency George Vella, President of the Republic of Malta

Meanwhile, the said leaders from friendly nations include:

- His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;
- His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Bahrain;
- Yang Amat Berhormat Dato' Seri Anwar bin Ibrahim, Prime Minister of Malaysia;
- His Excellency Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore;
- His Excellency (Rtd) General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand;
- His Excellency Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia;
- His Excellency Sonexay Siphandone, Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.
- His Excellency Fumio Kishida, Prime Minister of Japan;
- Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh;
- Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the State Administration Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar; and
- His Excellency Mr. Hissien Brahim Taha, Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

## His Majesty sends congratulatory messages

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 congratulatory messages to:

- His Excellency Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the government and the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the occasion of its National Day on February 11;
- His Majesty Emperor Naruhito, Emperor of Japan and His Excellency Fumio Kishida, Prime Minister of Japan; as well as to the government and people of Japan on the occasion of His Majesty Emperor Naruhito, 63<sup>rd</sup> birthday anniversary on February 23; and
- His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Emir of Kuwait and His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of Kuwait as well as members of the royal family, the government and people of Kuwait on the occasion of its National Day on February 25.

## News

### His Majesty Presents, receives Letters of Credence

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 28** - 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 Letters of Credence to newly-appointed Brunei Darussalam Envoys and received Letters of Credence from newly-appointed Foreign Envoys to Brunei Darussalam. After the ceremonies, His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam received in audience the newly-appointed Brunei Darussalam Envoys and the newly-appointed Foreign Envoys.



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 presents Letters of Credence to Her Excellency Noralizan binti Abdul Momin, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Brunei Darussalam to the Sultanate of Oman (left) and Her Excellency Megawati binti Dato Paduka Haji Manan, Ambassador of Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Brunei Darussalam to the Republic of Philippines (right).



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam presents Letters of Credence to Her Excellency Latifah binti Zaini, Permanent Representative of Brunei Darussalam to ASEAN in Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia (left) and receives Letters of Credence from Her Excellency Erma Said Mohamed Al Kathiry, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Sultanate of Oman to Brunei Darussalam (right).

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**His Majesty presents, receives Letters of Credence (continued)**

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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 receiving Letters of Credence from His Excellency Lim Hokseng, Ambassador of Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Cambodia to Brunei Darussalam (left) and His Excellency Mikhail Vladimirovich Baranov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to Brunei Darussalam (right).

**Brunei – Viet Nam strengthen bilateral relations (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 welcoming His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam at Istana Nurul Iman.



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam; His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam; and other members of royal family at the Luncheon Ceremony.



Also in attendance at the Luncheon Ceremony were His Majesty's sons, brothers, daughters, sisters and Vietnamese delegation (above and below).



From front page

Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam proceeded for a Bilateral Meeting.

During the meeting, His Majesty and the Prime Minister, among other discussed bilateral relations and cooperation between both countries including the signing of the Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Comprehensive Partnership which will chart the future

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Other members of royal family at the Luncheon Ceremony.



Yang Berhmat State Mufti reciting the *Doa Selamat*.



His Majesty with His Excellency Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.



His Majesty and delegation at the Bilateral Meeting with delegates of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

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direction of bilateral relations.

Both leaders also discussed the exploration of new opportunities for cooperation by both countries.

After the meeting, His Majesty and the Prime Minister witnessed the signing ceremony of two instruments of understanding between the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

The first instrument of understanding was on the Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Comprehensive Partnership between both countries (2023 – 2027), which provides a

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His Majesty and His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office during the Bilateral Meeting.



His Majesty and His Excellency Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam witnessing the signing of two instruments of understanding between the Government of Brunei Darussalam and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.



His Excellency Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam with delegates at the Bilateral Meeting.



Yang Berhmat Second Minister of Foreign Affairs and His Excellency Minister of Foreign Affairs signing the two instruments of understanding on behalf of the Government of Brunei Darussalam and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

Brunei – Viet Nam strengthen bilateral relations (continued)



His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office, and Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah binti Pengiran Haji Salleh Ab. Rahaman during the arrival of His Excellency Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and spouse.

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framework for both countries to promote closer bilateral cooperation in mutually beneficial areas ranging from economic, political, defence, security, energy, education, tourism as well as youth and sports.

Meanwhile, another cooperation was on the Exchange of Notes for the Arrangement on Visa Exemption for Holders of Diplomatic and Official Passport of Brunei Darussalam and Socialist Republic of Viet Nam which provides the extension of the length of stay from 14 days to 30 days.

Signing 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 Erywan bin Pehin Datu Pekerma Jaya Haji Mohd. Yusof, Second Minister of Foreign Affairs, while the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam was represented by His Excellency Bui Thanh Son, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

At noon, Their Majesties, together with His Excellency and spouse proceeded to Baitur Rahmah for the Official Luncheon, along with members of the royal family and the delegation of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

During the luncheon, His Majesty delivered a *titah* (royal speech), in which His Majesty reflected on the Prime Minister's visit as a testament to the strong diplomatic relations established between Brunei Darussalam and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam 30 years ago. Since Viet Nam became part of the ASEAN family in Bandar Seri Begawan

in 1995, it has become one of the fastest-growing economic countries in the region.

In this regard, His Majesty praised Viet Nam's excellent achievements including the National Digital Transformation Program, and stated that the signing of the Plan of Action is timely in further strengthening bilateral cooperation and assisting preparations in facing an era of disruption and global uncertainty.

Despite being faced with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, His Majesty was pleased that the two countries were able to continue bilateral cooperation in energy supply as well as produce trade that exceeded the target of USD500 million that had been set in 2017.

Therefore, Brunei Darussalam is keen to further develop trade relations, particularly through joint ventures in aquaculture to help build the capacity of local industries and ensure food security.

Furthermore, the continuing educational partnership between Universiti Brunei Darussalam and FPT University in Da Nang, as well as the implementation of visa exemptions, will bring people closer together as well as facilitate the movement of goods and services.

In concluding the *titah*, His Majesty thanked Viet Nam for supporting Brunei as ASEAN Chairman in 2021 and hoped to work together towards achieving the Post-2025 ASEAN Community Vision.

In addition, His Majesty congratulated Viet Nam on the successful election to the United Nations Human Rights Council and expressed confidence towards Viet Nam's contribution in addressing



human rights issues.

This was followed by a speech from the Prime Minister, who expressed gratitude for the long-established relations between both countries and congratulated Brunei on its achievements under His Majesty's reign.

In that regard, the Prime Minister also expressed confidence that Brunei would be able to achieve its economic transition and Brunei Vision 2035.

In efforts towards diversifying both economies, the Prime Minister highlighted that the signing of the Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Comprehensive Partnership (2023 – 2027) will give way to greater opportunities that will enhance further cooperation between the two countries. The Prime Minister also appreciated Brunei's active support in multilateral forums such as APEC and the United Nations and hoped that the continued friendship will further deepen towards building the ASEAN Community.

The Prime Minister and spouse as well as their delegation were in the country for a two-day official visit. The delegation arrived on February 10. Present to welcome the delegation at the Brunei International Airport were 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, as Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, and Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah binti Pengiran Haji Salleh Ab. Rahaman.

His Majesty graces 39<sup>th</sup> National Day Grand Assembly (continued)



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam during the 39<sup>th</sup> National Day Anniversary Grand Assembly.

The grand assembly commenced with the National Anthem. His Majesty later consented to inspect the Guard of Honour mounted by personnel of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) and Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF) followed by a march-past by seven groups comprising 3,900 participants led by the Flag-Bearers carrying a giant-sized national flag.

The march-past participants comprised ministries and government departments; national security agencies; uniformed government officers and organisations; public and private sectors, people with different abilities; senior citizens, local ethnic groups; educational institutions; foreign nationality; civil movements, as well as the excellent group comprising of youths and members of the community who have achieved excellence and recognition through involvement in various field at the national, regional and international levels.

It was then followed with the recitation of the National Day Oath by 39 youths from various sectors led by Awangku Md. Nazirul Mubin bin Pengiran Haji Abdul Rahman, an officer at the Ministry of Defence.

Meanwhile the three cheers of *Allahu Akbar* (Allah is most great) was led by Awangku Muhd Sallehin bin Pengiran Haji Liman, Religious Affairs Inspector at the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

This year's field performance themed "*Warisan Budaya: Jati Diri Bangsa*" was performed by 2,839 field performers with



Also present were His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office, His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik; His Royal Highness Prince Abdul Mateen; His Royal Highness Prince Haji Sufri Bolkiah, and His Royal Highness Prince Haji Jefri Bolkiah.



March pass carrying national flag.

139 traditional musicians from various age groups showcasing of traditional and patriotic songs, dances and imagery.

The grand assembly concluded with the flypast of Blackhawks from Royal Brunei Airforce.

Before leaving the event, His Majesty consented to mingle with the participants.

On February 22, a Doa Kesyukuran Ceremony in conjunction with the 39<sup>th</sup> National Day Celebration was held simultaneously in all mosques, suraus and religious halls nationwide.

Attend at the Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Mosque in the capital 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 Malik.

