



بروني دارالسلام

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

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His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam : development and progress devoid of moral and religious values are futile

Changes, such as those brought by development, should not be accepted merely for the sake of change or progress, without taking into consideration their values.

In whatever field, values is of the utmost importance.

Emphasising these points in his new year address to the nation over Radio and Television Brunei on new year's eve, His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam cited that progress devoid of moral and religious values have begun to show their futility as evidenced by various elements of evils and crimes, which in themselves can cause widespread destruction to the world at large.

The Brunei ruler urged his subjects and people of Brunei Darussalam to

Progress devoid of values bring about destruction

Values: first consideration in all fields

brace against the challenges of the new year, among which, he said, is looking back at changes which we have accepted and assess how far those changes have benefited us or otherwise.

"We should not outrightly accept

changes alone, without taking into account their values", His Majesty said.

Development should be carefully planned and nurtured. But, the ruler pointed out, the more advanced men become, the more there are new values which are not compatible with the national culture.

And furthermore, as the progress advances further, people begin to forget about moral and values as if "it is a becoming a disease that is contagious in this modern world of today".

"We must be aware of all these so that we will not be dragged into changes that can bring us only to vainness and futility", His Majesty stressed.

For us, the ruler went on, we shall be mindful and on guard although we might be slow in taking rational actions for the security of all.

Brunei Darussalam must stand on its own feet confidently, developing and making various efforts in its own style in line with healthy and safe modes of progress, with the guidance of Allah, God and Almighty, through the pure teachings of Islam.

The ruler also spoke of the examples and lessons which can be learned from what we are witnessing outside Brunei Darussalam.

It was now essential for Brunei Darussalam to attain the required level of strength in the social, economic and political fields. To achieve these, "we need determination, patience and wisdom in facing various situations".

The ruler pointed out that regional economic blocs and the competitive international trade demand us to be efficient and expert in drawing up new strategies which would allow us to negotiate with ease, and also for situations where we would probably have to compete.

The Brunei ruler also drew attention to the issue of the environment which, he said, is ever-showing increasing threats of pollution.

"We, too, are playing our part with regard to this issue by joining in the signing of the Rio Declaration, and by

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BRUNEI DARUSSALAM NEWSLETTER

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Editorial Staff

Chief Editor:
Mahari Haji Ismail

Senior Editor:
Aishah Mohamed

Editors
Hanafiah Mohamad
Aisah Haji Piee

Asst. Editors/Layout
Zaianit Haji Noorkhan
Painah Paiman

Photographs

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YOUR TURN

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From page 1 (Values)

continuing efforts towards achieving its objectives".

His Majesty called on the people of Brunei Darussalam to maintain a healthy and clean environment, especially those in the interiors and villages.

Looking back at 1992, His Majesty spoke of the many saddening upheavals and turmoils, including the developments in Bosnia-Herzegovina

over which Brunei Darussalam has realised its firm stand by sympathising both in terms of moral and materials.

His Majesty also touched on the recent celebrations marking the Silver Jubilee of his accession to the throne, saying it was not the celebrations which were the main goals, but more importantly what will be linked to history is the fact of our existence as a sovereign and civilised race in accordance with the glory of the Malay Muslim Monarchy philosophy, of which we are proud.

HM the Sultan tells Brunei Muslims Use the Koran fully

His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has said that Al-Quran guides and brings life to perfection. The monarch called on Brunei Muslims to make full use of the holy book since it is readily available in Brunei Darussalam.

The Brunei ruler was speaking at the final of the National Al-Quran (Koran) Reading Competition at the Taman Haji Sir Muda Omar Ali Saifuddin, in the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan on January 3. The theme of this year's competition was "Akidah Kukuh Negara Mantap" or Strong Islamic Faith Assures National Stability.

His Majesty said those people who own and recite the Al-Quran are fortunate, because not all Muslims in the world are able to own the holy book.

His Majesty said that the breaking up of an empire during this era, for instance, has uncovered such secrets as Muslims in several countries who have long been isolated from the Al-Quran. Only through donations from certain countries were these people able to own the Al-Quran.

Sultanate owns its hand-written Al-Quran

The monarch said Brunei Darussalam has now its own hand-written Al-Quran, published at huge expenses and urged that it should not merely be kept but should be recited.

His Majesty's Government has published some 150,000 specially hand-written Al-Quran known as the 'Mushaf Brunei Darussalam' to be distributed to Muslims in the country early this year; 1,000 copies are for His Majesty; while another 5,000 copies are for Govern-

ment ministries. The Mushaf Brunei Darussalam was officially launched by His Majesty in October last year, marking the Silver Jubilee Celebration of his accession to the throne.

The decision to print and produce the Mushaf Brunei Darussalam was made in 1986 with such aims: as a testimony to the fact that efforts to promote Islam continue under His Majesty's rule; that the Mushaf will be used by religious schools and Muslims in the country; and as an official gift from His Majesty's Government to guests from Islamic countries.

