



# برونى دارالسلام

## Brunei Darussalam

# Brunei Darussalam newsletter

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## Towards a smart nation and high integrity working culture

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, January 1** - The year 2020 has been a very challenging year for our country and even for the world, with the outbreak of the Coronavirus. This pandemic has made a huge impact on the global socio-economic development.

The matter was highlighted by 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) in conjunction with the New Year Celebration for the year 2021 at the Istana Nurul Iman.

Earlier in the *titah*, His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam called on the public to express their gratitude to Allah the Almighty, for it is with His consent that we are able to enter the New Year 2021.

"Alhamdulillah, it is with His permission that our country has been able to curb the pandemic from continuously spreading – a result of the concerted efforts of the relevant parties; as well as the involvement and cooperation of all citizens and residents in overcoming the issue, by consistently practicing the teachings of our faith as a vaccine," said His Majesty.

The Monarch further explained that the country also looks forward for the development of digital transformation, in achieving the aspirations of Brunei Darussalam as a smart nation.

"Therefore, continuous strategic cooperation between all stakeholders is needed to provide a skilled workforce in order to progress towards a smart city," His Majesty added.

His Majesty further stated that the government, through the Ministry of Finance and Economy, has already prepared the Economic Blueprint as a guideline towards attaining steady economic development.

## His Majesty calls attention to issues under MoE

**BERAKAS, January 12** – The Ministry of Education (MoE) requires the leadership of dedicated, thoughtful and far-sighted officers, as education is not static but it is dynamic; and if the leadership is stagnant and is inclined towards a slacking administration, then the education will be weak.

This is because MoE is one of the largest ministries in the government; where its vision and mission are focused on providing quality education that is capable of realising the aspirations of the Brunei Vision 2035.

The matter was stated by His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji



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) in conjunction with the New Year Celebration for the year 2021 at the Istana Nurul Iman.

The Monarch then emphasised that this objective will only be accomplished through the strong support of various stakeholders; and expressed his anticipation for the economic policy to further enhance the country's productivity through effective innovation and coordination.

"On the other hand, the issue of food security is also our main agenda, in ensuring that basic food supply is really sufficient," His Majesty continued.

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Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam during an unscheduled visit to MoE.

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam outlined the two divisions under the ministry: the Core Education Division and the Higher Education Division.

According to His Majesty, the Core Education Division focuses more on monitoring the primary and secondary levels; whereas the Higher Education Division oversees the higher and vocational levels from within and outside the government.

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**3.** His Majesty receives audiences



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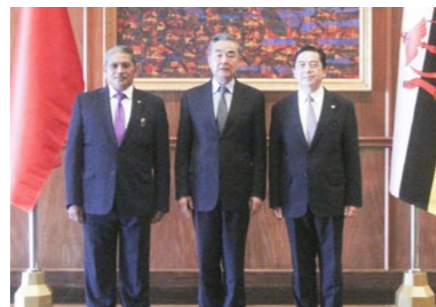
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EMAIL US AT: [info.dept@information.gov.bn](mailto:info.dept@information.gov.bn)

**EDITORIAL Advisory Board:**  
Haji Shahrul Jeffri bin Dato Paduka Haji Ibrahim  
([jeffri.ibrahim@information.gov.bn](mailto:jeffri.ibrahim@information.gov.bn))

Sastra Sarini Haji Julaini  
([sarini.julaini@information.gov.bn](mailto:sarini.julaini@information.gov.bn))

**Chief-Editor:**  
Saadiatul Nur Aqilah Haji Jaman  
([aqilah.jaman@information.gov.bn](mailto:aqilah.jaman@information.gov.bn))

**Editor:**  
Nor Hanizah Haji Abd Halim  
([hanizah.halim@information.gov.bn](mailto:hanizah.halim@information.gov.bn))

**Text & Translation:**  
Syakirah Matusin  
([syakirah.matusin@information.gov.bn](mailto:syakirah.matusin@information.gov.bn))

**Layoster:**  
Khairul Shaharim Haji Abdul Ghafor  
([shaharim.ghafor@information.gov.bn](mailto:shaharim.ghafor@information.gov.bn))

**Proofread:**  
Nor Zuriana Haji Azman/Malai  
([norzuriana.azman@information.gov.bn](mailto:norzuriana.azman@information.gov.bn))

**Photographs**  
Photography Unit of Department of Information

**General inquiries**  
Tel: (673) 2383 400/ext English Publications  
Fax: (673) 2382 012

**Information Department**  
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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:



His Excellency Dato Paduka Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of ASEAN on January 12.



His Excellency Wang Yi, State Councillor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China on January 14.

## 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 U Win Myint, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar; Her Excellency Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar; the Government and the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on the occasion of its 73<sup>rd</sup> Independence Day on January 4.
- His Excellency Joseph R. Biden Jr., President of the United States of America (US) on the occasion of his Inauguration as the 46<sup>th</sup> President of the US on January 20.
- His Excellency General the Honourable David John Hurley AC DSC (Rtd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia; The Honourable Scott Morrison MP, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia; the Government and the people of Australia on the occasion of Australia Day on January 26.
- His Excellency Shri Ram Nath Kovind, President of the Republic of India; His Excellency Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India; the Government and the people of the Republic of India on the occasion of India Republic Day on January 26.

## His Majesty sends message of condolences

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam consented to send a message of condolences to His Excellency Dato Laila Utama Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia; the Government and the people of the Republic of Indonesia following the recent Sriwijaya Air SJ182 plane crash which occurred on January 11 and the recent earthquake that struck West Sulawesi on January 16.

## His Majesty calls attention to issues under MoE (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 delivering a *titah* (royal speech) during the unscheduled visit to the Ministry of Education (MoE).

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"Therefore, in running the educational administration, individuals with good personalities and who are active in carrying out all kinds of responsibilities are heavily needed," said the Monarch.

His Majesty stated his awareness that the superiors from the ministry have been visiting schools across the country. These visits include face-to-face dialogue sessions with leaders of the schools.

His Majesty added that this method is good, but there are times where it is disliked by some of the officers and staff, as the superiors often give their criticisms in public. However, several others have taken the feedbacks positively, by considering them as mind-openers for improvement.

The Monarch also expressed his absolute appreciation for the transparent leadership and the highly caring attitude of relevant parties. Nevertheless, issues that arise should be looked into with facts to support any decisions made. Hence, His Majesty advised that one should not feel uncomfortable when a superior takes charge.

His Majesty said that on the other hand, what should be discouraged are superior officers who are only capable of pressuring their subordinates to meet their demands, or who practise cronyism. These bad ethics can result in all sorts of incidents. For example, when a superior assigns a representative to attend a meeting or a working visit; but the delegated officer fails to report the issues that arise during the meeting or visit to the superior.

If this has actually happened, then it means that obliquities violating the discipline of teamwork, or deceptions against the superiors have taken place.

"If this becomes tradition, then unwanted deficiencies will befall the ministry. For instance, administrative machineries can possibly be disrupted or become unsteady, and other similar issues," His Majesty added.

The Monarch also questioned the ministry's plans in achieving the Brunei Vision 2035, with the existence of issues that need to be examined together and addressed. In realising the vision, MoE has been allocated provisions amounting over \$753 million



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam during the unscheduled visit to the ministry.

for the financial year 2020-2021, and this is an increase from the previous financial years.

"The three objectives outlined by the ministry are as such: to transform the human resource development towards a performance driven culture; to provide equal opportunities for quality education; and to increase a shared sense of accountability with stakeholders in teaching and learning," said His Majesty.

His Majesty then touched on the shortcomings under the National Education System (*Sistem Pendidikan Negara Abad Ke-21-SPN21*), and inquired whether there have been any plans to review or improve the system, since it is a duplication of other educational systems.

Under this system, His Majesty pointed out that there may be a flaw in promoting the students to the next level based on their percentage of attendance, regardless of their marks.

"During the Higher Education Expo in early February 2020, it was found that some of the students are still weak or are not fluent in reading, therefore they do not understand the subject being taught," elaborated His Majesty.

Other shortcomings include giving exemptions to any party. The Monarch further brought into question the extent of the system's ability to incorporate the civics and ethics of the Malay Islamic Monarchy (*Melayu Islam Beraja - MIB*) philosophy into the primary and secondary school students. This matter certainly needs to be analysed.

As for the change in the Education Loan Assistance Scheme (*Skim Bantuan Pinjaman Pendidikan - SBPP*) repayment period; a report in 2018 showed that instead of requiring the recipients to start paying their loans after receiving their first working salary, the ministry has issued a new directive for borrowers to start their repayment period as soon as they graduate, with a three per cent interest rate. His Majesty suggested for the new regulation to be reviewed in greater depth.

His Majesty then brought up the issue of favouritism, or elements of cronyism in selecting officials for senior positions in MoE, and called for these practices to stop should they be occurring.

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His Majesty during the unscheduled visit to the ministry (above & below).



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The Monarch also highlighted that the achievements of schools under the International School Leaders (ISL) Project have left much to be desired. His Majesty suggested for the project to be monitored, as there are leaders who have been overwhelming the teachers with new projects.

The issue of schools is indeed challenging, which is why it requires special attention, said His Majesty.