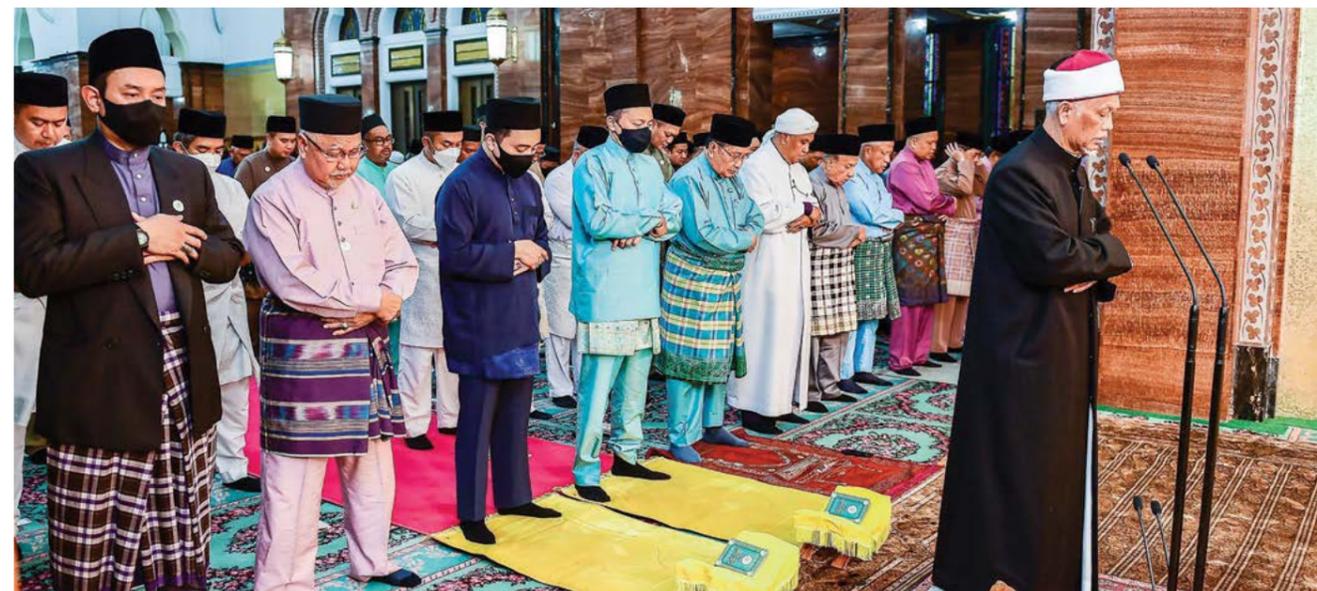
The ceremony consisted of a mass Maghrib and Isyak Prayer, Surah Yasin recitation, and *doa kesyukuran*.

# His Majesty graces 39<sup>th</sup> National Day Grand Assembly (continued)

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His Majesty during the get-together session with some of the participants at the event.



His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik; and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen at the Doa Kesyukuran Ceremony in conjunction with the 39<sup>th</sup> National Day Celebration.



Congregants at the Doa Kesyukuran Ceremony.

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Flag-Bearers carrying a giant-sized national flag.



Among those involved in the performances at the celebration.



March-past participants.



Among those involved in the performances at the celebration.



March-past participants.

## Review inefficient, unfair recruitment procedures

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 9** - The Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Public Service Department (PSD) were urged to review matters related to complaints from the public on the employee recruitment procedures which were said to be inefficient due to delays in the job application process and unfair in relation to interviews and written tests which are seen to have many weaknesses.

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 in a *titah* (royal speech) said that among the weaknesses that can be seen when competing candidates consisting of members of the public, fresh graduates, and officials or staff currently serving the government has lead to speculation that the vacancy targeted to be filled already has a chosen candidate.

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in a *titah* also reminded that it is a form of oppression if the question procedures are left unaligned.

The Monarch further emphasised on the screening system of the list of candidates based on the criteria which also needs to be examined, because it has already happened that if a person's approval is deemed not to meet the criteria, then the application will be rejected as not recognised by the system.

Other matters raised by His Majesty include finding ways to overcome the increasing number of unemployment among graduates; finding a better way to replace retiring staff; reports of senior officers that are not in accordance with procedures; a report of an officer who was promoted while under investigation

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



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam during the visit to several divisions and units at the Public Service Commission (PSC).



His Majesty during the visit to several divisions and units at the PSC.



His Majesty during question and answer session.



His Majesty listening to a brief explanation during a visit to Public Service Department (PSD).



His Majesty listening to a brief explanation during a visit to PSD (above and below).

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and the failure of the currently used computerised testing system in solving the delay in filling government positions.

His Majesty first visited PSC at Old Airport Berakas. Here His Majesty took a closer look at several sections and later proceeded to PSD at Jalan Kumbang Pasang.

During the visit to PSD, His Majesty held a question and answer session with officers and staff of PSD and PSC.



His Majesty in a group photo during the visit to PSD.

# Various management issues under royal scrutiny

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 16** - His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkhiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam highlighted that with the purpose of providing digital telecommunications services in the country, on September 1, 2019, Unified National Networks (UNN) Sendirian Berhad took over all the telecommunications infrastructure and networks in the country along with the assets of three local telecommunications companies. The matter was stated during His Majesty's unscheduled visit to UNN Sdn. Bhd. Headquarters, at Sumbiling Telephone House, Jalan Istana Darussalam.

During the visit, many questions have arisen in which among them was that over 500 workers lost their jobs and the vacant positions will be offered to foreign workers, including positions at the UNN Executive Management which were mostly monopolised by foreigners who do not seem to have any expertise in telecommunications, and are instead more concerned about their personal interests.

Four years of its establishment, UNN continues to receive complaints regarding the services particularly the internet speed and blaming cable theft without further efforts to overcome it.

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His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkhiah 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) during the unscheduled visit to UNN Sdn. Bhd. Headquarters (above and below).



His Majesty listening to a brief explanation from officers at several division and units of UNN.



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam during the unscheduled visit to UNN Sdn. Bhd. Headquarters at Sumbiling Telephone-House.



His Majesty interacting with officers and staff of UNN during the visit.



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His Majesty also stated that in July 2022, the Audit Department were to carry out audit inspection on a few telecommunication companies under DA Sdn. Bhd. including UNN. However, the Chairman of DA Sdn. Bhd. instructed the Audit Department not to carry out the inspection.

This has shocked many parties and triggered assumptions that such action aimed to cover up all problems of the companies under DA Sdn. Bhd.

Other issues raised by His Majesty include negativity that invites speculation about the misuse of power and finances at UNN and the actions of a number of foreigners who have expressed their intention to resign earlier before their contract ends.

During the visit, His Majesty took a closer look at several divisions and units in the company.



His Majesty taking a closer look at the telecommunications facilities (above and below).



## Prayer, patience a success in combating COVID-19

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 18** - The country's capability in facing the COVID-19 pandemic and its various variants is greatly appreciated. The key to all of this is we never neglect worship to Allah the Almighty, not only limited to the acts of worship, but also covers all charitable practises.

In a *titah* (royal speech) at the National Level Isra' Mi'raj Celebration for 1444 Hijrah at the International Convention Centre in Berakas, His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkhiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam added that whatever the stage of life, we are also not exempted from tests, which are not penalties but are glad tidings for the faithful.



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkhiah 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) at the ceremony.

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### Prayer, patience a success in combating COVID-19 (continued)



Accompanying 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 ceremony were His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen and His Royal Highness Prince Haji Sufri Bolkiah (all above and left).



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Patience will not exist, other than among the believers who always draw closer to Allah the Almighty through the acts of worship, especially prayer, as the catalyst of all perfection. Not only this, but all good and beneficial things are all found in the Al-Quran," added His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam.



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam mingling with mosque youth performers.

His Majesty further affirmed that the Al-Quran is the Heavenly Book that comes directly from Allah the Almighty and not composed by Prophet Muhammad or anyone else.

Accompanying His Majesty at the ceremony were His Majesty's sons and brother; His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen and His Royal Highness Prince

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Yang Berhormat State Mufti reciting the Doa Selamat (left); and Yang Berhormat Minister of Religious Affairs, as the Chairman of the Executive Committee for Major Islamic Calendars Events for 1444 Hijrah delivering a welcoming address (right).



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Haji Sufri Bolkiah.

The religious ceremony was highlighted with a welcoming speech by Yang Berhormat Pehin Udana Khatib Dato Paduka Seri Setia Ustaz Haji Awang Badaruddin bin Pengarah Dato Paduka Haji Awang Othman, as the Chairman of the Executive Committee for Major Islamic Calendars Events for 1444 Hijrah; the recitation of Al-Quran by Qari Champion of the National Al-Quran Reading Contest for Adults for 1443 Hijrah, Muhammad Zul-Hafiz bin Tengah and its translation; performance of Selawat Ibrahimiyah; a special stage performance by mosque youths and a religious talk from Pengiran Ahmad Faris Ramadhani bin Pengiran Haji Sellahhuddin, Mosque Affairs Officer at Jame' 'Asr Hassanil Bolkiah.



A religious talk from Mosque Affairs Officer at Jame' 'Asr Hassanil Bolkiah.