Formation of "Institut Tahfiz Al-Quran"

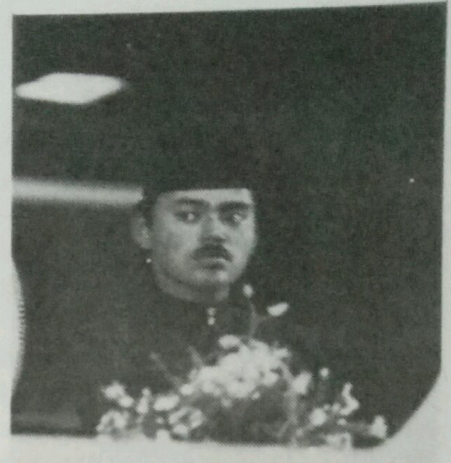
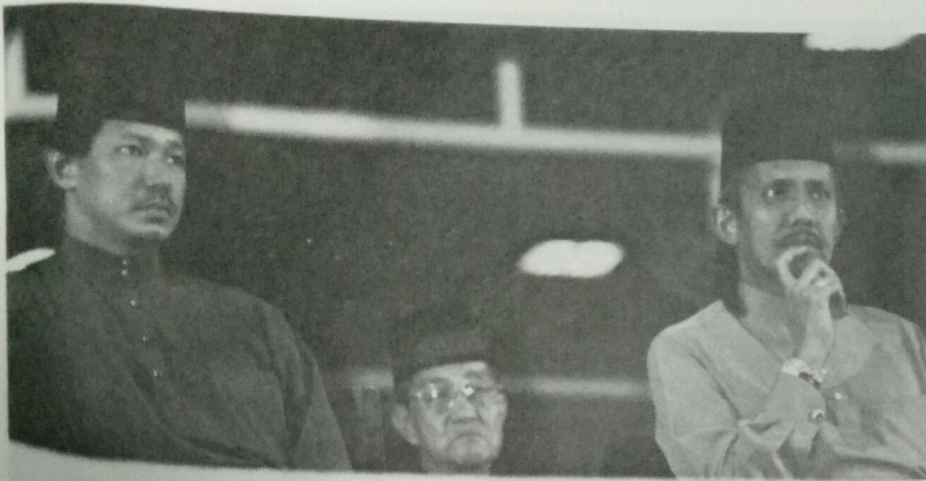
In his 'titah', His Majesty outlined the measures to enhance the study of Al-Quran in the Sultanate including the setting up of the Institut Tahfiz Al-Quran (The Institut for the Study and Memorizing of the Al-Quran), which had an encouraging response from the public.

The first intake of 44 students began their studies at the institute on January 1, this year, when it was officially launched by His Majesty's eldest son, His Royal Highness Paduka Seri Duli Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah.

The Institut Tahfiz Al-Quran Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, which is His Majesty's personal donation, is presently sited at a temporary building in Kampong Kiarong in Bandar Seri Begawan.

Apart from studies of memorizing the Al-Quran and Islamic knowledge, the institute will also offer subjects such as the Arabic, English and Malay languages as well as computer,

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His Royal Highness Paduka Seri Duli Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah (far right), His Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Bendahara Seri Maharaja Permaisura Pengiran Muda Haji Sufri Bolkiah (second from right) and His Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Digadong Sahibul-Mal Pengiran Muda Haji Jefri Bolkiah (extreme left) were also at the National Koran Reading Competition with His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam.



The Law Minister, Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Laila Kanun Diraja Pengiran Haji Bahrin officially opened the competition.

From page 2 (Al-Quran)

mathematics and science.

Brunei Darussalam's first Hafiz Al-Quran is Awang Haji Suhaili bin Haji Metali Al-Hafiz.

Significance of Al-Quran

His Majesty pointed out that Al-Quran provides us knowledge and blessings in the form of enlightenment which is capable to heal distress and restlessness, adding that the holy book is one of the best ways to resolve crisis and turmoil facing the world.

The Brunei monarch stressed that mankind should turn to the Al-Quran because of its perfect guidance to mankind.

His Majesty urged Muslims in the country to directly refer to Al-Quran and 'Hadis' [records of actions or saying of

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the acquisition of 'akidah' (faith).

A person who acquires true 'akidah' will be able to manage himself properly and in turn adapt it to his duty, dealing, administration, and his relations to Allah, God the Almighty and human being, His Majesty said.