"The Special Education Unit (SEU) is said to have been unable



His Majesty receiving a briefing from an officer under the ministry.

to accommodate the annually increasing number of students – to a point where a group of students had to be assigned or temporarily placed in regular school classes in Tutong District.

"This is because the special learning centres are full; while the said primary schools do not have special education teachers, making it difficult for regular teachers to cater to the students with special needs. Even the number of teachers under SEU is small, yet they are not enough to support the number of students. If this matter is true, then it certainly requires urgent action," His Majesty emphasised.

His Majesty also stressed for relevant educational programmes to be supervised more regularly. Several programmes have been found to face shortcomings, including the Media and In-Service Centre (MISC) Learning Lab Programme, whose office has been vacated.

The Whole School ICT Development (WSID) Programme also needs to be given attention, as there are still some difficulties in the students' teaching and learning during the outbreak of the Coronavirus in the country.

The Monarch also questioned why the Model School Programme was put to a halt, as it is an initiative under SPN 21. As for the PAAKS ICT Certification Programme, His Majesty brought up that the participants' filed information cannot be accessed. In fact, it is not within the ministry's records.

"On the other hand, students' results under the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT) Service Programme are also unsatisfactory. Hence, the programme also requires attention," said His Majesty.

Several projects and programmes have also been introduced by the ministry to improve the quality of learning and administration: including the Integrated National Education Information System (INEIS) Project; the Literacy and Numeracy Coaching Programmed (LNCP); and the School Based Assessment (SBA).

His Majesty brought up the need to further examine whether or not these initiatives have given positive impacts; or if they are only adding to the workload of teachers and tutors.

His Majesty also asked when it will be time for Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) to be able to manage its own educational affairs, without depending on any foreign parties; especially since the higher institution has reached its age of maturity.

During the unscheduled visit, His Majesty inspected several Divisions and Units under the ministry, starting with the Department of Curriculum Development.

## 73 Officer Cadets complete military training

**TANAH JAMBU, January 21** – The Sovereign’s Parade Ceremony for the 19<sup>th</sup> Intake of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) Defence Academy Cadet School was held at the academy’s parade ground, Kampung Tanah Jambu. The event marked the completion of military training for 73 officer cadets; 52 males and 21 females.

Of the total, 40 cadet officers were commissioned as Royal Brunei Army Officers; 14 as Royal Brunei Navy Officers; and another 19 were commissioned as Royal Brunei Air Force Officers.

Present to grace the parade was 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.

Also in attendance were the sons of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO); and His Royal Highness 920 Captain (U) Prince ‘Abdul Mateen.

Upon arrival, His Majesty received a Royal Salute before inspecting the Guard of Honour, which was then followed by a parade comprising officer cadets.

At the event, His Majesty presented a *titah* (royal speech), where he reminded RBAF to make use of technological developments to address workforce shortages, as well as to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the management, administration and other possible uses.

“Technological developments are also closely linked to cyber capabilities. Overcoming them and the threats associated is a new challenge for the RBAF,” said the Monarch.

Earlier in the *titah*, His Majesty stated that in 2020, the country was not exempt from facing the Coronavirus pandemic, and it disrupted many routine activities, including the management of military training.

“Nevertheless, Alhamdulillah, the trainings could still carry on through alternative procedures, which were successfully implemented via technology,” said the Monarch.

His Majesty underlined that this confirms that other courses



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 conferring the “Sword of Honour Award” to 53535 Cadet Officer Zulfahmi Solihin @ Abdul Hannan bin Haji Zulhazmi at the Sovereign’s Parade Ceremony for the 19<sup>th</sup> Intake of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) Defence Academy Cadet School.

and trainings can also be conducted effectively through digital methods.

The Monarch then congratulated all officer cadets who completed their trainings, for their tenacity and perseverance in undergoing the course. His Majesty also reminded them to always maintain their discipline and level of professionalism; as well as to preserve their spiritual belief in order to receive blessings and protection from Allah the Almighty from any forms of harm.

“Alhamdulillah, the RBAF Defence Academy is now 10 years-old as of November 25, 2020,” His Majesty added.

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His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam inspecting the Guard of Honour at the Sovereign’s Parade Ceremony.



His Majesty delivering a *titah* (royal speech) at the event.

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Throughout the decade, RBAF has successfully trained a total of 2,216 local and foreign military officers through various courses – 605 of which were cadet officers.

His Majesty then expressed his exultation for the transformation of RBAF: which includes its very own camp, carrying out collaborations with local and foreign higher institutions, as well as attracting course participants from the region and around the globe. Recently, RBAF produced Diploma and Masters in Defence and Security Studies Graduates through collaborations with Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD).

His Majesty once again conveyed his appreciation and gratitude to all members of the Defence Academy for their dedication and hard work in training and educating the future RBAF Officers, and making the Sovereign’s Parade a success. The Monarch also congratulated the 73 cadet officers for completing their training and for presenting a quality parade; as well as parents and family members for their constant support throughout the training.

Following the *titah*, His Majesty consented to deliver awards to the best officer cadets for the 19<sup>th</sup> Intake of the RBAF Defence Academy Cadet School.

The award presentation commenced with the “Sword of Honour Award”, which was the most prestigious award for overall excellency. The award was conferred to 53535 Officer Cadet Zulfahmi Solihin @ Abdul Hannan bin Haji Zulhazmi. The second award, which was the “Best Overall in Academic Award”, was received by 53558 Officer Cadet (U) Mohammad Khalid Wassadisalleh bin Haji Mahmud. The “Best Military Skills Award” was conferred to 53546 Cadet Officer Muhammad



Also present alongside His Majesty at the Sovereign’s Parade was His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO); and His Royal Highness 920 Captain (U) Prince ‘Abdul Mateen (above and below).



Athhar Ridzwan bin Haji Muhammad Alamizan. Lastly, the “Best in Physical Training Endurance Award” was bestowed to 53531 Officer Cadet Awangku Ahmad Muqri bin Pengiran Sahbirin.

A *Junjung Ziarah* Ceremony took place at the event, which involved the newly commissioned cadet officers as well as their families. His Majesty also signed a Commemorative Parchment prior to a group photo session.

The Officer Cadet Course for the 19<sup>th</sup> Intake ran for 52 weeks, starting from January 30, 2020. The course included various military trainings and activities, which were especially designed to enhance leadership, character and intellectual qualities, as expected in every RBAF Officer.



His Majesty delivering the “Best Overall in Academic Award” to 53558 Officer Cadet (U) Mohammad Khalid Wassadisalleh bin Haji Mahmud (left); the “Best Military Skills Award” to 53546 Officer Cadet Muhammad Athhar Ridzwan bin Haji Muhammad Alamizan (centre); and the “Best in Physical Training Endurance Award” to 53531 Officer Cadet Awangku Ahmad Muqri bin Pengiran Sahbirin (right).

## Nation prays for the late Prince



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 other members of the royal family joining the mass Maghrib prayer and mass Sunnat Hajat prayer led by Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Seri Utama Dato Paduka Seri Setia Haji Awang Salim bin Haji Besar.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, January 31** – The people of Brunei Darussalam gathered in mosques and suraus for their prayers in the Surah Yaa Siin and Tahliil Ceremony in remembrance of the 100 days since the passing of Al-Marhum His Royal Highness Haji 'Abdul 'Azim ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah.

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien

Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam attended the event, which was focused at the Jame' 'Asr Hassanil Bolkiah, Kampung Kiarong.

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

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## Towards a smart nation and high integrity working culture (continued)

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The Monarch also expressed his hope for those who serve in the public or private sector to adopt a working culture of high integrity, responsibility and adherence to the laws and regulations.

His Majesty further highlighted that decadence and weakness of moral and ethics in carrying out trusted responsibilities can be the cause of corruption; breach of trust; or abuse of power for personal gain. If these attributes were to be eliminated, the country, with the will of Allah, will be safe and will always be blessed towards success.

Touching on workforce, the Monarch explained that in 2020, a total of 9,317 Bruneians have been employed under the private sector; compared to a total of 9,056 in 2019.

"The government, through the Manpower Planning and Employment Council (MPEC), will increase its efforts between the public and private sectors through JobCentre Brunei (JCB) in further expanding employment opportunities for locals," His Majesty stated.

His Majesty also mentioned that in 2021, Brunei Darussalam will be the Chairman for ASEAN meetings, with the theme: 'We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper'. The theme aims to focus on the welfare of the people of ASEAN.

"Hence, priority will continue to be given to carrying out initiatives that allow ASEAN countries to be responsively better prepared, in maintaining the well-being of their people, especially in the face of future crisis or disaster," the Monarch further elaborated.

His Majesty also stressed that the people of ASEAN should be given opportunities to improve their skills and capabilities; so that they are more prepared to face challenges, and are quick to seize opportunities from technological developments and rapid global changes.

"Therefore, Brunei Darussalam must be on par with its partners in creating changes; with the strengthening of the country's system, economy, education and security, in accordance with the Blueprints, Master Plans and Strategic Plans that have been issued, whether they are at the ministerial or national level," His Majesty added.

His Majesty then touched on matters of security, where the Monarch had approved the establishment of Cyber Security Brunei in August 2020, as an agency that ensures national cyber security from any incidents and cyber threats.

Before concluding the *titah*, His Majesty conveyed his deepest appreciation to all members of the Public Service, including those working in the private sector, security forces as well as volunteers, for their hard work in carrying out their duties and responsibilities throughout 2020.