Among the attendees at the ceremony (above and below).



The recitation of the Al-Quran by Qari Champion of the National Al-Quran Reading Contest for Adults for 1443 Hijrah.



A performance of Selawat Ibrahimiyah (above) and a special stage performance by mosque youths (below).



## Redouble efforts in achieving Brunei Vision 2035

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 21** – 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 said that it is important giving appropriate attention to the Brunei Vision 2035 and it must be realised as the main agenda of national development.

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam while chairing the First Meeting of the Wawasan Brunei 2035 Supreme Council for the year 2023 at Istana Nurul Iman also noted on various efforts in strengthening strategic implementation and action plans aiming at attaining various core vision goals, namely Manpower Blueprint, Social Blueprint and Economic Blueprint.

With these blueprints, it is hoped that the nation will be able to transform actions. For this, more work to be done towards achieving all set targets.

Also in attendance was His Majesty's son, His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office, as the Deputy Chairman of the Wawasan Brunei 2035 Supreme Council.

During the meeting, among the matters discussed were the progress of Brunei Vision2035 covering the Economic Blueprint, Manpower Blueprint and Social Blueprint; as well as future plans.



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) while chairing the First Meeting of the Wawasan Brunei 2035 Supreme Council for the year 2023.

Among the main roles of the Wawasan Brunei 2035 Supreme Council is to ensure that strategies and policies related to the national development agenda are coordinated at the highest level in a more systematic manner, as well as continuously addressing the issues and challenges to lead the country toward achieving our Brunei Vision 2035.



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 at the meeting held at Istana Nurul Iman.

## Ensure progress gives a positive impact

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 22** - 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 stated that the price of independence is difficult to evaluate as it is not a static object to be counted with numbers but a platform to obtain something better.

"Because of this, independence should be preserved to decorate the life of our people and nation. The way we preserve it is by fulfilling each other's obligations transparently and perfectly, not for self-interest but for all," said His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in a *titah* (royal speech) on the eve of the 39<sup>th</sup> National Day Anniversary at Istana Nurul Iman.

"Now our main obligation," said His Majesty, "is to see the goals

of Brunei Vision 2023 be implemented without any longer as we are only 12 more years to realise it.

"The government needs to finalise the Manpower and Social Blueprint soon as a future direction for every discussion and action of stakeholders in the government."

His Majesty in a *titah* also mentions on efforts to further strengthen the nation's economy sustainability through roadmaps in the main industries sectors.

According to His Majesty, "the progress to be achieved is not focused on constructing buildings, but a more meaningful progress such as building infrastructure and system that bring positive impact to the citizens and residents."

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The Monarch stressed the importance for education STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) skills to be broadened taking into consideration the importance of those skills as catalysts of development.

Equally important is the application of religious knowledge and pure values as a basis to strengthen the nation's identity.

His Majesty ended the *titah* with a supplication for the people and nation to always be in the protection of Allah the Almighty.



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) on the eve of the 39<sup>th</sup> National Day Anniversary.

## BFI Company, TotalEnergies achieve positive progress

**BELAIT, February 25** - Brunei Fertilizer Industries (BFI) Sdn. Bhd. will continue to play a vital role in further accomplishing the government and country's aspirations.

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 highlighted that with the launch of the new plant, the company will provide opportunities to local companies in various fields.

In a *titah* (royal speech) during the launch of a new plant at BFI, Sungai Liang Industrial Park (SPARK) Centre in Lumut, His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam stated that this project symbolises the government's commitment in supporting efforts to further increase the country's economic activities and is expected to be able to reduce the country's dependence on exports of oil and gas products.

In line with the Brunei Vision 2035 objectives, His Majesty was proud of BFI's achievement in recruiting 66 per cent of workers, of which 161 are locals from technical education institutes in the country and overseas who have undergone a six-month industry training locally and abroad including job exposure at Ammonia and Urea plants in neighbouring countries.

At the end of the *titah*, His Majesty consented to the payment of the Project Completion Bonus for the success of the BFI Plant Project.

The Launching Ceremony of the BFI Sdn. Bhd.'s new plant was in conjunction with His Majesty's working visit to TotalEnergies EP, Brunei B.V for the company's 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.

Earlier, His Majesty made a working visit to TotalEnergies EP (Brunei) B.V for the company's 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.

Mr. Jerome Saniez, the company's General Manager in his welcoming address, among other matters highlighted the safety aspect as the company's priority and core value in recording 23

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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 delivering a *titah* (royal speech) during the working visit to the launching of the new plant at Brunei Fertilizer Industries (BFI), Sungai Liang Industrial Park (SPARK) Centre in Lumut.



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 launching of the new plant at Brunei Fertilizer Industries (BFI), Sungai Liang Industrial Park (SPARK) Centre. Also present was His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen.



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam launching the new plant at BFI, SPARK Centre.



His Majesty mingling with officers and staff of BFI Sdn. Bhd.



His Majesty listening an explanation about the destinations of the export of urea fertilizer (left) and signing a commemorative plaque (right).

From page 19 years of operations in the country without a Lost Time Incident.

His Majesty later signed a plaque and officiated TotalEnergies' 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration and consented to watch a video clip showcasing the development of TotalEnergies from the start of its operations in the country. His Majesty also viewed the 'History Tunnel-Archive of TEPB Achievements' Exhibition that showcased the company's development and toured the Onshore Processing Plant and the Central Control Room (CCR).

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His Majesty in a group photo.



BFI Sdn. Bhd. at SPARK Centre in Lumut.



His Majesty during the working visit to TotalEnergies EP (Brunei) B.V for the company's 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.



His Majesty signing a plaque and officiating TotalEnergies 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration (left) and receiving a pesambah (souvenir) (right).



His Majesty in a photo session (left) listening to an explanation during a working visit to TotalEnergies EP (Brunei) B.V. (right).



# Cycling recreation promotes healthy, active lifestyle



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 joining cycling enthusiasts at the Semangat Hari Kebangsaan 2023 Cycling Recreation (above).

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 26** - 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 join cycling enthusiasts at the Semangat Hari Kebangsaan 2023 Cycling Recreation held in conjunction with the 39<sup>th</sup> National Day Celebration.

made even more special with the active participation of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and other members of royal family, where the citizens and residents of the country took joy in riding and interacting with the Monarch.

Also in attendance were His Majesty's sons, His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen.

Immediately after arrival, His Majesty signed the Commemorative Shirt, and later

led the cycling recreation passing through several roads with the participation of state dignitaries, senior government officials, foreigners and members of the public.

Back to the Royal Dias, His Majesty witnessing a march past by 39 cyclists and inline skaters who had participated in 39 kilometre event.

His Majesty also witnessed the fitness training and self-defence performance by the National Service Program (PKBN).

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His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam during the Semangat Hari Kebangsaan 2023 Cycling Recreation (left) and signing the Commemorative Shirt shortly after the arrival (right).



His Majesty with the members of the royal family in a group photo at the cycling recreation.

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Such sport activity also enabled His Majesty to take a closer look at the lively atmosphere during the Bandarku Ceria Programme and touring the booths representing departments under the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports and private associations.



His Majesty touring several activities at Taman Haji Sir Muda Omar 'Ali Saifuddien (above and below).



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Among the cycling enthusiasts at the Semangat Hari Kebangsaan 2023 Cycling Recreation in the capital.



Fitness training and self-defence performance by the National Service Program (PKBN).

## Post of Deputy Minister of Defence abolished

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 26** - By command of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sutan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sutan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, it is hereby announced that His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has commanded that the appointment of Brigadier General (Rtd) Dato Seri Pahlawan Awang Haji Abdul

Razak bin Haji Abd. Kadir as Deputy Minister of Defence, Ministry of Defence (MinDef) and Director of Defence Minister's Office and Directorate of Planning and Strategic, MinDef is terminated with immediate effect. Following the termination, His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has consented to appoint Yang Berhormat Pehin Dato Lailaraja Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi

bin Haji Mohd. Yussof, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office, temporarily as the Second Minister of Defence in addition to his present appointment as Minister at the Prime Minister's Office. With this appointment, the post of Deputy Minister of Defence, MinDef is hereby abolished. The date of termination and appointment are effective from Monday, February 27.

## Audience ceremony with Acting Sultan of Pahang

**PAHANG, MALAYSIA, February 3** - The Acting Sultan of Pahang, Tengku Mahkota Tengku Hassanal Ibrahim Alam Shah ibni Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah recently received in audience a member delegation from the Brunei Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) and Badan Tanmiah Harta Majlis Ugama Islam (BTHMUI), who are in a

series of goodwill visits to Malaysia and the Republic of Singapore. The audience ceremony took place at Istana Abdul Aziz, Indera Mahkota, Kuantan, Pahang. The delegation was led by Pengiran Dato Seri Paduka Haji Mohd. Tashim bin Pengiran Haji Hassan, Deputy Minister

of Religious Affairs, as Vice-President of Brunei Islamic Religious Council (MUIB). During the visit, the delegation also held a discussion with members of the Pahang Islamic Religious and Malay Customs Council (MUIP) and heard a briefing on the background and main programs of MUIP and its subsidiaries.