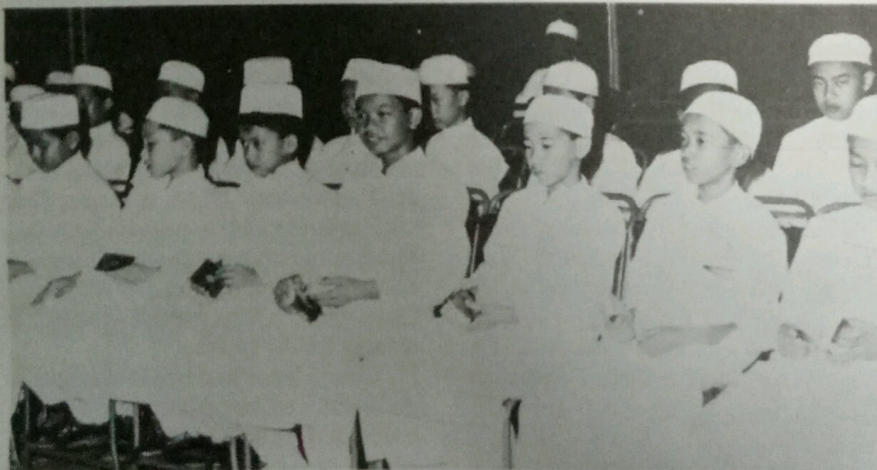
This is the source for every welfare which brings prosperity to the country, said the ruler, adding that, from this situation, we continue to strive ahead like other people with determination for development, but always being firm on the basis of 'akidah' towards 'kudrat' and 'iradat' (power and will of Allah, God the Almighty).

Effort to produce talented Al-Quran readers through competition

The Minister of Religious Affairs, Yang Berhormat Pehin Jawatan Luar Pekerma Raja Dato Seri Utama Dr. Ustaz Haji Awang Mohd Zain bin Haji Serudin, who was also chairman of the competition's organising committee, said a new format adopted in the efforts to find new talents in Koran reading which has only been introduced since last year is almost achieving its objective.

He said a total of 181 men and women readers had taken part in this year's competition at mosque and village levels leading to the national competition. Out of these, he said, only eight, four men and four women, were chosen to the final via elimination processes at quarter-finals and semi-finals.

The minister also announced slight

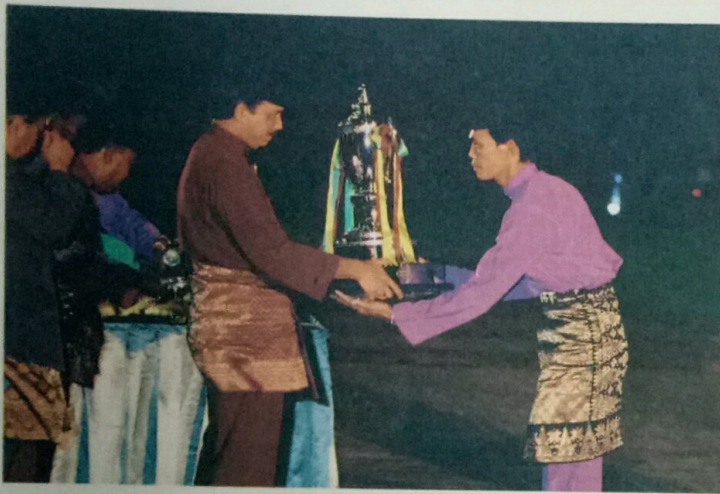


These are among the 44 students who will form the first intake of the Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Tahfiz Al-Quran Institute at Kampong Kiarong near the capital, which began studies on 1 January.

Continued to page 4

Souvenirs and prizes

Right: His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam presenting souvenir to one of the foreign judges at the National Koran Reading Competition. The men's winner, Awang Haji Wasli bin Haji Abu Bakar (left picture, below) and the winner in the women's section, Dayang Hajjah Maidah binti Haji Abdul Rahman also received their prizes from His Majesty, including challenge trophies and a B\$5 thousand cash prize each.



From page 3 (Al-Quran)

amendments made to the existing regulations of the competition. These include that a reader who wins the national level competition three times, whether consecutively or otherwise, will not be eligible to participate in Koran reading competitions for adults at mosque or village levels. Furthermore, the winners in the men's section and the winner in the women's section or the first runners-up in both sections of the national level competition would not automatically represent the country at any international Koran reading competition.

Brunei Darussalam's representatives to international competitions would only be decided by the ministry itself, he said.

Highlight of the ceremony

This year's men section was won by Awang Haji Wasli bin Haji Abu Bakar while the first runner-up was Awang Haji Mohd Daud bin Abdul Kadir.

Dayang Hajjah Maidah binti Haji Abdul Rahman won in the women section and Dayang Hajjah Norhamimah binti Haji Hamidon as the runner-up.

His Majesty consented to present prizes to the winners comprising trophies and cash of \$5,000, \$3,000 and \$2,000 respectively to the champions, the first runner-up and third place winner.

His Majesty also consented to present souvenirs to panel of judges from Malaysia, Indonesia, the United Arab Republic of Egypt and Brunei Darussalam.

The ceremony was preceded with the recital of the Al-Quran by an invited guest from the United Arab Republic. It was followed with a special religious talk by the Acting Director of the Institute of Islamic Studies, Pengiran Dr. Haji Mohammad.