The Monarch then wished all citizens and residents of Brunei Darussalam a happy new year, including those who are overseas. His Majesty also prayed for Allah the Almighty to continuously bestow His blessings upon everyone, and make Brunei Darussalam a country that remains peaceful and prosperous under His protection.

## Nation prays for the late Prince



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam reciting Surah Yaa Siin and Tahliil in remembrance of the 100 days since the passing of Al-Marhum His Royal Highness Haji 'Abdul 'Azim.

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Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Wakeel; as well as His Majesty's brothers.

The event commenced with a mass Maghrib prayer, followed by a mass Sunnat Hajat prayer led by Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Seri Utama Dato Paduka Seri Setia Haji Awang Salim bin Haji Besar, who also led the mass recitation of *Surah Yaa Siin* and *Tahliil*. Meanwhile, the *Doa Tahliil* was recited by Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Seri Maharaja Dato Paduka Seri Setia (Dr.) Ustaz Haji Awang Abdul Aziz bin Juned, State Mufti.

His Majesty then joined a mass Isyak prayer, which was led by Yang Dimuliakan Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Setia Raja Dato Paduka Seri Setia Haji Awang Suhaili bin Haji Mohiddin, before leaving the mosque.

Attendants of the Surah Yaa Siin and Tahliil Ceremony consisted of officers and staff members of all government ministries and departments, as well as the public.

Al-Marhum His Royal Highness Prince Haji 'Abdul 'Azim was born on Thursday, 8 Syawal 1402 Hijrah, corresponding to July 29, 1982 Masihi; and passed away on Saturday, 7 Rabiulawal 1442 Hijrah, corresponding to October 24, 2020 Masihi at the age of 38.

## New Chairman of Royal Brunei Airlines' Board of Directors

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, January 3** –By command of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, it is hereby announced that His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has consented to appoint Yang Mulia Dato Seri Paduka Dr. Awang Haji Abdul Manaf bin Haji Metussin, Deputy Minister of Finance and Economy (Economy) as Chairman of the Board of Directors of Royal Brunei Airlines (RB) to replace Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew bin Abdullah, the Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy.

The appointment of Yang Mulia Dato Seri Paduka Dr. Awang Haji Abdul Manaf bin Haji Metussin as Chairman of the Board of Directors of RB and its new members are effective from Monday, 20 Jamadilawal 1442, corresponding to January 4.

## Courtesy call from ASEAN Secretary-General

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, January 14** –Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Lela Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdul Rahman bin Dato Setia Haji Mohamed Taib, the Speaker of the Legislative Council (LegCo), received a courtesy call from His Excellency Lim Jock Hoi, the Secretary-General of ASEAN at the Dewan Majlis Building, Jalan Dewan Majlis.

Matters that are given joint attention in the ASEAN region, including the strengthening of ASEAN parliament lawmakers on the importance of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF), were among the agenda discussed during the event.

Yang Berhormat Speaker of the Legislative Council receiving a courtesy call from the Secretary-General of ASEAN at the Dewan Majlis Building, Jalan Dewan Majlis.



## AMBD celebrates 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary



Yang Berhormat the Minister of Home Affairs at the Thanksgiving Ceremony in conjunction with the Monetary Authority of Brunei Darussalam's (Autoriti Monetari Brunei Darussalam – AMBD) 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration at the Suri Seri Begawan Raja Pengiran Anak Damit Mosque, Kampung Manggis/Madang.

**MADANG, January 18** – In conjunction with its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, the Monetary Authority of Brunei Darussalam (Autoriti Monetari Brunei Darussalam – AMBD) held a Thanksgiving Ceremony (*Majlis Doa Kesyukuran*) at the Suri Seri Begawan Raja Pengiran Anak Damit Mosque, Kampung Manggis/Madang.

Present at the ceremony were the Minister of Home Affairs as the Deputy Chairman of the AMBD Board of Directors, Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Kerna Dato Seri Setia (Dr.) Haji Awang Abu Bakar bin Haji Apong; the Deputy State Mufti, Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Japar bin Haji Mat Dain @ Maidin; other members of the AMBD Board of Directors; as well

as officers and staff members of AMBD.

The ceremony began with a mass Fardu Asar prayer; followed by the recitation of *Surah Yaa Siin*, *Tahlil* and *Doa Kesyukuran*.

AMBD was established on January 1, 2011 as a statutory body under the AMBD Order, 2010. It has achieved various successes over its first 10 years of establishment, particularly in introducing the rules and standards for the financial sector, which are in line with international best practices; developing financial infrastructure to support the growth of the financial industry; as well as safeguarding the interests of financial consumers.

## The beauty of Brunei Darussalam through foreign lenses



Yang Berhormat Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism receiving a token of appreciation during the exhibition held at the Tutong District.

**TUTONG, January 23** – To show their appreciation to the people and residents of the country, the Heads of Foreign Delegates to Brunei Darussalam along with their family members have made the initiative to organise a photo exhibition in all four countries entitled 'Brunei Darussalam from the Eyes of Foreign Diplomats and their Families'.

The Tutong District was the final destination for the exhibition, where the 109 photographs presented by 19 delegates will be open to public until February 2 at the Tourist Information Centre, Pekan Tutong during working hours (9am to 4pm).

Present to launch the exhibition as the guest of honour was the Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism, Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Ali bin Apong.

Also present at the launching were the Members of the State Legislative Council: Yang Berhormat Awang Haji Abdul Wahab bin Apong as the Head of Mukim Tanjong Maya and Acting Head of Pekan Tutong Sub-District, and Yang Berhormat Awang Haji



Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and Second Minister of Finance and Economy touring the exhibition held at the Temburong District.

Ramli bin Haji Lahir as the Head of Mukim Telisai and the Acting Head of Mukim Ukong; as well as the Acting Temburong District Officer, Awang Ajmin bin Haji Meludin.

Previously, the exhibition was held on January 9 at the Temburong District. The launching took place at the Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam (BIBD) Heritage Branch, Bumiputera Main Complex, and was officiated by 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 as the Guest of Honour.

The exhibition was displayed daily at Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP) Library, Bangar, from 8.00 am to 5.00 pm; except on Friday, during which the exhibition was open from 8.00 am to 11.30 am and 2.15 pm to 5.00 pm.

Prior to that, the exhibition was held in the Belait District on December 29; and at the Royal Regalia Museum, Brunei-Muara District on December 17.

## Minister receives BRC Henry Dunant Leaders Award

**BERAKAS, January 24** – Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Md. Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health was conferred the Brunei Red Crescent Society (BRC) Henry Dunant Leaders Award 2020, in recognition of his excellent work in helping nation curb the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The award which is jointly recognised by the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) was presented by the Awang Haji Muhammad Suhaimi bin Haji Ibrahim, President of BRC during an award ceremony at the Al-Afiah Hall, Ministry of Health (MoH).

In his welcoming speech, the President explained that the ceremony was held to show appreciation and gratitude to all front liners, volunteers, donors and contributors, corporate and media partners, as well as individuals who have been involved and who have collaborated under the BRC COVID-19 humanitarian mission.

The COVID-19 Medal, he explained, is the first humanitarian mission medal introduced by BRC since its establishment in the country 70 years ago.

The medal serves as the highest form of acknowledgement for BRC volunteers; and it was given to nearly 200 recipients in appreciation for their service and volunteerism.

At the event, BRC also presented the 'Friends of BRC' Charter Award to two corporate bodies – Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam (BIBD) and Rimba Point – for their constant support to the BRC



Yang Berhormat Minister of Health receiving the Brunei Darussalam Red Crescent Society (BRC) Henry Dunant Leaders Award 2020 from the President of BRC.

humanitarian mission. The award is similar to the 'Friends of Red Cross and Red Crescent', which is an international level strategic cooperation practice.

The President conveyed his gratitude to MoH, on behalf of BRC, for placing their full confidence in BRC, in managing the volunteers on a national-level on March 19, 2020; before it was taken over by the national youth volunteers under the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS). Further appreciations were also extended to the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC); the Immigration and National Registration Department; the Department of Civil Aviation for entrusting BRC with the responsibility of coordinating with numerous agencies for the reception operations at the Brunei International Airport, as well as hotels designated as quarantine centres.

## JPMC receives Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval

**JERUDONG, January 17** – The Jerudong Park Medical Centre (JPMC) once again won the Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval for the third time, the first for any health service provider in the country.

The accreditation serves as a symbol of quality that reflects JPMC's commitment towards constantly improving the quality of patient care and safety.

The Joint Commission based in Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois in the Chicago suburbs is one of the most prestigious non-profit groups in the world, which engage in hospital accreditation and certification for their service qualities.

JPMC was the first hospital in Brunei Darussalam to receive the Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation in 2014 and for the second time in 2017.

Recently, JPMC once again maintained its accreditation, and was awarded the 3<sup>rd</sup> JCI award by a US-based body, for demonstrating continuous compliance and internationally recognised criterion.

In his speech, Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Md. Isham bin Haji Jaafar, the Minister of Health who is also the Chairman and Executive Director of JPMC, said that JCI's accreditation is a 'Gold' standard for any healthcare provider that aims to maintain a high level of patient care and safety. The management makes sure that the procedures, policies and resources are available, in ensuring the safety of health workers in all areas of the organisation.