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Tengku Mahkota Tengku Hassanal Ibrahim Alam Shah ibni Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah as Acting Sultan of Pahang during the audience ceremony with the delegation from the Brunei Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) and Badan Tanmiah Harta Majlis Ugama Islam (BTHMUI), led by Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs, as Vice-President of the Brunei Islamic Religious Council (MUIB).

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Apart from enhancing network integration and cooperation opportunities in fields related to tithe, endowment, inheritance and *Baitul Mal*, the visit was also part of the Brunei Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) efforts to streamline and realise the strategic focus of security and social welfare in MoRA Strategic Plan 2020-2024.

The visit also aimed to explore the prospect of cooperation and obtain exclusive information in various *waqf* projects and *Baitul Mal* abroad, thus being able to achieve BTHMUI's strategic goals in its efforts to improve the quality and productivity in expanding its property through a syariah-compliance investment horizon, always relevant with the passage of time, current needs and suitability in Brunei Darussalam.



Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs, as Vice-President of Brunei Islamic Religious Council (MUIB) leading the Brunei MoRA delegation at one of the discussions with Pahang counterparts.



## Crown Prince attends 49<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 20** - 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) attended a reception held in conjunction with the Crown Prince's 49<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration. The event was hosted by the PMO.

Also present at the ceremony held at the PMO Building was His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik.

At the ceremony, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince was invited to a group photo session before proceeding to the Pesambah Gallery at the East Wing.

The celebration was enlivened with a

cake-cutting ceremony where His Royal Highness received a greeting card from PMO and a *pesambah* (souvenir) from 12 agencies comprising government agencies; higher education institutions and the Brunei Darussalam Scouts Association.

Previously, on February 19, His Royal Highness and Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah binti Pengiran Haji Salleh Ab. Rahaman also attended a High Tea Reception hosted by the Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF) at RBPF's Headquarters.

Also present was His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik and Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Raabi'atul 'Adawiyah binti Pengiran Haji Bolkiah;

Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Masna, Commandant of Women Police and Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Lela Cheteria Sahibun Najabah Pengiran Anak Haji Abdul Aziz.

At the reception, His Royal Highness signed a commemorative parchment followed by cake-cutting session. His Royal Highness also consented to receive a *pesambah*.

Another Royal Birthday Celebration for His Royal Highness was also hosted by the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) on February 17.

Accompanying Their Royal Highnesses at the High-Tea Reception – which took place at the Officer's Mess, Bolkiah

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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) in a photo session. Also present was His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik.

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Garrison were His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik and Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Raabi'atul 'Adawiyah binti Pengiran Haji Bolkiah, as well as His Royal Highness 920 Major (U) Prince 'Abdul Mateen.

At the reception, Their Royal Highnesses joined a group photo session; and were afterwards, introduced to RBAF officers. Prior to the cake-cutting ceremony, His Royal Highness watched a video clip and was presented with a photo book, consisting of a collection of photographs of His Royal Highness titled "Sejambak Ristaan Enam Belas (XVI)" and also signed a commemorative parchment.

His Royal Highness also received a *pesambah* from RBAF officers and staff.

A Doa Kesyukuran Ceremony was also hosted today by the Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah (YSHHB), as the Secretariat of the Pengiran Muda Mahkota Al-Muhtadee Fund

for Orphans (DANA) to commemorate the birthday celebration. Present to grace the ceremony was His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik, as Chairman of YSHHB Committee of Governors.

The event commenced with the mass Fardu Asar Prayer followed by the recitation of Surah Yasin and *doa kesyukuran*.



His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the PMO cutting a birthday cake at the ceremony.



His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at PMO during the luncheon at the Banquet Hall (above).



His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at PMO receiving a *pesambah* (souvenir).

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His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the PMO and Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah binti Pengiran Haji Salleh Ab. Rahaman; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik and Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Raabi'atul 'Adawiyah; Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Masna, Commandant of Women Police; and Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Lela Cheteria Sahibun Najabah Pengiran Anak Haji Abdul Aziz in a group photo (above) and attending a High Tea Reception hosted by the Royal Brunei Police Force (below).



His Royal Highness cutting a birthday cake, witnessed by Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah.



His Royal Highness receiving a *pesambah*.



His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik and Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Raabi'atul 'Adawiyah as well as His Royal Highness 920 Major (U) Prince 'Abdul Mateen in a group photo session at the high tea reception hosted by the Royal Brunei Armed Forces.

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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) and Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah binti Pengiran Haji Salleh Ab. Rahaman; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik and Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Raabi'atul 'Adawiyah as well as His Royal Highness 920 Major (U) Prince 'Abdul Mateen at the High Tea Reception hosted by the Royal Brunei Armed Forces.



His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office being introduced to RBAF officers (left) and cutting a birthday cake (right).



His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the PMO receiving a photobook consisting of collection of photographs of His Royal Highness titled "Sejambak Ristaan Enam Belas (XVI)".



His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik, Chairman of the Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Committee of Governors joining the mass Fardu Asar Prayer (above) and joining the recitation of Surah Yasin (below).



## Speaker of LegCo receives separate courtesy calls

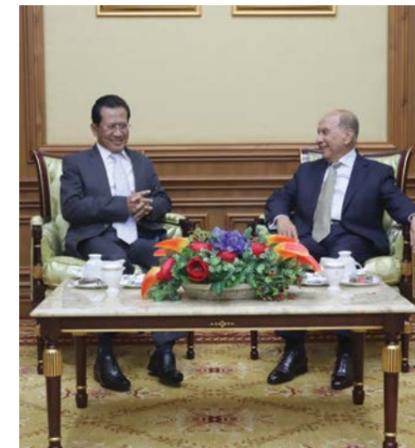
**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN** - Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Lela Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdul Rahman bin Dato Setia Haji Mohamed Taib, Speaker of the Legislative Council (LegCo) received courtesy calls at the LegCo Building:



His Excellency Major General (Rtd) Farhat Abbas Sani, High Commissioner of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Brunei Darussalam on February 2.



His Excellency Professor Dr. Hamit Ersoy, Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to Brunei Darussalam on February 2.



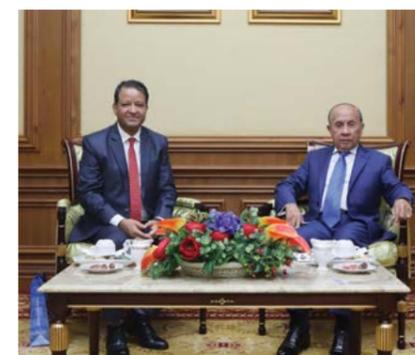
His Excellency Dr. Sujatmiko, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to Brunei Darussalam on February 2.



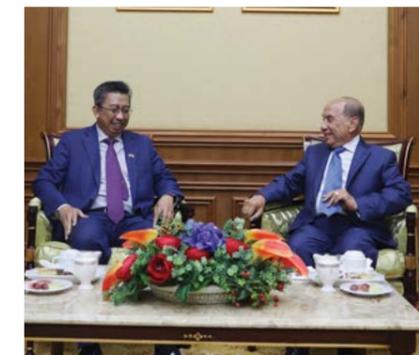
His Excellency Kim Sung-Eun, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Brunei Darussalam on February 22.



Her Excellency Ambra Dickie, High Commissioner of Canada to Brunei Darussalam on February 8.



His Excellency Alok Amitabh Dimri, High Commissioner of the Republic of India to Brunei Darussalam on February 22.



His Excellency Dato' Raja Reza bin Raja Zaib Shah, High Commissioner of Malaysia to Brunei Darussalam on February 22.

## Criminal cases increase in 2021

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 9** - A total of 3,542 cases were conducted online between August 2021 and October 2022, where online hearing was adopted in the previous years and is now a permanent feature for law practitioners to keep abreast with digital literacy and to not be at risk of being left behind.

Speaking at the opening of the Legal Year 2023, Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Paduka Steven Chong Wan Oon, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court further said that in the past 12-month period ending in December 2022, the number of civil appeal cases filed in the Court of Appeal, interlocutory hearings filed in the High Court and Intermediate Court and civil cases in the Subordinate Courts increased significantly compared to 2021, signalling a positive

return for civil and commercial litigation with the easing of restrictions as the economy re-opened.

"100 per cent of judgments for civil trials in the High Court were delivered within the target of between one to three months from the close of submissions," said the Chief Justice.

"The Subordinate Courts docketed 1,056 criminal cases in 2022, an increase from the previous year's number of 880 and correspondingly, the number of criminal cases on appeal to the High Court from the Subordinate Courts also saw an increase when compared to 2021", added the Chief Justice at the annual Legal Year event which took place at the Supreme Court, Jalan Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha with the presence of members of

the Judiciary and the legal profession.

The Chief Justice also highlighted that notwithstanding the rise in caseload, the clearance rate of criminal trials in the Magistrate's Court stands at 76.8 per cent and 77 per cent of judgments for criminal trials in the Magistrate's Court were delivered within the target of between one to three months from the close of submissions.