Early reading lessons of the Al-Quran

In another speech by the Minister of Law, Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Laila

Kanun Diraja Pengiran Haji Bahrin who opened this year's final on January 2, among others noted that a study in reciting the Al-Quran was one of the early lessons taught to Muslim community in concurrence with the entry of Islam into this country.

The minister said the two institutions, religious reading lessons conducted at religious halls, mosques and homes; and later spread to religious schools, have contributed significantly.

The minister said the lesson through the 'hall system' is still practical today as a continuous effort to expand the reading lessons of the holy book among Muslim community in the Sultanate; and towards supporting His Majesty's Government efforts to erase illiteracy in reading the Al-Quran.

The minister also urged Muslims in the country to strengthen their 'akidah' (faith) and belief to Allah, God the Almighty because the 'akidah' through the teachings of the Al-Quran and 'Hadis' have been able to liberate mankind from oppression, anxiety and sufferings.

Commercialisation of forests' biodiversity and ecotourism promotion planned

The Director of the Forestry Department has been speaking about the future role of the Sultanate's forests, including plans to commercialize its biodiversity, the promotion of ecotourism and development to foster awareness and appreciation of forests as well as the wealth of genetic material with the existence of genebank, that are useful and even profitable to the pharmaceutical, horticultural and agriculture industries of the future.

Dr. Morni bin Othman, in his opening remark at a two-day Third Meeting of the ASEAN Working Group on Nature Conservation held in Bandar Seri Begawan from November 17, also said that the Sultanate intends to keep as much forest for as long as possible.

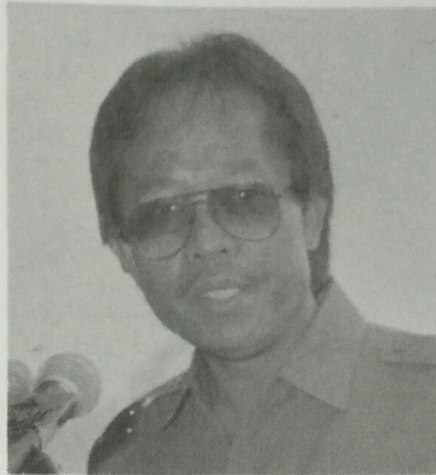
He said: "Starting in 1990, we have reduced the rate of logging by 50 percent, offsetting the shortfall by tapping other sources, and pursuing a long-term timber production strategy aimed at preserving the remaining natural forest, and at the same time sustaining the timber requirement of the country."

The Forestry Director also highlighted the establishment of Protected Area System in Brunei Darussalam, in line with the programmes of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), particularly those of the Commission on National Parks and Protected Area (CNPPA).

He said Brunei Darussalam has recently signed up with the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES).

He also noted the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been integrated into the industrial development, particularly oil exploration and drilling.

He said that wasteland rehabilitation projects are being carried out in the oil drilling sites and other degraded areas, adding that, based on recent findings of a joint research by the Brunei Shell Petroleum Company and the Department of Fisheries: "Brunei Darussalam has one of the richest coral



Dr. Morni: Brunei Darussalam intends to keep its forests for as long as possible.

reef diversity in this region."

Earlier, he described nature conservation as a real and urgent priority in all national agenda, which transcends all political, economic or social boundaries.

Touching on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) or Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, held last June, the Forestry Director said that it has many milestones in the effort to a better and sustainable environment, and also to forge a unified and strong approach to the conservation of nature, the country's heritage, legacy, wealth and for history of mankind.

Dr. Morni stressed: "Brunei Darussalam has been giving serious attention on the critical need for nature

conservation."

He added that the 1989 National Forestry Policy has committed at least 55 percent of the total land area of the country to be under forest cover.

"At present," he said, "more than 80 percent of that area is still forested and 60 percent is primary undisturbed forest."

The official later underlined the categories of forests such as protection forests, which are declared unexploitable areas preserved for ecological and environmental stability; production forests which are man-made forests and for commercial utilization of forest resources; conservation forests which are preserved for educational, scientific and special uses; recreation forests which are developed for outdoor recreation and aesthetic amenities; and national parks which are areas with special geologic and topographic formations and other special natural features of interest with biodiversity of flora and fauna for the benefit of the present and future generations.

Dr. Morni stressed: "Brunei Darussalam does not traditionally rely on the forest for its economic well-being and there is no pressure for land development, therefore, the forests are well preserved."

"Prudent planning in forest management such as total ban on the ex-

Continued to page 11



Under a strict conservation measure, logging in Brunei forests has been reduced by fifty percent since 1990.



HRH Paduka Seri Pengiran Bendahara Seri Maharaja Permaisua Pengiran Muda Haji Sufri Bolkiah, presenting on behalf of His Majesty The Sultan, the PBLI medal to Dato Paduka Awang Haji Zakaria bin Haji Jeneh (top left), the PIKB to Dayang Hajjah Salmah binti Pengiran Muda Kahar (second from top, left), the PJK to Dayang Hajjah Rashidah binti Orang Kaya Periwara Abdul Rashid (second from bottom left) and the PKL to Dr. R. Pathmanathan (bottom left). They were among 968 people honoured for their services to the country.