The Minister added that the JCI accreditation process is designed to create a culture of safety and self-quality. It also assures that the standards, training and processes used to



Yang Berhormat Minister of Health as Chairman and Executive Director of Jerudong Park Medical Centre (JPMC) (right), receiving the Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval Accreditation for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time, presented by Yang Berhormat Minister at Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy.

review the performance of health organisations meet the highest international benchmarks.

On the other hand, the Dr. Meera Sahib Kabeer, Medical Director of JPMC mentioned that receiving the accreditation does not mean that they are perfect, but the hospital organisation needs to be more consistent in finding ways to narrow the gaps and in proactively improving themselves.

She added that JCI provides many valuable resources to help JPMC maintain their continuous compliance with the quality standards and patient safety.

The five-day virtual survey was conducted by two International Health Scouts, Diane Sanders and Dr. Ken Waxman, both of whom were from the United States.

## COVID-19: 8 new cases recorded in January



Yang Berhormat Minister of Health during press conference on the latest COVID-19 situation in Brunei Darussalam.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, January 30** – In January, Brunei Darussalam recorded eight new COVID-19 cases, bringing the total number of confirmed cases to 180.

Case 173 was announced on January 7. The case involved a 38-year old man who arrived in the country on Singapore Airlines SQ148 flight on December 25, 2020 from Indonesia via Singapore. The patient showed no signs of infection.

Case 174 was announced on January 12. The case involved a 28-year old man who arrived in the country on Royal Brunei BI4112 flight on December 30, 2020 from India. The patient showed no signs of infection.

Case 175, which was an imported case, was announced on January 22. The case involved a 50-year old man who arrived in the country on Royal Brunei BI874 flight on January 8 from United Kingdom via Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The patient experienced sore throat on January 20, but was no longer showing any signs of infection during the time of the announcement.

Case 176 was announced on January 26. The case involved a

23-year old woman who arrived in the country on Royal Brunei BI874 flight on January 13 from Nepal via Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Following investigations, it was found that the patient did not have any close contacts.

Cases 177 to 180 were announced on January 28 – all of which were imported cases. Case 177 is a 10 month-old baby, whereas case 178 is a 28 year-old woman, who is also an aunt of case 177. Both patients arrived in the country on Royal Brunei BI4112 flight on January 15 from India. Case 179 is a 28-year old man who arrived in the country on Singapore Airlines SQ148 flight on January 15 from Indonesia via Singapore. Case 180 is a 29-year old woman who arrived in the country on Singapore Airlines SQ148 flight on January 25 from Dubai via Singapore.

The announcements were made by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Md. Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health during a series of press conference on the latest COVID-19 situation held at Al-Afiah Hall, Ministry of Health (MoH); as well as via press releases issued by the ministry. The patients were all taken to the National Isolation Centre for treatment and monitoring, and contact tracing were actively carried out following the confirmation of the cases.

A recorded number of 20 cured COVID-19 patients were also confirmed throughout the month, bringing the total number of cured cases to 171.

At present, a total of 39 import cases have been confirmed since the last local infection case was reported – which was on May 6, 2020 where Brunei Darussalam has recorded 270 days without a local COVID-19 infection case.

Five hundred individuals are currently undergoing mandatory self-isolation; whereas a total of 12,248 have completed their mandatory self-isolation since March 2020.

Over the last 24-hours, 305 samples have been tested for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, bringing the total number of lab tests to 91,879 since January 2020.

## Creating quality, knowledgeable and integrous public service



Yang Berhormat Minister presenting the Public Service Department Strategic Plan 2021-2025 book.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, January 20** – The formulation of Strategic Plans for the departments under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) upholds the aspirations of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in creating a quality, knowledgeable and integrous public service.

The matter was highlighted by the Yang Berhormat Dato Seri



Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) delivering his speech at the launching ceremony.

Setia Haji Awang Abdul Mokti bin Haji Mohd. Daud, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), who attended and officiated the Launching Ceremony for the Public Service Department Strategic Plan 2021-2025. The event took place at the Multipurpose Hall, Public Service Department Headquarters.

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According to the Minister, the Strategic Plan will be used as a guideline to drive and realise the changes that are necessary to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of the public service machinery; especially in terms of management, planning, as well as human resource development for the department and for public service in general.

At the ceremony, the Directors of Administration from ministries across the country received copies of the Public

Service Department Strategic Plan 2021-2025 book, which were presented by the Minister. The event proceeded with a mini exhibition, which showcased the main functions and projects coordinated by the divisions under the Public Service Department.

Yang Berhormat also launched the Public Service Department's Asset Management System (AMAS) at the event.

## Logo commemorates 30-year Brunei-China friendship

**BERAKAS, January 14** - The year 2021 marks the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Brunei Darussalam and the People's Republic of China. In maintaining this bilateral friendship, which has existed since September 30, 1991, a Joint Steering Committee (JSC) Meeting was held earlier today at the International Convention Centre (ICC).

Leading Brunei Darussalam's delegation was Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Erywan bin Pehin Datu Pekerma Jaya Haji Mohd. Yusof, Second Minister of Foreign Affairs; while the country's counterpart was led by His Excellency Wang Yi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China.

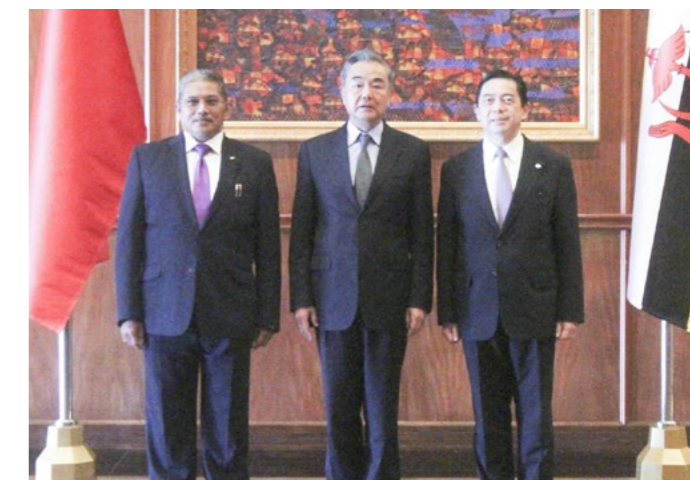
Also present were Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew bin Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and Second Minister of Finance and Economy; Her Excellency Yu Hong, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to Brunei Darussalam; as well as senior government officials from both countries.

After the meeting, an official logo to commemorate the 30-year alliance was launched by the Second Minister of Foreign Affairs and His Excellency Wang Yi; followed by a certificate presentation to the winner of the logo competition, Awang Mohammad Aliff bin Haji Awang Madial from the Public Works Department (PWD).

The bilateral relation between both countries was elevated to a strategic cooperative relationship during the State Visit of 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 to the People's Republic of China in 2013. It was then further promoted to a strategic cooperative partnership in 2018, when Brunei Darussalam received a State Visit from His Excellency Xi Jinping, the President of the People's Republic of China.



Yang Berhormat Second Minister of Foreign Affairs and His Excellency Wang Yi during the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) Meeting with delegations from both countries.



Yang Berhormat Second Minister of Foreign Affairs; His Excellency Wang Yi; and Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and Second Minister of Finance and Economy in a group photo.



Yang Berhormat Second Minister of Foreign Affairs and His Excellency Wang Yi unveiling the official logo to commemorate 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Brunei Darussalam and the People's Republic of China.



Yang Berhormat Second Minister of Foreign Affairs and His Excellency Wang Yi in a photo with the winner of the logo competition, Awang Mohammad Aliff bin Haji Awang Madial from the Public Works Department (PWD).

## Discussing ASEAN's priorities

**BERAKAS, January 21** – The ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat (AMM Retreat) 2021 discussed matters concerning ASEAN's priorities throughout the year; strengthening the ASEAN community and centrality; as well as the region's overall recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The meeting, which was conducted via video conference at the International Convention Centre, was chaired by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Erywan bin Pehin Datu Pekerma Jaya Haji Mohd. Yusof, Second Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The meeting also followed-up on the results and decisions made during the 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and other Summits, including those from the Mid-Term Review of the ASEAN Community Blueprints 2025, to enhance the cross-pillar and cross-sectorial coordination in ASEAN towards the Community Vision Post-2025.

During the retreat, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers stressed the importance of ensuring fair, equitable and affordable access to safe and quality vaccines for all ASEAN citizens; where they all agreed to make use of the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund in the procurement vaccines, medical supplies and equipment.

In line with the theme "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper", the ministers expressed their support towards the priorities of Brunei Darussalam, which are focused on leveraging ASEAN's attentiveness in order to build a



Yang Berhormat Second Minister of Foreign Affairs chairing the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat (AMM Retreat) 2021.

harmonious and resilient community centered on its people.

The Ministers also welcomed the increasing number of countries that are interested in joining the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation (TAC) in Southeast Asia, and looked forward to the admission of Greece, the Netherlands, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar in the future.

Also discussed at the meeting was the situation in the South China Sea, where several ministers raised concerns about the reclamation of lands; the serious activities and incidents which have resulted in the erosion of trust and confidence; as well

as the increased tensions and possibly compromised peace, security and stability of the region.

The ministers stressed the need to enhance mutual trust and confidence; to abstain from activities that would escalate disputes, and affect peace and security; and to avoid actions that may further complicate the situations.