The issue of ethics and professional standards in the legal profession was also reported by the Chief Justice where according to data provided by the Law Society of Brunei Darussalam, there were 23 complaints heard by the Inquiry Committee from 2018 to 2022, of which

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Yang Berhormat the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court delivers his speech at the ceremony.

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three were investigated by the Disciplinary Committee.

The Chief Justice also touched on a recent case involving a senior member of the Bar.

"The Court will not hesitate to take firm action when necessary to uphold public confidence in the administration of justice and in the integrity of the legal profession in order to protect the public who are dependent on the services of solicitors.

"A strong message needs to be sent by the legal fraternity that any degradation of standards is not acceptable and the court's position that errant solicitors who are found guilty of misconduct will be punished accordingly", emphasised the Chief Justice.

The ceremony was held in person and at full capacity for the first time since the start



Present at the ceremony was Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Setia Bakti Diraja Dato Laila Utama Haji Awang Isa bin Pehin Datu Perdana Menteri Dato Laila Utama Haji Awang Ibrahim, Special Adviser to His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (far left).



Also present was Yang Berhormat the Chief Syarie Judge (centre).

of the pandemic, after a two-year absence due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Earlier, the event also welcomed the return of the Guard of Honour parade by

the Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF) which was inspected by the Chief Justice.

The tradition of Opening the Legal Year

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Yang Berhormat Chief Justice of the Supreme Court inspecting the Guard of Honour held in person and at full capacity for the first time since the start of the pandemic.

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underscores the central role of the Judiciary in the administration of justice. It also focuses attention on the legal community with speeches delivered by Yang Berhormat Chief Justice, followed by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Paduka Haji Ahmad bin Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Setia Bakti Diraja Dato Laila Utama Haji Awang Isa, the Attorney General; and Awang Haji Mansur bin Dato Paduka Dr. Haji Latif, the President of the Law Society of Brunei Darussalam, in representing members of the legal fraternity.

The ceremony was attended by Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Setia Bakti Diraja Dato Laila Utama Haji Awang Isa bin Pehin Datu Perdana Menteri 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; Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Seri Utama Dato Paduka Seri Setia Haji Awang Salim bin Haji Besar, the Chief Syarie Judge; Dato Seri Paduka Haji Sufian bin Haji Sabtu, Acting Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (Security and Law); and Dato Seri Paduka Awang Mohd. Riza bin Dato Paduka Haji Mohd. Yunos, Deputy Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (Civil Service Governance).

Also present were Ambassadors and High Commissioners, Senior Government Officials, members of the Judiciary from



Yang Berhormat the Attorney General delivers his speech at the ceremony.

the Civil and Syariah Courts, Attorney General's Chambers, the Law Society, and members of various government enforcement agencies.

### Separate visits of Viet Nam Prime Minister and spouse

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 11** - His Excellency Phạm Minh Chính, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and spouse, Madam Lê Thị Bích Trân visited Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) as part of their two-day official visit to observe a Vietnamese language class and an online English teaching class with UBD-FPT Global Centre in Da Nang, Viet Nam.

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His Excellency Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and spouse during the visit to Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) mingling and interacting with teachers and students of the UBD-FPT Global Centre (right) and observing a Vietnamese Language Class session and an online English teaching class with UBD-FPT Global Centre in Da Nang, Viet Nam (below).



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The Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and spouse also visited the UBD Botanical Research Centre (UBD BRC), where the Prime Minister also planted a *Cotylelobium burckii* F Heim tree to mark the visit.

The Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam continued his visit with a tour to the Brunei Energy Hub Dermaga Diraja.

Before the tour, the Prime Minister and delegation participated in a high-level business forum between the business community and energy companies of Brunei Darussalam and Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

Meanwhile, the spouse of the Prime Minister also made a separate visit to the Royal Regalia Museum in the capital.

Formerly known as Royal Regalia Building, it mainly houses the regalia of the Sultan and the royalty and exhibits related to the



His Excellency Phạm Minh Chính, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam plants a tree, *Cotylelobium burckii* F Heim to mark the visit.

commemorations of the Silver and Golden Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam which was officiated in 1992.

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His Excellency Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam upon arrival at the Brunei Energy Hub Dermaga Diraja in the capital (left) and participating in a high-level business forum between the business community and energy companies of Brunei Darussalam and Viet Nam (right).

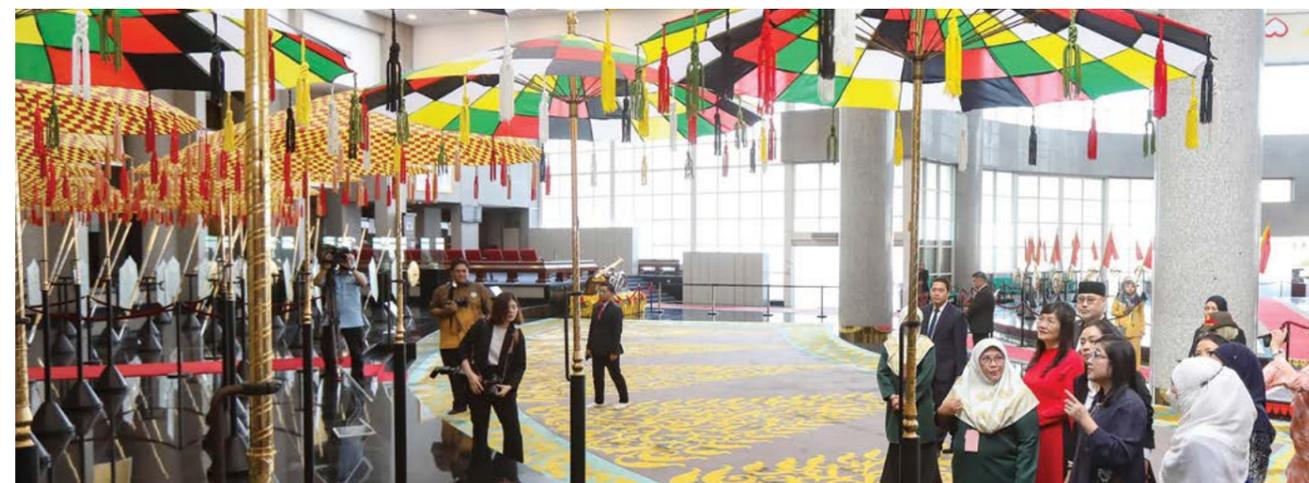


His Excellency in group photo at the Brunei Energy Hub Dermaga Diraja in the capital.

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The spouse of Prime Minister in a group photo (left) and listening to a brief explanation about the Sultanate's heirlooms and regalia (below).



### The Launching of SMS Brunei Prihatin for Türkiye and Syria



Yang Berhormat Minister of Religious Affairs and Yang Berhormat Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports and the committee's co-advisors jointly launch the SMS Brunei Prihatin and leading the financial aid.



Yang Berhormat Ministers, the committee's co-advisors during the meeting.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 14** - His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has consented for the establishment of 'The Republic of Türkiye and the Syrian Arab Republic Earthquake Humanitarian Fund' as well as the Fund's National Committee.

The SMS Brunei Prihatin for the fund was launched 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 and Yang Berhormat

Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Nazmi bin Haji Mohamad, Minister of Youth, Culture and Sports.

The Minister of Youth, Culture and Sports in his speech expressed the need for immediate assistance, where the Republic of Türkiye and the Syrian Arab Republic have appealed to the international community for assistance.

Meanwhile, Minister of Religious Affairs while speaking at the meeting described the establishment of the fund as an outpouring of the humanitarian heart of the people and residents of the

country. Jointly organised with DataStream Technology, DST Sendirian Berhad, Progresif Sendirian Berhad and Imagine Sendirian Berhad, the humanitarian fund which will last for three months is one of the efforts to give donors the opportunity to contribute directly in the form of financial donations.

Contributions can be made via donation boxes set up in mosques, suraus and religious halls, banks, business premises and public buildings nationwide or through the BIBD QuickPay service.

## Brunei Darussalam participates in AMER9 and IEW 2023



Group photo session with the Honourable Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India.



Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) with His Excellency Haitham Al-Ghais, Secretary General of Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).



Yang Berhormat Minister at PMO with His Excellency Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Republic of India.

### REPUBLIC OF INDIA, February 7 -

Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd. Yussof, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) currently attending the 9<sup>th</sup> Asian Energy Ministerial Roundtable (AMER9) alongside the India Energy Week 2023 (IEW 2023) held at the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre, Bengaluru from February 6 to 8.

The Minister at PMO also attended the Ministerial Session of the Strategic Conference which focused on the role of policymakers in accelerating the adoption of low-carbon options, including

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Group photo session at the 9<sup>th</sup> Asian Energy Ministerial Roundtable (AMER9).



Yang Berhormat Minister at PMO during the courtesy call with His Excellency Dr. Sultan bin Ahmed Al Jaber, Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, and Special Envoy for Climate Change, UAE (President-Designate for COP28).

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renewable energy, electric vehicles and hydrogen, and in ensuring collaboration to achieve energy secure and low carbon future.

The discussions during the AMER9 called for strengthening dialogue between producers and consumers to promote energy security and support the stability

of markets, and increasing trade and investments for long-term energy security, justice, resilience and sustainability.