Medals for services to Nine hundred and sixty eight

His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'azzam Billah of Brunei Darussalam has consented to confer meritorious honours in conjunction with His Majesty's birthday.

The honours were presented during separate ceremonies held on 8, 12 and 19 December at the Lapau in the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan. Making the presentation on behalf of His Majesty were HRH Paduka Seri Pengiran Bendahara Seri Maharaja Permaisua Pengiran Muda Sufri Bolkiah.

The first of the ceremonies saw 277 people receiving the honours. C. Kebaktian, PJK, 246 received the Pingat Kerja Lama, PKL, and one other received the PKL for police personnel.

One person was awarded the Pingat Bakti Laila Ikhlas, PBLI, on 12 December. 10 received the Pingat Kerja Baik, PIKB, and another 86 received the PKL.

On 19 December, a total of 413 people received honours. The PJK was awarded 10, the PIKB 10, and the PKL 393.

The ceremonies were attended by Pengiran cheterias, cabinet ministers, permanent secretaries and other senior government officials.

Call of duty

IN PHNOM PENH.....personnel of The Royal Brunei Police Force and Brunei Armed Forces pose with Brunei Darussalam's representatives (Supreme National Council of Cambodia) on their arrival on 20 November at the Pochentong International airport in Phnom Penh, the Cambodian capital. A dozen police personnel are helping to police the peace process in Cambodia alongside other peacekeeping force under the supervision of The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia, UNTAC, while the three soldiers are observers. This is Brunei Darussalam's first participation in a UN peacekeeping operation, and the group will be with UNTAC for at least six months.



His Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Bendahara Seri Maharaja Permaisua Pengiran Muda Haji Sufri Bolkiah with dignitaries seated behind him at the medal bestowal ceremonies. Below: The "do'a" to bless the ceremonies

the country people honoured

zaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-

d 11 December at the Dewan Persantapan
lf of His Majesty was His Royal Highness
da Haji Sufri Bolkiah.

the, 30 were awarded the Pingat Jasa
person was also awarded the long service

ml, 29 the PJK, 162 received the Pingat

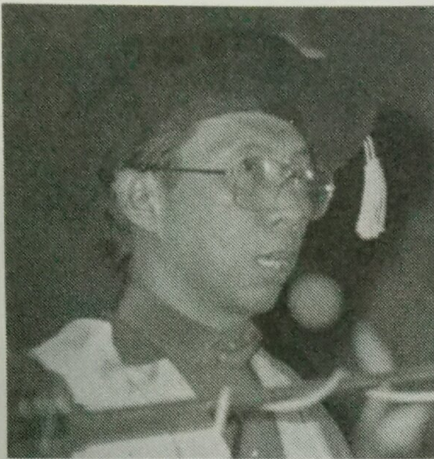
warded to 46 people, while 367 received

s and their deputies, foreign diplomats,



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Muslims warned against study of Islam without 'akidah' and 'akhlak'



The Islamic Studies Institute's Acting Director, Pengiran Dr. Haji Mohammad delivering a welcoming address at the institute's first convocation ceremony.

Brunei Darussalam's Religious Affairs Minister has advised Muslims in the country to be on guard against Islamic studies conducted by certain higher learning centres overseas which merely provide Islamic knowledge but omitting the true Islamic 'akidah' (belief) and 'akhlak' (moral).

The minister said that undoubtedly these higher learning centres had brought benefit and contribution, but it is still important for us to be alert, as history has shown, such centres had existed in the West since the 16th century and later in Australia, Japan and Korea.

The minister stressed: "According to research, the Islamic studies sponsored by the Orientalists is very dangerous to the Muslim ummah."

Yang Berhormat Pehin Jawatan Luar Pekerma Raja Dato Seri Utama Dr. Awang Haji Mohd Zain bin Haji Serudin, the Religious Affairs Minister made the remarks at the 'Haflut Takharuj' (convocation) ceremony for thirty-one graduates of Institut Pengajian Islam (IPI) or The Institute of Islamic Studies, at the Seri Begawan Religious Teachers' College in the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan on December 15.

The minister also called on the institute to be sensitive towards its chal-

lenging task, as entrusted by His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, of making itself one of the ramparts for showing the way to a truly synchronised and united religious living.

He said His Majesty had underlined that religious faith practised in the Sultanate is in accordance with the teaching of 'Ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah' (Sunni), especially that of the 'Mazhab Shafee', which has enabled us to evade any disturbance and dispute on religious-related matters. A unified and integrated religious thought therefore should not be allowed to be harmed by deviationists who spread other beliefs or thoughts.

Deviation of Islamic teaching through 'Qadiani' and 'anti-hadith'

The minister noted that the 'Qadiani' teaching conducted by England-educated Mirza Gulam Ahmad of India, who gained his religious knowledge through translations and information without 'akidah', is one reason why one is easily diverted from the true teachings of Islam and that he also claimed himself to be a prophet.