The ministers further encouraged the continuous efforts made by the Myanmar government in addressing the situation in the Rakhine State, including the initiation of the repatriation process, in line with the country's bilateral agreement with Bangladesh.

## Higher learning institutions urged to create conducive digital ecosystem



Yang Berhormat Minister of Education delivering a speech at the Micronet International College (MIC) Convocation Ceremony 2020.

**JERUDONG, January 20** - A total of 320 students who successfully graduated from Micronet International College (MIC) in various Information Technology (IT) Programmes received their certificates at the MIC Convocation Ceremony 2020, at the Indera Samudera Hall, The Empire Brunei.

Presenting the certificates as the Guest of Honour was Yang

Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Hamzah bin Haji Sulaiman, Minister of Education.

In his speech, the Minister urged the graduates to stay proactive and responsive, while keeping up-to-date with the current developments and trends of the employment market, which are becoming more challenging nowadays.

"The knowledge and skills possessed by the graduates should always be relevant so that they have high job market value.

"Graduates also need to constantly update their knowledge and skills by exploring the programmes provided by government and private parties, especially those that can increase employment opportunities as well as opportunities to venture into entrepreneurship," explained the Minister.

The Minister stated that the Ministry of Education (MoE) is actively supporting the government's efforts to realise the country's digital transformation goals through holistic educational programmes; in line with the aspirations of a digital economy and the implementation of the Digital Economy Masterplan 2025.

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In relation to the matter, the Minister urged all higher learning institutions to play their roles in providing a conducive digital ecosystem, in order to generate digitally skilled and future-ready human resource.

The Minister further highlighted that these institutions (especially private higher learning institutions) need to move fast in planning and exploring opportunities to provide academic programmes that can fulfil the needs of a highly skilled, adaptive and innovative human resource, in accordance with the aspirations of the Economic Blueprint for Brunei Darussalam and the plans under the Manpower Planning and Employment Council (MPEC).

The Minister was also pleased with MIC's efforts in establishing the UTB-MIC Computing Degree Programmed. He expressed his confidence that the programme and similar efforts that are undertaken will provide advantages to students who are qualified for the BSc (Hons) in Computing Programme, where the students undergo their first year in MIC before continuing their studies in Universiti Teknologi Brunei (UTB) prior to their graduation.

"Close cooperations between public and private higher learning institutions are highly encouraged, as I believe it will bring synergy in providing various access for students to continue their studies to higher levels, in line with the ministry's mission "to deliver holistic education in order to achieve fullest potential for all," said the Minister.

In addition, the initiative is expected to produce graduates that are more dynamic and adaptable, with environmental and



Yang Berhormat Minister of Education presenting a certificate to one of the graduates of MIC.

educational diversity, as well as the opportunity to study in different institutions.

The graduates at the event completed their courses under the Pearson BTEC International Level 2 Certificate in IT; Pearson BTEC Level 3 Diploma in IT; Pearson BTEC Level 5 Higher National Diploma in Computing and System Development (QCF); Pearson BTEC Level 5 Higher National Diploma in Computing (RQF); Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) National Certificate in Mobile Technology; Higher National Diploma (SQA) in Computer Science; and the NCC Education Level 4 Diploma in Computing.

## 651 receive Diploma Certificates



Yang Berhormat Minister of Education delivering the "Best Student Award" to Awang Abdul Hakim bin Mohammad Ridzuan.

**TUNGKU LINK, January 28** – A total of 651 graduates from Politeknik Brunei's (PB) Class of 2020 received Level 5 and Level 4 Diploma Certificates at PB's 6<sup>th</sup> Convocation Ceremony 2020, held at the Chancellor Hall, University of Brunei Darussalam.

Taking into account the Ministry of Health's (MoH) de-escalation plan and regulations to curb the COVID-19 pandemic, the convocation ceremony was divided into a morning and afternoon session.

Present as the Guest of Honour to deliver certificates to 317 graduates in the morning session was Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Hamzah bin Haji Sulaiman, the Minister of Education.

The Minister also delivered a speech during the session, where



Yang Mulia Deputy Minister of Education presenting a certificate to one of the graduates at the ceremony.

he urged the private sector to play an important role in developing the country's education sector; especially the technical and vocational education sub-sectors, which are some of the nation's biggest contributors to the employment field.

"The variety of available access to technical and vocational programmes in the private sector will create an innovative and competitive educational environment that will produce marketable manpower," said the Minister.

According to the Minister, PB has been continuously focusing on enhancing the quality of the teaching and learning programmes offered since its establishment, in line with the international higher education standards. This is done through initiatives

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## 651 receive Diploma Certificates (continued)

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under the institution's Strategic Development Plan, which include strengthening the quality of the teaching and learning system.

The Minister also urged the institution to incorporate educational and industrial interests into their Strategic Plan 2021-2025, which is currently being planned and implemented to produce graduates who are innovative, future-ready and resilient, which are essential in supporting the nation's developments.

"The development of the industrial sector is closely related to the development of human resource skills. In this matter, cooperation between the industry and PB is crucial to improve the students' skills through collaborative programmes," he elaborated.

The Minister further added that PB's collaboration with Hengyi Industries Sdn. Bhd. in the hopes of establishing a petrochemical school is expected to provide new programmes that cater to the needs of human resources, especially in producing local experts who will be able to lead the country's petrochemical industry.

The Minister also took note of the institution's close cooperations with the Manpower Planning and Employment Council (MPEC) in exploring new programmes; and with the Manpower Industry Steering Committee (MISC) in the Architect – Mechanical and Electrical – Civil and Structural (ARMECS) Bridging Programme.

The Minister then encouraged the graduates to make full use of their knowledge and experiences; and to practise lifelong learning so that they stay up-to-date and relevant in any field they pursue.

Lim Kian Boon, the Acting Director of PB and Chairman of

the Working Committee of the Convocation Ceremony also presented a speech at the event.

In the morning session, the Minister also presented the "Best Student Award" to Level 5 Diploma in Business Studies graduate, Awang Abdul Hakim bin Mohammad Ridzuan; as well as the "Academic Excellence Awards" and "Enrichment Activity Excellence Awards" to several other graduates.

The graduates who received their certificates in the morning session completed their courses under Level 5 Diploma Programmes in Business Studies (Entrepreneurship; as well as Marketing); Digital Media; Library Informatics and Computing; Web Development; Architecture; Civil Engineering; Interior Design; Petroleum Engineering; Science Technology (Chemical Laboratory Technology); as well as Telecommunication and Systems Engineering.

In the afternoon session, Yang Mulia Datin Seri Paduka Dr. Hajah Romaizah binti Haji Mohd. Salleh, Deputy Minister of Education and Chairman of PB Board of Directors presented certificates to 334 graduates as the Guest of Honour.

The graduates who received their certificates in the afternoon session completed their studies under Level 5 Diploma Programmes in Business Accounting and Finance; Business Studies (Human Resource Management); Information Systems; Information Technology Network and Security; Electrical and Electronic Engineering; as well as Mechanical Engineering.

Meanwhile, those receiving their Diploma Level 4 certificates completed their studies under the Health Science (Midwifery; Nursing; and Paramedic) Programmes.

## Discussing ASEAN's digital collaboration

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, January 22** - The Minister of Transport and Infocommunications, Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Abdul Mutalib bin Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Setia Dato Paduka Haji Mohammad Yusof led Brunei Darussalam's delegation for the 1st ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting and Related Meetings held from January 21 to 22.

The 1st ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting, which served as a platform for ASEAN Digital Ministers to discuss and decide on the course of the region's digital cooperation with dialogue partners, was chaired by the Minister of Communications and Multimedia, Malaysia, Yang Berhormat Dato' Saifuddin Abdullah.

The main outcome of the meeting was the launching of the ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025, which replaced the ASEAN ICT Masterplan 2020. This new plan outlined eight desired outcomes and 37 enabling actions, which will maneuver ASEAN's digital cooperation from 2021 to 2025.

The meeting also endorsed the ASEAN Data Management Framework (DMF)



Yang Berhormat Minister of Transport and Infocommunications representing Brunei Darussalam's delegation during the 1st ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting. The meeting was chaired by Yang Berhormat Minister of Communications and Multimedia, Malaysia.

and the ASEAN Cross Border Data Flows (CBDF), which are initiatives under the ASEAN Framework on Digital Data Governance to coordinate data

management standards and cross-border data flows in the ASEAN region.

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The session further outlined the importance of enhancing collaborations in cyber security, with the welcoming of suggestions to enhance said cooperation; especially among ASEAN member states (AMS) through the exchange of information via ASEAN Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERT).

The Ministers at the meeting adopted the Putrajaya Declaration on 'ASEAN: A Digitally Connected Community', which aims to build a digitally-ready and connected ASEAN in order to allow businesses and citizens to benefit from the opportunities provided by the digital economy.

During the meeting, the Minister of Transportation and Infocommunications also shared Brunei Darussalam's priority: which is utilising digital transformation as a key approach towards

recovering from the impact of the COVID-19, and in achieving sustainable development.

The ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting also consisted of meetings with dialogue partners, which are the People's Republic of China; Japan; the Republic of Korea; the Republic of India; United States of America; and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

Previously, the 1st ASEAN Senior Digital Officials meeting took place at January 19 and 20. Awang Haji Hairul Mohd Daud bin Haji Abdul Karim, Deputy Permanent Secretary (Infocommunications) at the Ministry of Transportation and Infocommunications (MTIC) led Brunei Darussalam's delegation during the meeting.

## Strengthening friendship, exploring collaborations in various fields



Yang Berhormat Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports delivering a speech during the 6th Brunei-China Friendship Association (BCFA) New Leadership Swearing-in Ceremony for the 2021-2023 Session.

**GADONG, January 10** - The Brunei-China Friendship Association (BCFA) will remain significant to Brunei Darussalam and the People's Republic of China; and fulfill the aspirations of leaders of both countries.



The 6th BCFA New Leadership Swearing-in Ceremony for the 2021-2023 Session led by the President of BCFA, Dr. Muhammad Firdaus bin Abdul Rahman.



Yang Berhormat witnessing the signing and presentation of certificates of appointment during the ceremony.

The matter was highlighted by Yang Berhormat Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Aminuddin Ihsan bin Pehin Orang Kaya Saiful Mulok Dato Seri Paduka Haji Abidin, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports during the 6th BCFA New Leadership Swearing-in Ceremony for the 2021-2023 Session, which took place at a hotel in Gadong.

The Minister also emphasised the importance of the association's new leadership in continuing and developing the areas that have been jointly managed; thus, further increasing the achievements that have been accumulated over the years.

"Therefore, the association's new initiative to explore collaborations between youths of both countries by setting up a Youth League is very timely and is highly welcomed. This is a golden opportunity to actively involve our youths - in order to connect and network with the youths from the People's Republic of China and beyond, where everyone will benefit as professionals in various fields," added the Minister.

The swearing-in ceremony was led by Dr. Muhammad Firdaus bin Abdul Rahman, the President of BCFA. The event also consisted of the signing and presentation certificates of appointment to the new leaders.

## Promote inclusive, sustainable economic growth

**BERAKAS, January 11** - The 52nd ASEAN Senior Economic Officials Meeting (SEOM) Retreat 2021 was held virtually, with Dr. Dayang Hajah May Fa'ezah binti Haji Ahmad Ariffin, the Permanent Secretary (Economy) at the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE) as the chairperson.

The meeting, which marked the start of a series of economic meetings was chaired by Brunei Darussalam as the host of the 2021 ASEAN Summit and Related Summits, and was attended by Senior Economic Officials and representatives of ASEAN.

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## Promote inclusive, sustainable economic growth (continued)

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As the Chair of ASEAN, Brunei Darussalam proposed 10 Priority Economic Deliverables (PED) under the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). In summary, the PED are divided into three strategic thrusts.

The first thrust is Recovery, which is aimed at ensuring the recovery of the region following the impact of COVID-19. This strategic thrust focuses on clarifying regulations on non-tariff measures and facilitation of investments into the region; preparing a roadmap for the rehabilitation of the tourism sector as a guideline for comprehensive and coordinated planning and solutions; as well as allowing new opportunities for ASEAN market and cooperation, particularly through negotiations on the possibility of an ASEAN-Canada Free Trade Agreement.

The next thrust is Digitalisation, which is aimed towards nurturing ASEAN into a sustainable region by making use of new technologies through the provision of a secure and harmonised e-commerce environment and digital ecosystem.

The last strategic thrust is Sustainability. This thrust intends to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth in ASEAN, by focusing on providing guideline and support to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs); sustainable energy transition; as well as cooperation in the mineral field.

In her opening speech, Dr. Dayang Hajah May Fa'ezah welcomed



Permanent Secretary (Economy) at the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE) chairing the 52<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Senior Economic Officials Meeting (SEOM) Retreat 2021, which was held virtually.

the leaders and officials of SEOM, and officiated the launching of the ASEAN SEOM Retreat 2021.

The meeting discussed matters related to the 2021 Annual Priorities under SEOM, SEOM Working Programme for 2021; updates on the works of Economic Officials in Jakarta; as well as the ASEAN economic meetings for this year.

## Over 170 job offers at UBD Career Fair 2021

**TUNGKU LINK, January 11** - The Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD), through the UBD Centre of Networking, Employment and Career Training (UBD ConNECT) and with the support of the UBD Office of Alumni Relations and Advancement (UBD OARA), is organising the UBD Career Fair 2021, which will run until January 16.

Present to officiate the launching as the Guest of Honour was Dr. Haji Azman bin Ahmad, the Permanent Secretary (Higher Education) at the Ministry of Education (MoE). The launching of the event took place at Level 3, UBD Business Library.

The fair is held both physically and virtually in light of the COVID-19 pandemic; with the availability of a 24-hour web portal that allows job seekers and the public to interact with future employers. Several venues at the campus are also provided for live-streaming, as well as walk-in interviews.

In his speech, Dr. Haji Azman highlighted that despite the challenges and implications of the pandemic, Brunei Darussalam is still able to drive its national priorities. One of the priorities is the accessibility of education for all, where every school and higher institution has adjusted their methods to ensure that their teaching and learning are not disrupted. This is done by accustoming oneself to working remotely and integrating technology, thereby allowing education and training to be carried out through blended learning.

The Permanent Secretary also added that MoE, through the Higher Education Division, has collaborated with all public and private higher and technical institutions in conducting the Graduate Employment Studies and Employer Satisfaction Survey.

The survey will monitor as well as evaluate the marketability and the job performance of the graduates, which will provide an



Permanent Secretary (Higher Education) at the Ministry of Education (MoE) delivering a speech at the UBD Career Fair 2021.

overview of the effectiveness of the existing policies and strategies. In addition, the will also benefit national educational institutions, with the development and implementation of initiatives that can boost their confidence in providing employment opportunities to graduates.

This year's career fair saw the participation of 40 exhibitors from various industry sectors (including several government agencies), with over 170 various job opportunities as well as interview sessions for full-time, part-time and internship placements.

The fair aims to strengthen cooperation between UBD and its industry partners in enhancing the marketability of the students, as well as bridging the gap between the industry's expectations and the university's future-ready graduates.

## Sharing experience, knowledge in technological advancements

**TUNGKU LINK, January 26** - The Opening Ceremony for the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Computational Intelligence in Information Systems (CIIS) 2020, took place virtually. The event was officiated by Awang Haji Mohammad Nazri bin Haji Mohammad Yusof as the Guest of Honour, the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Transport and Infocommunications (MTIC).

The conference, which is organised by the School of Computing and Informatics (SCI), Universiti Teknologi Brunei (UTB) will run for three days, starting from January 25.

The ceremony began with a welcoming speech from the Professor Dr. Dayang Hajah Zohrah binti Haji Sulaiman, Vice Chancellor of UTB followed by a speech by Professor Emeritus Tamon Ueda, the Chief Advisor of AUN/SEED-Net. The Guest of Honour also presented a speech at the event.

The opening ceremony was then followed by the presentation of two keynote papers; where Professor Kazuhiko Hamamoto from Tokai University, Japan presented a paper entitled "Virtual Reality on Biomedical Engineering"; whereas Kenji Araki from Hokkaido University, Japan presented another paper entitled "Laughing Computer - Automation Generation of Funny Humor Superior to Human Beings".



The 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Computational Intelligence in Information Systems (CIIS) 2020 which took place virtually.

The conference also featured two invited international speakers: Dr. Afif Osseiran from Ericsson Stockholm, who delivered a talk entitled "5G and Beyond - The state of the art"; and Dr. Kisuk Kweon from Samsung Corporation, who delivered a talk entitled "Artificial Intelligence (AI) in 5G system".

Incorporating the theme "Digital Innovation towards Sustainable Development Goals"; the topics presented by the participants reflected their recent research works in intelligent information system applications; networking and information security application; the advancement

of digital innovation; and the theoretical foundations of digital innovation.

This year received a total of 55 international submissions, 23 of which were selected to be presented in the conference and included in the proceedings of CIIS 2020, which will be published by Springer in the Advances in Intelligent Systems and Computing book series.

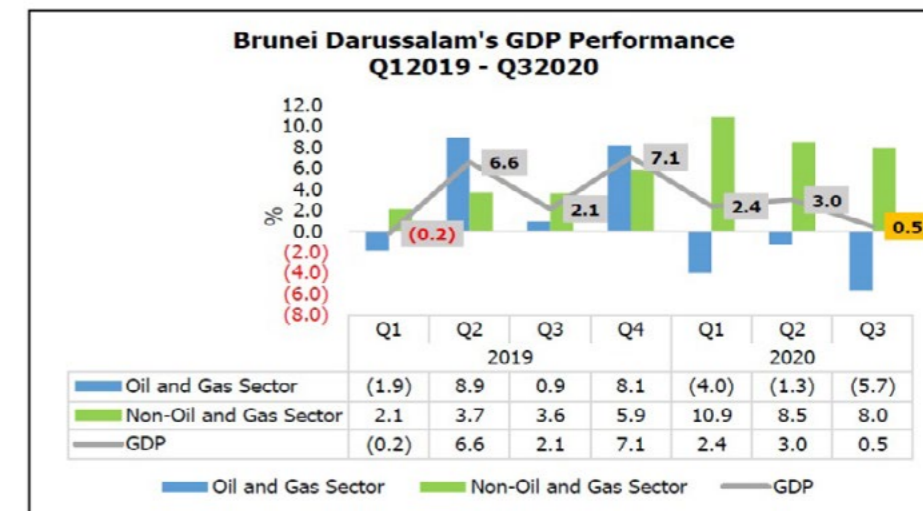
UTB also hosted the virtual Presidential Forum 2021 in conjunction with the conference, with the theme "Digital Innovation in Higher Education Institutions".