In a Ministerial Statement during the Plenary Session, the Minister shared Brunei Darussalam's initiatives and efforts in enhancing energy security in ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy, and key energy transition strategies that include

increasing renewable energy share in the total energy mix to at least 30 per cent by 2035, primarily through the development of large-scale solar.

At the side-lines of both events, the Minister also made a Courtesy Call with His Excellency Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Republic of India, on February 6.

## Close the care gap

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 4** - According to statistics obtained from the Brunei Darussalam Cancer Registry (BDCR) for 2021, a total of 294 deaths due to cancer with 682 new cancer cases detected.

This was shared by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohammad Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health in a message in conjunction with World Cancer Day Celebration 2023, themed "Close the Care Gap".

The Minister of Health said that about 30 to 50 per cent of cancer deaths are preventable and is linked to some risky behaviours and practices.

At the individual level, the Minister advised the public to adopt a healthy lifestyle by stopping smoking and avoiding exposure to cigarette smoke; maintaining a healthy weight consistently; adopting a healthy and balanced diet including ensuring sufficient fruit and vegetable intake daily and reducing excessive fatty diets and increase physical activity, at least 30

minutes daily, five times or more in a week.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has published the second edition of the National Physical Activity Guidelines which contain the information and recommendations based on scientific evidence to reduce sedentary behaviour that can guide the public.

MoH is also conducting a campaign collectively called 'BNontheMove', an initiative to count the steps taken to achieve the target steps set from time to time which is expected to increase physical activity and as further foster an active culture among the people and resident in the country.

The ministry will continue to work with The Brunei Cancer Centre (TBCC) in offering the best cancer treatment services for cancer patients and families.

Cooperation from all level of society including education institutions, associations, NGOs and grassroots leaders in cancer patient management is vital to reduce the effects of cancer.



Yang Berhormat Minister of Health.

## Embassy of Kuwait hosts 62<sup>nd</sup> National Day reception

**JERUDONG, February 21** - The Embassy of the State of Kuwait in Brunei Darussalam hosted a Dinner Reception in conjunction with the 62<sup>nd</sup> National Day and the 32<sup>nd</sup> Liberation Day of the State of Kuwait at the Royal Berkshire Hall, Royal



Brunei Polo and Riding Club.

Present as the Guest of Honour representing the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohammad Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health.

Later, the Minister of Health and His Excellency Salah Mubarak Musleh Al-Mutairi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Kuwait jointly cut the cake, followed by a presentation of a souvenir to the Guest of Honour.

Brunei Darussalam and the State of Kuwait established diplomatic relations since May, 1990 and continues to develop and strengthened in various levels and areas.

Yang Berhormat Minister of Health as the Guest of Honour and His Excellency Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Kuwait jointly cutting the National Day Anniversary cake.

## Non-oil and gas sector continues to grow steadily



Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy delivering his opening keynote address at the National Business Conference 2023.



Yang Berhormat the Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy at the National Business Conference 2023.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 2** - The recent contribution towards the economic growth that we have seen from the non-oil and gas sector, has reached \$9.8 billion in 2021 and is projected to continue to grow steadily into the foreseeable future.

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew bin Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and Second Minister of Finance and Economy said "notably, the development of the Downstream Oil and Gas sector has

proven instrumental in driving this growth, indicating that the country's diversification efforts are bearing fruit."

"Positive strides have also been made within the Services Sector, namely within the Financial sector as well as the Transport and Logistics sectors. In order to maintain this encouraging growth, Brunei Darussalam will continue its economic diversification agenda especially in the various sectors identified in the Brunei Darussalam Economic Blueprint", said the Minister at PMO and Second Minister

of Finance and Economy while delivering his opening keynote address at the National Business Conference 2023 at the International Convention Centre.

The conference themed "Beyond Recovery: Building a Sustainable Digital Future" was participated by over 300 participants. It aims to explore collaboration among the public and private sectors and sharing knowledge from senior government and business figures

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Chair of the APEC Business Advisory Council Brunei, Executive Director of LVK Group of Companies delivering her welcoming remarks at the conference.

as well as overseas experts in advancing a sustainable digital economy and work towards achieving Brunei Vision 2035.

The Chair of the APEC Business Advisory Council Brunei, Hafimi Abdul Haadi, Executive Director of LVK Group of Companies, in her welcoming remarks expressed her gratefulness for the significant interest in the National Business Conference which seeks to bring all stakeholders in our economic future.

"As a country that is connected to the global economy and plugged into the trading architecture, such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, it is imperative for the Brunei business community to understand global trends and challenges and how they impact our businesses.

"In a recent ABAC - USC Marshall School of Business developed report, one of the conclusions arising is that Driving Economic Growth requires Business Leaders and Policy Makers to take Economic Inclusion seriously - Pursuing economic growth with only half the team playing is a losing strategy", she added.

The Chair of the ASEAN Business Advisory Council Brunei, Haslina binti Haji Mohd. Taib also the CEO of Dynamik Technologies said "it is time to transform our young and educated people into a Digital Workforce, position this Abode of Peace as a Digital Economy Hub as well our Energy, Green and Halal industries towards ASEAN Net Zero for a better planet.

"It is time to expand on our partnerships and collaborations locally and regionally. Especially in the Borneo Economic Corridor, we have the potential to develop and support small, and medium enterprises island-wide to participate more actively in digital trade, which in turn builds our shared prosperity", she said.

The conference also heard from Eduardo Pedrosa, Secretary-General of the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council who highlighted how global challenges are impacting the region such as inflation, supply chain issues, and currency fluctuation.



Chair of the ASEAN Business Advisory Council Brunei, also the Chief Executive Officer of Dynamik Technologies delivering her remarks.



Among the attendees and participants at the conference.

## Singapore Food Festival 2023

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 2** - Anjung Saujana Restaurant under Royal Brunei Culinary with the support of Singapore High Commission and Singapore Tourism Board launched the Singapore Food Festival 2023 at Anjung Saujana Restaurant, Brunei International Airport.

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The Guest of Honour, Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy, and His Excellency High Commissioner of the Republic of Singapore to Brunei Darussalam jointly launching the Singapore Food Festival 2023.





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The Singapore Food Festival was jointly launched 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, and His Excellency Heng Aik Yeow, High Commissioner of the Republic of Singapore to Brunei Darussalam.

Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy and spouse witnessing a portion of Singaporean food.



Some of the featured Singaporean dishes at the festival.

## Brunei - China upgrades MoU strengthening development of BGEC



Yang Berhormat the Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy (top, centre) witnessing the signing of Memorandum of Understanding held virtually.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 6** - The Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and the Government of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the upgraded Brunei-Guangxi Economic

Corridor (BGEC) on February 2, in conjunction with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brunei-Guangxi Economic Corridor Joint Cooperation Committee (BGEC JCC) Meeting held virtually at the Ministry of Finance and Economy.

Signing on behalf of the Government

of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was Dato Seri Paduka Awang Haji Khairuddin bin Haji Abdul Hamid, Deputy Minister of Finance and Economy (Economy), while the Government of the Guangxi Zhuang

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Autonomous Region was represented by Her Excellency Vice-Governor Sui Guohua.

Witnessing the signing ceremony were 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, and His Excellency Lan Tianli, Governor of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

The upgraded MoU serves to reinforce the strong commitment by both the Government of Brunei Darussalam and the Government

of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region to further strengthen the cooperation and development of the BGEC, established through an MoU inked between the two governments during the 11<sup>th</sup> China-ASEAN Expo (CAEXPO) on September 17, 2014 in Nanning, Guangxi.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> BGEC JCC meeting acknowledged the solid progress that has been made in the cooperation of the BGEC, the continuous deepening of the economic and trade cooperation between Brunei Darussalam and Guangxi, and the development of various cooperation projects under the framework of the BGEC.

## Quarantine Order for COVID-19 no longer mandatory

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 6** - 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 wishes to announce the latest amendments to COVID-19 control measures which will commence on Wednesday, February 15.

Infectious Diseases Act Cap 204 will no longer be the basis for mandatory isolation for positive cases of COVID-19.

This is taking into consideration that Brunei Darussalam has entered the Endemic Phase about a year ago and the people of this country have a high level of immunity for collective protection which was achieved through vaccination and natural infection (hybrid immunity). This is also in line with the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO).

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 in a press conference held at the Dewan Al-Afiah, Ministry of Health said that anyone with a positive Antigen Rapid Test (ART) are encouraged to upload their ART results to the BruHealth app.

However, Quarantine Order will no longer be issued and is replaced with Self Isolation Advice. The use of the purple code in the BruHealth app will be maintained. However, its usage will only be for verification and as a Medical Certificate, and not for mandatory self-isolation.

Currently, positive cases are required to undergo mandatory self-isolation for five to ten days, which is subject to ART results after the fifth day.

Therefore, with these changes, COVID-19 positive cases are only advised to undergo self-isolation for a period of three to five days only. Those who opt to self-isolate can end their self-isolation after the fifth day or at any time after they are tested negative after the third day.

Close contacts of COVID-19 cases are no longer required to



Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy in a press conference highlighting the COVID-19 updates.

undergo self-isolation and as such, the red code on the BruHealth app will no longer be in use. However, anyone with symptoms are advised to do their ART.