The minister also spoke about 'Rashid Khalifah', who through his scientific analysis, logical study and knowledge on Islamic studies which

were not based on 'akidah', had denied Prophet Muhammad's 'hadis' [records of action or sayings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)]. This teaching began spreading in America by the Islamic intellectual groups which gained their education from the so-called Islamic Studies Centres of the West, and today such anti-Hadith groups have begun spreading in this region, the minister said.

Yang Berhormat also highlighted that Islam and its followers are constantly being attacked. According to a book written by Abd. Rahman Hassana Habanakah Al-Midani, entitled "Ajnihatul-makrith Thalatha", he said, the tactics are aimed at influencing and subjugating the souls of Muslim children and younger generation through sexual elements and various other vices, as well as by dominating the minds of youths and younger generation through various cultures and ideas, to deviate their true belief in Islam.

Yang Berhormat said these tactics contain such elements designed to create confusion on the understanding of Islam among Muslims, create bad image of the history of Islam so that Muslims are no longer proud of the glory of the religion, and by making Muslims ignorant of the true teachings

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Some of the 31 male and female students of the IPI first intake proudly await turn to receive their Diplomas in Islamic Studies on graduation day.

From page 8 (Islamic akidah)

of Islam by way of various falsehoods, among others.

The minister pointed also to the banned-publication of "The Satanic Verses" written by Indian-born Salman Rushdie, which among others stated that there are 'Surah' (Chapters) in the Al-Quran that are not from Allah, God the Almighty but from Satan.

The minister stressed, "This is one of the so-called Islamic Studies without 'akidah', which is very dangerous."

IPI marks another milestone in Islamic Studies in Sultanate.

Yang Berhormat Pehin Jawatan Luar Pekerma Raja Dato Seri Utama Dr. Haji Mohd. Zain earlier spoke about the formation of IPI as yet another milestone in the systematic progression of Islamic studies in the Sultanate.

He said after the Second World War, religious lesson was taught as a subject in schools; systematic religious schooling was launched in the 1950s, the setting up of Arabic Secondary Schools up to upper secondary came in the 1960s, followed by the formation of the Seri Begawan Religious Teachers' Training College in 1970s, and the setting up of the Institut Pengajian Islam in the 1980s.

This is evidence of the serious attention given by His Majesty to religious education, and more importantly the emphasis to bringing about higher religious studies which are administered within the country itself.

The minister also noted that in facing the 1990s, Memoranda of Understanding were signed between the IPI and the University of Al-Azhar of Cairo, and between the IPI and the International Islamic University, Islamabad of Pakistan on measures to ensure the IPI will truly become a centre of higher Islamic studies.

Objectives of setting up IPI in 1989

The Acting Director of the IPI, Pengiran Dr. Haji Mohammad, in his welcoming speech said that the setting



The Religious Affairs Minister, Yang Berhormat Pehin Jawatan Luar Pekerma Raja Dato Seri Utama Dr. Ustaz Haji Awang Mohd. Zain, as chief guest, presents the Diploma of Islamic Studies to one of the graduates.

up of the IPI, among others, is aimed at producing capable students in the fields of Islamic studies and education, and upgrading the standard of religious studies in the country, thus assisting the aspiration in making the teachings of Islam as a way of life based on the 'akidah' of Ahli-Sunnah Wal Jamaah and Mazhab Shafie.

The IPI is also designed towards meeting the Sultanate's needs in the fields of knowledge, education, propagation and spread of Islam; and encouraging and providing research facility on efforts to uphold and respect Islam as the country's official religion in accordance with the country's constitution, as well as providing research facility on other religious-related studies.

The IPI opened its door in July 1989 with a first intake of 31 male and female students. It was first accommodated at a temporary campus at the Seri Begawan Religious Teachers' College, but has now moved to another temporary campus at the Hassanal Bolkiah Arabic Secondary School nearby.

The Acting Director of IPI disclosed that a permanent campus has been identified, and the building construction is in progress at Kampung Ikas Bandung, some 27 kilometres from the capital, at a cost of B\$60 million.

Structure and system of IPI

The IPI comprises four departments namely 'Usuluddin' (knowledge of tenets of Islam); 'Syariah' (Islamic religious law); 'Pendidikan' (educa-

tion); and 'Bahasa Arab' (Arabic language). The system of study is through lectures and tutorials with the Arabic language as the medium of conveyance.

Students will undergo three-years of study and on completion, they will be awarded diplomas in Islamic Studies.

Diploma in "Takhassus At-Tafaqquh Fiddin"

The acting director also announced that due to the small number of Bruneian intellectuals in the field of Islamic studies, specially on the knowledge of Mazhab Shafie's 'Syariah' (religious law), the IPI has conducted a diploma programme known as Diploma in 'Takhassus At-Tafaqquh Fiddin'.