## Brunei's economy grew 0.5 per cent in Q3 2020

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, JANUARY 4** - In the third quarter of 2020 (Q3 2020), Brunei Darussalam's gross domestic product (GDP) at current prices was estimated at \$4.0 billion, compared to \$4.2 billion in Q3 2019. The oil and gas sector - comprising oil and gas mining; and liquefied natural gas (LNG) manufacturing - was valued at \$1.8 billion, which accounted for 45.4 per cent of the total gross value added (GVA). Meanwhile, the non-oil and gas sector - which includes downstream activities such as manufacture of petroleum and chemical products - contributed 54.6 per cent with a GVA of \$2.2 billion.

At constant prices, a positive GDP growth of 0.5 per cent year-on-year was recorded in Q3 2020. The growth was contributed by an increase in the non-oil and gas sector by 8.0 per cent. On the other hand, the oil and gas sector recorded a decrease by 5.7 per cent.

The growth in the non-oil and gas sector was mainly due to the downstream



activities following the new production of petroleum and chemical products, with a GVA of \$208.9 million at constant prices.

Meanwhile, the decline in the oil and gas sector mainly resulted from the decrease in the production of crude oil, from 113.3 thousand barrels per day in Q3 2019 to 100.5 thousand barrels per day in

Q3 2020. Natural gas production also recorded a decrease, from 31.0 million cubic metres per day in Q3 2019 to 30.6 million cubic metres per day in Q3 2020. During the same period, LNG production declined from 843,994 MMBtu per day to 833,565 MMBtu per day.

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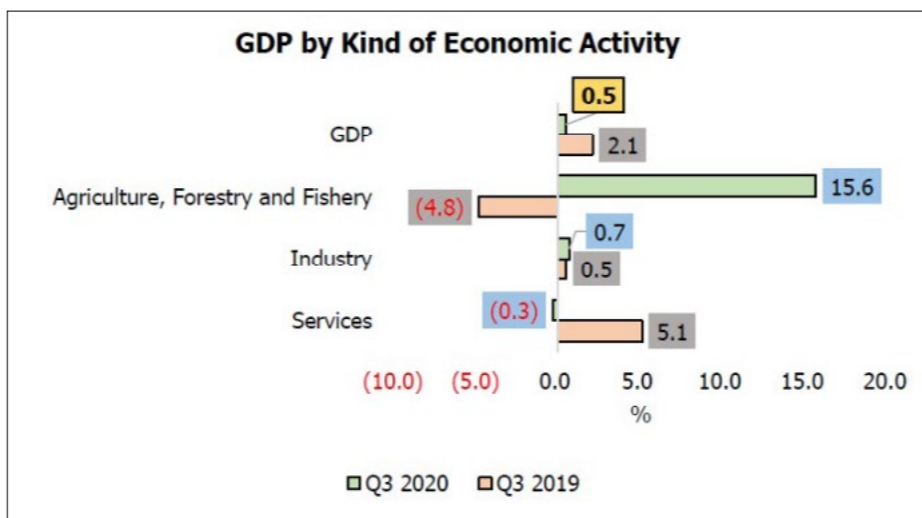
## Brunei's economy grew 0.5 per cent in Q3 2020 (continued)

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By kind of economic activity, the positive growth year-on-year in Q3 2020 was due to an increase in the industry sector by 0.7 per cent, following the new production of petroleum and chemical products.

Meanwhile, the agriculture, forestry and fishery sectors also increased by 15.6 per cent – following an increase in the production of sub-sectors, such as fishery, livestock and poultry. An increase in fisheries activities was mainly due to the aquaculture industry, in line with the increase in the production of farm prawn. In addition, the increase in livestock and poultry activities was mainly associated with an increase in the egg and broiler production.

However, the services sector declined by 0.3 per cent due to a decrease in sub-sectors such as government services, air transport and finance. The COVID-19 outbreak has adversely affected the air transport sub-sector, which declined by 92.1 per cent due to reduced travel operations. Meanwhile, the contraction



in the finance sub-sector by 4.4 per cent was mainly attributed to the decline in the banking services activities.

Although the overall services sector recorded a decrease, several sub-sectors under the sector showed improvements such as communication (23.8 per cent); water transport (22.0 per cent); wholesale and retail trade (4.6 per cent); health

services (5.3 per cent); and real estate and ownership of dwellings (2.3 per cent). The growth in the wholesale and retail trade subsector was attributed to an increase in domestic demand, as travel restrictions remain effective amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

By expenditure approach, GDP growth was mainly attributed to an increase in domestic demand, particularly household final consumption expenditure by 14.1 per cent; and gross capital formation by 9.5 per cent, particularly private investment. Meanwhile, external demand (exports of goods and services) also recorded an increase of 0.3 per cent.

GDP is a measure of the total value of goods and services produced in a particular period, after deducting the cost of goods and services used up in the process of production.

### GDP by Expenditure at Constant Prices

	Q3 2019	Q3 2020	% Growth
<b>Domestic Demand</b>	<b>4,111.3</b>	<b>4,360.0</b>	<b>6.0</b>
Government Final Consumption Expenditure	1,048.0	960.1	(8.4)
Household Final Consumption Expenditure	975.6	1,113.1	14.1
Gross Capital Formation	2,087.7	2,286.8	9.5
<b>External Demand</b>	<b>2,338.0</b>	<b>2,344.7</b>	<b>0.3</b>
Exports	2,338.0	2,344.7	0.3
<b>GDP</b>	<b>4,610.5</b>	<b>4,631.9</b>	<b>0.5</b>

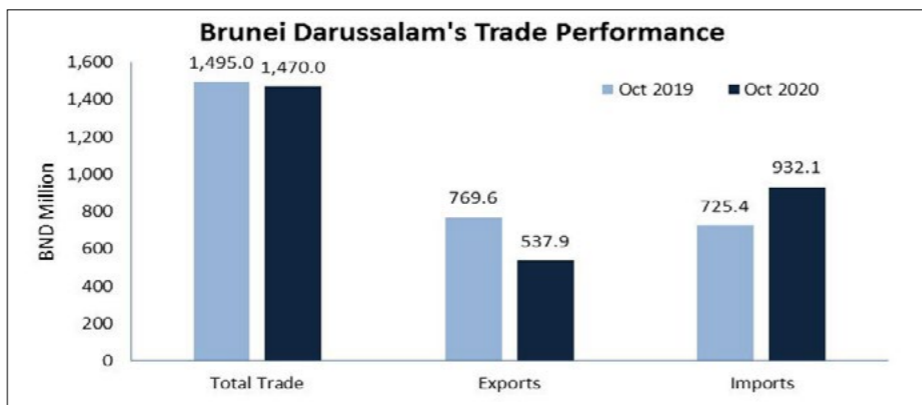
## October 2020 shows decline in trade value

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, January 16** – In October 2020, Brunei Darussalam recorded a total trade value of \$1,470.0 million, a decrease of 1.7 per cent from \$1,495.0 million on the same month of 2019.

As for month-over-month growth, the total trade for October 2020 showed an increase of 24.2 per cent, as compared to September 2020.

The total exports decreased by 30.1 per cent year-on-year to \$537.9 million, compared to \$769.6 million, in October 2019. This was mainly due to the decline in the exports of mineral fuels to \$442.3 million (October 2020) from \$702.2 million (October 2019).

The decline in crude oil and LNG exports was caused by the slowing down of global demand and drop in prices.



The total crude oil exports volume decreased to 85.77 thousand barrels per day (October 2020) from 141.58 thousand barrels per day (October 2019), while the average price of crude oil exports decreased to USD39.08 per barrel (October 2020) from USD64.48 per barrel (October 2019).

On the other hand, the average price of LNG exports dropped to USD5.51 per MMBtu (October 2020) from USD8.09 per MMBtu (October 2019). Meanwhile, the total LNG exports volume decreased to 745,680 MMBtu per day (October 2020) from 867,462 MMBtu a day (October 2019).

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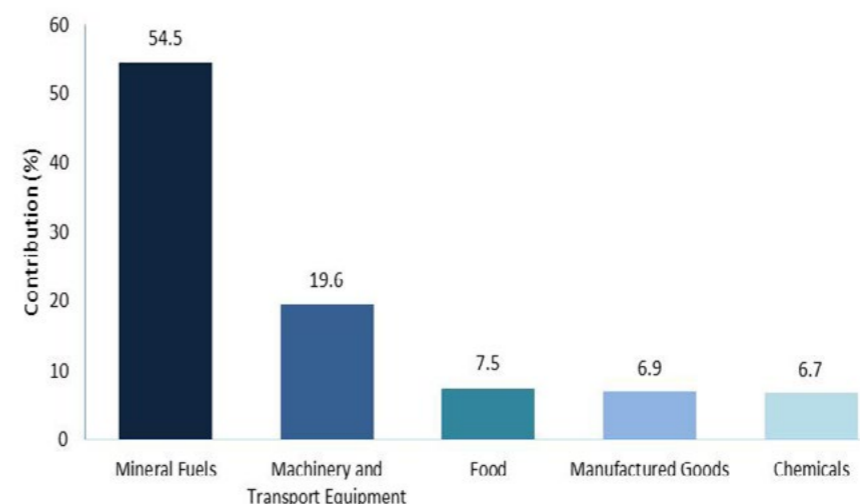
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The total exports also included the domestic export of petroleum and gas products, which was valued at \$127.6 million.