Physical distancing in mosques is no longer required and the use of own prayer mats is not mandatory.

With these changes, the term 'COVID-19 Health Protocols' will be replaced by 'COVID-19 Health Advisory'.

The Ministry of Health will update and implement control measures at hospitals and clinics including private hospitals and clinics where visitors are no longer required to do an ART before visiting inpatients in the wards and the use of face masks are only mandatory in clinical areas.

Other control measures are still maintained where ART will still be done for patients being admitted to the hospital for treatment and patients with COVID-19 will be treated in designated isolation wards.

## Strengthening regional efforts to promote ASEAN tourism

**REPUBLIC INDONESIA, February 6** - The 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers (26<sup>th</sup> M-ATM) and the related meetings with Plus Three (22<sup>nd</sup> M-ATM Plus Three); 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ASEAN-India; and 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of ASEAN-Russia Federation Tourism Ministers were held on February 4 in Yogyakarta.

Brunei Darussalam's delegation was led by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Abdul Manaf bin Haji Metussin, Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT).

The meeting was chaired by His Excellency Mr. Sandiaga Salahuddin Uno, Indonesian Minister of Tourism and Creative Tourism and Her Excellency, Suanesavanh Vignaket, Lao's Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism as the

Vice-Chairperson.

With the theme of "ASEAN: A Journey to Wonderful Destinations", the meeting noted that 60 per cent of measures and activities under the post COVID-19 Recovery Plan for ASEAN Tourism have been completed or are being implemented through the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP).

During the M-ATM Plus Three, the meeting noted that the Plus-Three countries continued to implement measures and initiatives to revitalise the tourism sector. The 10<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-India Meeting emphasised the need to continue supporting tourism

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Yang Berhormat Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism in a group photo at the meeting.



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micro-small medium enterprises. The 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN-Russian Federation Tourism Meeting among others highlighted the importance of advancing efforts to promote sustainable and inclusive tourism between the two parties.

Meanwhile at the ASEAN Tourism Standards Awards Ceremony, Brunei's Trueliving Spa & Studio and Reflections Eco Holistic received the 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Spa Services Awards.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Public Toilet Award was awarded to Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Complex (for Premium and Premier); Malay Technology Museum; Kaizen Sushi Restaurant and Seria Energy Lab.

Brunei Darussalam also participated in the ASEAN Tourism Forum Travel Exchange (TRAVEX).

Yang Berhormat Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism during the 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers (26<sup>th</sup> M-ATM) and the related meetings.

## Prioritising foundational and lifelong learning



Yang Berhormat Minister of Education of Brunei Darussalam in a group photo at the 52<sup>nd</sup> South East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO) Council Conference (52<sup>nd</sup> SEAMEC).

**REPUBLIC PHILIPPINES, February 9** – The 52<sup>nd</sup> South East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO) Council Conference (52<sup>nd</sup> SEAMEC) and the 6<sup>th</sup> Strategic Dialogue of Education Ministers (6<sup>th</sup> SDEM) that was held from February 8 and 9 was hosted by the Department of Education Philippines as the chair along with the SEAMEO Secretariat.

This year's 6<sup>th</sup> SDEM themed "Prioritising Foundational Learning and Lifelong Learning: Investing in Literacy, Numeracy,

and STEM Education in the Digital Era".

Yang Berhormat Datin Seri Setia Dr. Hajah Romaizah binti Haji Md. Salleh, Minister of Education Darussalam as moderator of the First Round Table shared efforts that have been made by Brunei Darussalam towards prioritising foundational and lifelong learning.

The Minister of Education highlighted that the Ministry of Education recognises the significance of foundational learning by placing great emphasis on early

childhood education through its efforts on the development of the National Quality Framework, the National Quality Policy as well as a National Quality Curriculum Framework specifically in teacher capacity building and professional development workshops at the early childhood level.

The Minister also shared the development of the Digital Transformation Plan that aims to transform the education sector, by streamlining the processes and making use of technologies to enhance education.

## Brunei-Japan strengthen bilateral relations



Yang Berhormat Minister of Education in a group photo representing His Majesty's Government at 63<sup>rd</sup> Birthday Anniversary of the Emperor of Japan. Also present, His Excellency Maeda Toru, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Brunei Darussalam.

**JERUDONG, February 28** - The Embassy of Japan in Brunei Darussalam hosted a reception celebrating the 63<sup>rd</sup> Birthday Anniversary of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan at the Royal Berkshire Hall, Royal Brunei Polo and Riding Club.

Present as the Guest of Honour representing the Government of His

Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was Yang Berhormat Datin Seri Setia Dr. Hajah Romaizah binti Haji Md. Salleh, Minister of Education.

His Excellency Maeda Toru, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Brunei Darussalam in his welcoming addressed

that people-to-people exchanges have always been the basis of the friendly relations between Brunei and Japan with the number of tourists is steadily growing, especially after the relaxation of order control in Japan and the resumption of direct flights to Japan last year.

## Brunei Darussalam, top 10 fastest mobile network speed



Yang Berhormat Minister of Transport and Infocommunications delivering his keynote address at the conference.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 2** - Brunei is placed in the top 10 for the fastest mobile network speed on a global basis with a median download speed of 102.06Mbps on mobile networks.

This was stated by Yang Berhormat Pengiran Dato Seri Setia Shamhary bin Pengiran Dato Paduka Haji Mustapha, Minister of Transport and Infocommunications in his keynote

address at the National Business Conference 2023 held at the International Convention Centre.

"However, a well-connected nation is not in itself sufficient for Brunei Darussalam to achieve and become a Smart Nation. Being a Smart Nation means using technology to create a better future for people and society. It involves using data, digital services, and advanced associated

technologies to improve the quality of life for citizens including, but not limited to healthcare, education and other public services", added the Minister of Transport and Infocommunications.

According to the Minister, being a Smart Nation also means creating an environment where citizens can easily access the information and services they need, providing citizens with easy-to-use platforms to access information and related services.

Earlier, the Minister also highlighted that over the past few years, Brunei Darussalam has benefited greatly from high connectivity coverage across the whole nation.

"Key investments in our national connectivity infrastructure over the past 20 years has resulted in the growth of percentage population with access to the internet from nine per cent in 2000 to 95 per cent in 2020.

"On this front, the government continues to work with key stakeholders to further improve the quality of our network infrastructure such as through the Broadband Uplifting programme which aims to raise the fixed broadband baseline

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speed for all subscribers to at least 50Mbps", said the Minister.

In wrapping up his speech, the Minister also stated that it is imperative for government, businesses and individuals to move in tandem towards a connected and Smart Nation.

"All need to strategically invest in education and infrastructure and better understand how technology can influence our comparative advantage," added the Minister.

"The government needs to protect the population from being disenfranchised, create an enabling and safe environment

as well as keeping itself up to speed with technological development and how to manage the change," said the Minister.

Meanwhile in the panel discussion, Dato Seri Paduka Haji Khairuddin bin Haji Abdul Hamid, Deputy Minister (Economy), Ministry of Finance and Economy shared that the economy is seeing greater diversification and encouraged the business community to embrace digitalisation.

The National Business Conference 2023 was an opportunity for the participants to gain significant insight into the business environment for the year ahead that will help them plan and prepare as well as network with the speakers and fellow

participants.

The National Business Conference 2023 is part of the Brunei Economy Programme, an initiative by the ASEAN and APEC Business Advisory Councils of Brunei in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and Economy and in partnership with Baiduri Bank and leading organisations to connect global issues with the Brunei economy.

AIA, Darussalam Enterprise (DARe), Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD), Centre for Strategic and Policy Studies (CSPS), Royal Brunei, Radio Televisyen Brunei, and Borneo Bulletin, and Media Permata are also partners to the programme.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> ADGMIN discuss progress of ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025



Yang Berhormat Minister of Transport and Infocommunications in a group photo during the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Digital Ministerial meeting and related ASEAN dialogue partners meetings.

**REPUBLIC OF PHILIPPINES, February 13** - The 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Digital Ministerial (ADGMIN) Meeting was held on February 9 to 10.

Yang Berhormat Pengiran Dato Seri Setia Shamhary bin Pengiran Dato Paduka Haji Mustapha, Minister of Transport and Infocommunications attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> ADGMIN Meeting and related ASEAN dialogue partners' meetings with People's Republic of China, Japan, Republic of Korea, India, United States of America and International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

With the theme "Synergy towards a Sustainable Digital Future", the 3<sup>rd</sup> ADGMIN Meeting was chaired by His Excellency Ivan John E. Uy, Secretary of the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), Republic of the Philippines.

The meeting among others discussed the progress of the ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025 (ADM 2025) as well as updates from the working groups under the purview of ADGMIN.

In exchanging views on development of the digital sector within ASEAN, the Minister of Transport and Infocommunications shared that we are now in a dynamic digital era where the pace of technological change is rapidly transforming businesses and society. This brings with it a significant wealth of opportunities for growth in our digital economy.

The Minister also acknowledged the need to leverage on ASEAN's regional integration and partnerships to increase ASEAN Member States access to best practices and strategies for transforming the region into a digital community powered by secure and transformative

digital services, technologies and ecosystems.