The two-year course which started in October 1991, is aimed at upgrading the general knowledge of Islam and specialization on certain fields, among others, the principles of Islamic jurisprudence, comparative of Islamic law and the Islamic mysticism.

The entry requirement include a degree in Islamic Studies from recognised Islamic universities, especially the University of Al-Azhar, and the ability to communicate in Arabic language, as the medium of study is fully conducted in Arabic.

The acting director described that the course is the first to be conducted in this region, adding that, it will also lead the insitute to produce MA and PhD qualifications.

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Agreement signed to establish cooperation and assistance to upgrade academic standard and Islamic studies

The Acting Director of the IPI also noted that His Majesty's Government through the Religious Affairs Ministry had recently signed two separate agreements with the University of Al-Azhar of Cairo and the International Islamic University, Islamabad of Pakistan. Among the terms of the agreement are to establish cooperation and to get assistance in upgrading the academic standard in improving the institute's capability in the field of Islamic studies and for the benefit of the Islamic community in the Sultanate.

In concordance with the agreement, several outstanding students who had completed their studies at the IPI and have passed their interviews conducted by the Scholarship Section of the Religious Affairs Ministry will further their studies at the International Islamic University, Islamabad in Pakistan, under His Majesty's Government sponsorship. They will sit in the final year at the university's 'Usuluddin' and 'Syariah' faculties to obtain B.A. (Hons) and LL.B (Hons).

Tahfiz Al-Quran course

The Acting Director of IPI also stated that IPI is also conducting the 'Tahfiz Al-Quran' (Memorising and studying the Al-Quran) courses for religious teachers to become 'imam' (leader of prayers and other Islamic activities); revision course for 'imam'; Arabic language course for student candidates intending to go to the Al-Azhar University and Islamic religious laws course for 'Syariah' officials.

Students receive their Diploma in Islamic Studies

At the ceremony, the first batch of 31 students of the IPI received their diplomas from the Religious Affairs Minister. Three of them received outstanding awards in the fields of 'Syariah', 'Usuluddin' and 'Pendidikan Islam' respectively.

Non-Muslim students to study certain aspects of Islam

Non-Muslim students in Brunei Darussalam will have an insight and understanding of Islam through a school curriculum which is being structured especially for them by the Ministry of Education. The curriculum will focus on aspects of Islam as a way of daily life in Brunei Darussalam, but will not include Islamic laws and such practices as prayers, performing the Haj, paying the tithes and fasting during the month of Ramadan.

This was announced by Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Wijaya Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Abdul Aziz, Minister of Education at a ceremony marking the seventieth anniversary of the formation of the non-government Chung Hwa Middle School in the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan, on December 12.

The Education Minister hoped that non-Muslim students, specially Chinese, would feel at ease in following the lesson and seize the benefit from it.

He was optimistic that the school could become a model to other non-government schools in the country to help achieve the 'nation-building' objective in strengthening solidarity, by upholding the existing unity and understanding, taking new initiative and instilling awareness, spirit, Bruneian characteristics among school students, especially the Chinese community, towards the creation of a harmonious, united and dynamic society.

The minister believes the school has the potential in achieving unity or national integration in view that not only it is one of the oldest schools, but it is also influential among its community and represents the history of education for the Chinese community in Brunei Darussalam.

He hoped that in future, the school will become prominent and able to meet the country's need and aspiration based on MIB (Melayu Islam Beraja) or Malay Islamic Monarchy philosophy, through high quality learning facility not only to attract the interest of

Chinese but also Malay students studying in the school.

The minister urged that more Chinese students enter government schools so that the common basis would become the base for unity and understanding.

Curriculum

The Education Minister earlier stressed that the time has come for the school to move more pragmatically and dynamically as it has done so far, towards giving serious attention on 'nation-building' which had been implemented in various aspects by the Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam.

The process of nation-building towards achieving the country's identity as a Malay Islamic Monarchy for national integration was no longer an imagination because the basis for national unity had existed; among others through the country's education system and curriculum as well as the uniformity of examination system for students in all schools and making MIB as a subject in the school curriculum.

The minister hoped that the country's educational system based on MIB would produce an educated, well-mannered and faithful generation with Islamic and Bruneian identity.

Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Wijaya Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Abdul Aziz noted that MIB has existed since the reign of Sultan Muhammad 1, the first Sultan of Brunei Darussalam in 1415, and continues to be practiced until today.

He said that Islam has strongly influenced the society and culture of the Bruneians, adding that elements of Islam has become a way of life in ceremonies and functions.

The minister said the Chinese community in Brunei Darussalam has its own values and similarities in their way of life as that of Bruneians.

Continued to page 11

From page 10 (Islamic curriculum)

He said almost all of them are now able to converse in the Malay language, even though not fluently.

On the outstanding result by Chinese students in their Malay language examination, the minister said that this was a positive development as a useful base for uniformity of culture and moral towards national unity as the main objective in the process of 'nation-building' as well as for social-cultural unity.