The meeting welcomed the progress made in the second year of the ADM 2025 and encouraged ASEAN Member States to further cooperate and implement a people-centered approach digital transformation journey.

This includes the continuous development and implementation of programmes and projects to improve ICT policy and regulatory frameworks based on best practices and international standards.

In reviewing the progress of the Senior Officials and Working Group's work plans and projects. The ministers were pleased to take note of the various progress made. Among these included the completion of the ASEAN Guidelines on Quality of

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Experience (QoE) Framework which was led by Brunei Darussalam.

The meeting also welcomed the ASEAN Member States' efforts in implementing enhanced cybersecurity measures consistent with the ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy 2021-2025 in view of the recent rise of global cybersecurity attacks and threats.

The meeting also recognised the need to strengthen collaboration and programmes

aimed at developing analytics, AI, and the digital skills essential to fill the talent and skill gaps in the region.

The meeting concluded with the adoption of the Boracay Digital Declaration that calls for a sustainable digital transformation that is people-centered, safe, secure and relevant to the needs of end users and various stakeholders.

This aims at increasing the quality and use of e-government services and solutions that can connect businesses, and support innovation for new business

models to facilitate cross-border trade and affordable access.

Prior to the 3<sup>rd</sup> ADGMIN Meeting, Senior Official Members of ASEAN Member States attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Digital Senior Official Meetings (ADGSOM) from February 7 to 8.

Brunei Darussalam was led by Awang Haji Hairul Mohd. Daud bin Haji Abdul Karim, Deputy Permanent Secretary (Infocommunications), MTIC in his capacity as ADGSOM leader of Brunei Darussalam.

### National Day Reception of Iran



Yang Berhormat Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports and spouse and Her Excellency Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran during the National Day of Iran reception.

**JERUDONG, February 11** - The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Brunei Darussalam held a reception commemorating the National Day of Iran which took place at Royal Berkshire Hall, Tarindak D'Polo and Riding

Club.

Present as the Guest of Honour representing the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Nazmi bin Haji Mohamad, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports and spouse.

Her Excellency Homeira Rigi Zirouki, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in her welcoming address among other touched on the strong bilateral relations between both countries based on friendship and mutual understanding.

Her Excellency the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran strongly believed that the formation of a people-to-people relationship is an effective step for the development and progress of the nation.

The event saw the presentation of certificates of appreciation to local media, a handover of donation to Pusat Ehsan Al-Ameerah Al-Hajjah Maryam and highlighted with the cake-cutting ceremony by the Guest of Honour and spouse and Her Excellency.

### Empowering thought, generating change



His Excellency Luke Arnold, the Australian High Commissioner to Brunei; Her Excellency Ambra Dickie, the High Commissioner of Canada to Brunei; and Her Excellency Caryn McClelland, the Ambassador of the United States of America to Brunei. Dr. Asyura Salleh, Consultant and Co-Founder of GAIA during the dialogue titled 'In the Middle: A Dialogue on Women in Foreign Policy'.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 27** - The Global Awareness and Impact Alliance (GAIA), a local-based non-governmental organisation, held a dialogue at The Event Space in Kiulap,

near the capital.

Titled "In the Middle: A Dialogue on Women in Foreign Policy", the event was attended by over 30 people from various backgrounds, including embassy

representatives, professionals, graduates, and high school students.

In line with GAIA's goal towards

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empowering thought and generating change, the dialogue was set as a debate where experts offer comparative insights through improvised prompts to stimulate an organic discussion relating to women in the field of international relations and foreign policy.

Invited speakers include His Excellency Luke Arnold, the Australian High Commissioner to Brunei; Her Excellency Ambra Dickie, the High Commissioner of Canada to Brunei; and Her Excellency Caryn McClelland, the Ambassador of the United States of America to Brunei. Dr. Asyura Salleh, Consultant and Co-Founder of GAIA, underscored

the roles of GAIA in her opening remarks which include raising awareness on pressing issues and contributing to impactful policy solutions as well as fostering intellectual thinking amongst Bruneian youth. The dialogue was moderated by Ms. Qayyimah Al-Zelzy and joined by GAIA Volunteer Research Associates, Ms. Nafisa Halim and Ms. Siuu Tzyy Wei.

The dialogue acknowledged that while there has been a persistent pattern of over-representation of men in diplomacy, there is a marked increase in the number of women involved in diplomacy and peacekeeping processes nowadays. Women's inclusion and participation in foreign policy have been

known to contribute to longer-lasting peace.

The dialogue also highlighted how other factors such as race, gender identity and socioeconomic class intersect and exacerbate gender inequalities in foreign policy. Both the audience and the invited speakers recognised the importance of addressing gender issues on a systemic level to guarantee positive and sustainable outcomes at all levels of society.

GAIA hopes to host more impactful dialogues in the future to increase the collective understanding of critical issues amongst the younger generation and address shared problems for a secure future.

## Total Trade increased by 41.1 per cent in November 2022

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 9** - The total trade increased by 41.1 per cent in November 2022 compared to 2021, contributed by a rise in both export and import value between this period.

Compared to October 2022, total trade grew by 15.3 per cent due to an increase in exports, mainly mineral fuels.

Total exports increased by 31.0 per cent mainly due to the increase in mineral fuels.

The increase in mineral fuels exports was mainly due to the higher export value of Crude Oil, Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and Petroleum products.

In terms of commodity, mineral fuels represented the major contributor to Brunei Darussalam's exports at 78.9 per cent, followed by chemicals (18.9 per cent), and machinery and transport equipments (1.1 per cent).

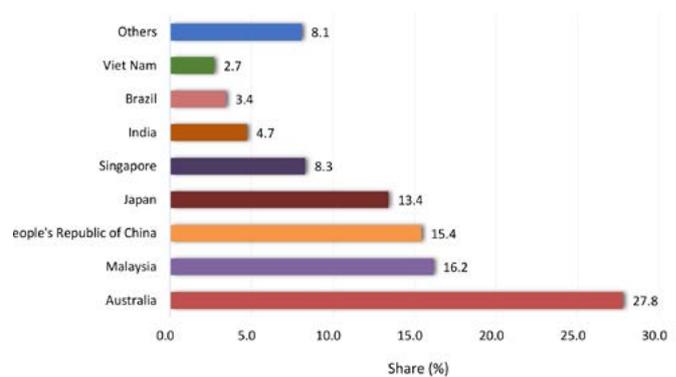
The main exports market in November 2022 was Australia, followed by Malaysia, and People's Republic of China.

The largest export commodity to Australia and Malaysia was mineral fuels, whereas to People's Republic of China was chemicals.

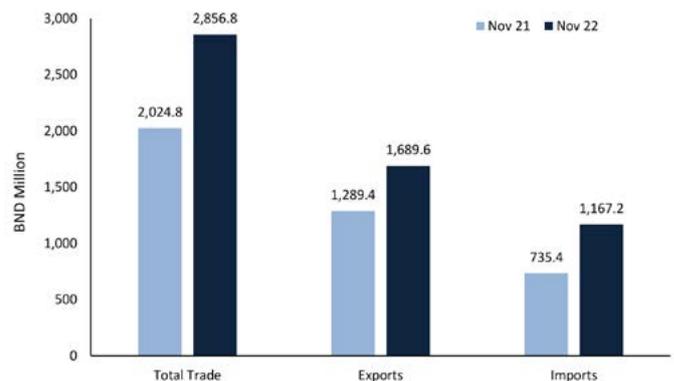
Total value of imports increased mainly due to an increase in imports of mineral fuels particularly Crude Oil as a production input for the downstream Petrochemical Industry.

The five main imports by commodity for November 2022 were mineral fuels, followed by machinery and transport equipments, food, chemicals, and manufactured goods.

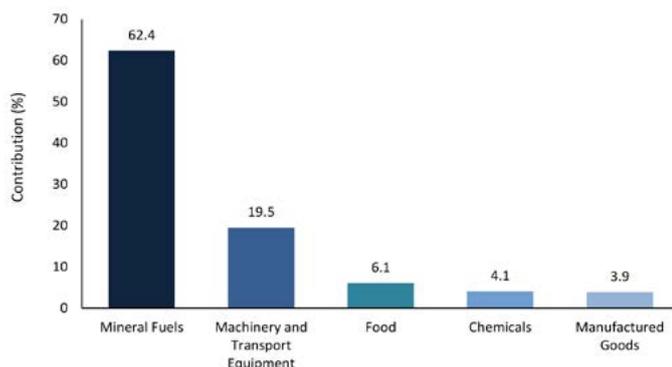
Share of Exports by Trading Partners



Brunei Darussalam's Trade Performance



Five Main Imports by Commodity



The biggest import partner was Malaysia, followed by United Arab Emirates and Qatar, with mineral fuels as the largest import commodity.

Transport by sea accounted for the highest share for both exports and imports, which amounted to 91 per cent. This was followed by air transport and via land.

The International Merchandise Trade Statistics report for November 2022 can be accessed through the Department of Economic Planning and Statistics website at <https://deps.mofe.gov.bn>.