At the function, the minister presented souvenirs to advisers, members of the organising committee and long-service teachers of the Chung Hwa Middle School. The chief guest also toured an exhibition put up by the school.

The Chung Hwa Middle School was set up in 1918 and was then known as the Yik Chye School. It was renamed the Chung Hwa Middle School



The Education Minister, Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Wijaya Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Abdul Aziz, presenting souvenirs to members of the Chung Hwa School's Seventieth Anniversary Celebration Committee. At the event the minister announced the introduction of a curriculum of certain aspects of Islam for non-Muslim students.

in 1922. There were only 20 primary students studying in the early stage of

its formation, but today the school has some 2700 students.

from page 5 (Forests' biodiversity)

ports of logs and unfinished timber products also ensures that the forests are conserved for posterity."

He said because the soils in Brunei Darussalam are so diversified, the forests have a large range of flora and fauna, much of which are yet to be studied in detail.

Speech by chairman of the meeting

The Chairman of the Third ASEAN Working Group Meeting on Nature Conservation, Mr. Mohd. Khan bin Momin Khan in his speech said that it was the first meeting of the ASEAN Experts on Nature Conservation (ANC).

Touching on several meetings held following the establishment of a network of ASEAN Heritage Parks and Reserves, he said that the vast expanse of protected areas were undoubtedly the most important conservation areas in the ASEAN region.

He also noted that the workshops and training seminars held with the ASEAN Nature Conservation Meetings have greatly helped to upgrade the capability of officers managing these protected areas.

The chairman added that these priceless conservation areas hold the most varied biological diversity representing the ASEAN region and they deserve to be effectively managed and developed, adding that such vast areas of land must not remain idle as governments will find other uses for them.

He stressed: "Ecotourism, scientific research and education have important roles to play in these areas and have provided the much needed employment and income for local people."

On the ASEAN Agreement on Nature Conservation, he said that this has been a more complex and difficult agreement to implement largely due to the different laws in existence in the different ASEAN countries.

Nevertheless we have persevered and reached the present stage where all ASEAN countries are undertaking studies of existing local legislations with a view to suitably amend the ASEAN Agreement for implementation.

Speaking on the various projects which have been planned and proposed by ASEAN countries for Nature Conservation, he said these project proposals have been submitted to ASEAN for funding and hoped that ASEAN Dialogue Partners would receive these project proposals favour-

ably and provide the funds to implement them.

The meeting which was attended by 13 officials from the ASEAN member countries including host Brunei Darussalam, among others, reviewed the past commitments of the ASEAN Working Group on Nature Conservation.

These include cooperation in the Management of Transfrontier Parks and other Protected Areas for Conservation within the greater ASEAN region namely on Management Plan for ASEAN Heritage Parks and Reserves (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand); ASEAN Heritage Parks and Reserves Training and Technical Assistance; and Management of Transfrontier Parks and protected areas in the ASEAN region.

The meeting also reviewed the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the ASEAN Region on the ASEAN Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation; ASEAN Marine Turtle Conservation Programme; An Action Plan for the In-Situ Conservation of Endangered Species; Biodiversity Conservation; Implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on the Conservation of Nature of Natural Resources; and ASEAN-Australia Wetlands and Waterbirds Projects.



A splendid stage for a glorious occasion

This is the face of the astaka (open, special stage) which was used for the 1993 National Koran Reading Competition, which took place on 2-3 January. It was designed by an architect of the Public Works Department, which also built it. Seated in the centre of the Taman Haji Sir Muda Omar Ali Saifuddin in Bandar Seri

Begawan, the astaka shone magnificently in bright lights over the two nights of the competition, during which verses from the holy Al-Qur'an also echoed throughout the capital and its vicinity.

The competition is held annually, and a different astaka is built each year. Judges for the competition this

year came from as far afield as Egypt, as well as from Indonesia and Malaysia, alongside Brunei judges.

The winners in the men's section and the women's section would traditionally represent Brunei Darussalam to the annual International Koran Reading Competition at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Brunei in Brief

Capital : Bandar Seri Begawan
Land size : 5765 sq. km
Population : 260,000 (1991)
Official Language : Malay
Official Religion : Islam
December rainfall : 250.9 mm
(annual 2,818mm)

PRIME LENDING RATE

December 6%
(quoted by Bankers' Association)

Brunei Malay in a minute

Each month we introduce readers to a Brunei Malay word that is used only in the country.

This edition we introduce the word **takuyung**.

Takuyung is snail in English and siput in standard Malay.

Let's now use the word in a sentence.

Pekebun itu menyembur tanamannya dengan racun perosak untuk membunuh **takuyung**.

The gardener sprinkles his plants with pesticides to kill snails.

THE TRAFFICKING IN AND THE ILLEGAL IMPORTATION OF CONTROLLED DRUGS ARE VERY SERIOUS OFFENCES IN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM AND THE PENALTY FOR SUCH OFFENCES IS DEATH.