In terms of commodities, the mineral fuels section served as the highest contributor to Brunei Darussalam's exports (82.2 per cent); followed by chemicals (16.4 per cent); machinery and transport equipment (0.6 per cent); inedible raw materials (0.3 per cent); and miscellaneous manufactured articles (0.2 per cent).



### Five Main Imports by Commodity



The main export market for October 2020 was Japan (27.0 per cent); followed by the People's Republic of China (16.0 per cent); and Thailand (15.0 per cent).

The total value of imports increased to \$932.1 million (October 2020) from \$725.4 million (October 2019), mostly resulting from an increase in imports of mineral fuels, chemicals and food.

The five main imports by commodity were mineral fuels (54.5 per cent); followed by machinery and transport equipment (19.6 per cent); food (7.5 per cent); manufactured goods (6.9 per cent); and chemicals (6.7 per cent).

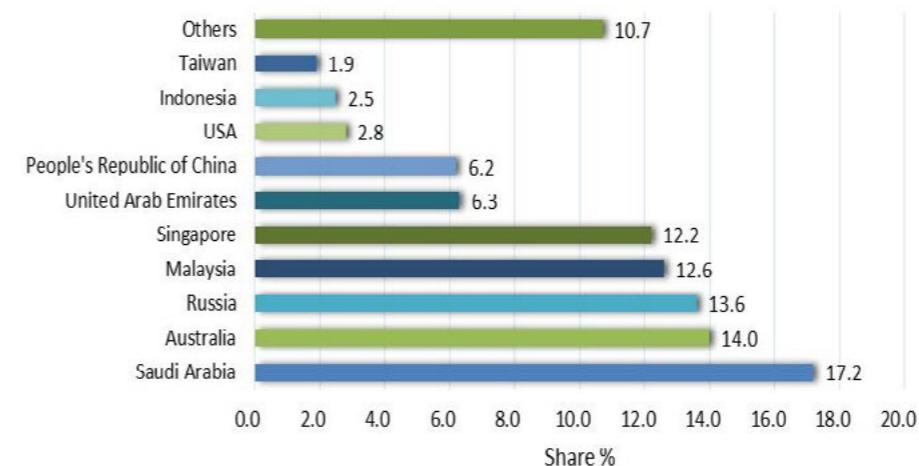
Under the 'By End Use' category, imports of intermediate goods accounted for 57.4 per cent of total imports; followed by capital goods (38.0 per cent) and consumption goods (4.6 per cent).

As for imports by trading partners, the highest share was from Saudi Arabia (17.2 per cent); followed by Australia (14.0 per cent); and Russia (13.6 per cent).

According to the mode of transport, the highest share was transport by sea, which amounted to \$1,390.1 million (94.6 per cent). This was followed by air transport (\$59.0 million or 4.0 per cent); and transport by land (\$20.8 million or 1.4 per cent).

International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) for Brunei Darussalam adopts the General System to record trade statistics, which include imports, domestic exports and re-exports.

### Share of Imports by Trading Partners



## Strengthening relations through art

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, January 15** - Brunei veteran artists Pengiran Abdul Wahab Hassan Al-Abbas, Pengiran Timbang bin Pengiran Haji Tuah and Dr. Zakaria Haji Abdul Hamid had performed a live public painting at the Turkish Embassy last year on September 13, in conjunction with Pengiran Abdul Wahab's solo exhibition hosted by the Embassy.

The ceremonial opening of a memorial plaque was held on January 14, involving the participation of the three artists and over 20 veterans at the exact point where the performance took

place, in the Embassy garden.

His Excellency Mehmet Suat Akgün, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Turkey to Brunei Darussalam stated in his speech that arts and culture provide a platform for people to connect with one another.

In a larger context, the art events hosted by the Turkish Embassy

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## Strengthening relations through art (continued)

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could also be perceived as bridges between the Embassy and the people of the country, and even between Turkey and Brunei Darussalam. His Excellency added that these bridges will be solid and long-lasting when transferred from individual memories into an institutional and collective memory. The live performance of the three Bruneian veteran artists at the Embassy premises constituted an important legacy for the Embassy, and it will be even more significant in the future.

Hence, with the intention of passing the story behind this legacy to the future generations, the Embassy decided to preserve the paint stains left on the floor from the performance, by installing a memorial plaque.

The painting entitled "From Bandar Seri Begawan to Istanbul", which was generously donated by Pengiran Abdul Wahab, is now displayed on the wall of the office of the Ambassador.



His Excellency Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Turkey to Brunei Darussalam with the paintings created by a veteran artist from Brunei Darussalam.



His Excellency with the veteran artists during the ceremonial opening of the memorial plaque.

## Students and teachers receive PMCA Certificate of Appreciation



Her Excellency Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Thailand to Brunei Darussalam in a group photo with the participants of the Fabulous ASEAN Breakfast Project.

**KIARONG, January 20** – Six students and three other recipients who were involved in the Fabulous ASEAN Breakfast – A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Skills Collaboration Project under the Princess Maha Chakri Award (PMCA) Foundation received their certificates of appreciation at the Royal Thai Embassy, Kiarong.

Present to conduct the Certificate Presentation Ceremony was the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the

Kingdom of Thailand to Brunei Darussalam, Her Excellency Wanthanee Viputwongsakul.

The project was carried out virtually, in collaboration with teachers and students of 33 schools from 11 Southeast Asian countries; where the students shared their quick and easy breakfast recipes. Also present at the ceremony were officials from the embassy; teachers from participating schools; as well as parents of students who took part in the project.

## New book collection from Canadian High Commission

**TUNGKU LINK, January 27** – The Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) Library received a book donation from the High Commission of Canada to Brunei Darussalam.

The donation, which consists of 39 books, is hoped to provide UBD students with a selection of the best Canadian books in the genres of literature, science, fiction, history and culture.

Present to deliver the books to the Datin Dr. Dayang Hajah Anita Binurul Zahrina binti Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Wijaya Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Abdul Aziz, Vice Chancellor of UBD was Her Excellency Jeanette Stovel, the Canadian High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam. The event took place at the UBD Business Library.

The Vice Chancellor of UBD receiving the book donation from the Canadian High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam.



## Intensive support, guidance process for JIS students

**JERUDONG, January 29** – The Jerudong International School (JIS) hosted its Year 12 Higher Education Evening at the JIS Arts Centre. The event was organised to allow JIS students to research and decide on universities that are suitable for their future careers.

Nicholas Sheehan, the School's Principal stated in his welcoming speech that the annual event is an important educational pillar for the students of JIS.

The event marks the beginning of the intensive support and guidance process that not only help students to apply to international top universities, but they also ensure the excellence of the student applications in demonstrating skills that are needed by the respective universities.

Presentations on various well-known academic destinations around the world were held: which covered Brunei Darussalam; Australia; Canada; the United Kingdom (UK); the United States (US); as well as Oxbridge Applications. Information booths comprising foreign representatives were also set up at the event.

The higher education evening saw the launching of the Ivy House Award Programme for the first time in Asia. The programme is designed to develop the youths' quality and skills in order to help them thrive in a fast-paced and increasingly challenging world.



The Jerudong International School (JIS) Year 12 Higher Education Evening organised at the JIS Arts Centre.

Brunei Darussalam was represented by Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) at the event.

Also present to provide information on their respective countries were Her Excellency Tiffany Anne McDonald, the Australian High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam; Her Excellency Jeanette Stovel, Canadian High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam; and Natalie Gowers-Barnes, the British Deputy High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam.

## 1,211 candidates achieve 3 'A' Levels and above

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, January 23** – The Ministry of Education (MoE), through the Department of Examinations, has issued the Brunei-Cambridge G.C.E. (BCGCE) 'AS' and 'A' Level October/November 2020 Examination Results.

Out of the 1,608 candidates who sat for the BCGCE 'A' Level Examinations, 1,211 candidates (75.31 per cent) obtained at least three 'A' Levels – an increase of 4.74 per cent as compared to the previous year. Meanwhile, 89.05 per cent achieved at least two 'A' Levels (an increase of 3.35 per cent); whereas 95.71 per cent obtained at least one 'A' Level (an increase of 1.45 per cent).

At the school level, the percentage of candidates who achieved at least three 'A' Levels is 81.45, which is an increase of 6.31 per cent. The percentage of candidates who obtained at least two 'A' Levels is 94.27 per cent (an increase of 3.60 per cent); and the percentage of candidates who obtained at least one 'A' Level is

98.36 per cent (an increase of 1.12 per cent).

In total, 251 candidates (15.61 per cent) achieved 'A's and higher grades for two to four subjects. Meanwhile, 31 school candidates obtained 'A' / A's in four subjects; 105 school candidates in three subjects; and 112 in two subjects.

Overall, 17 subjects have shown improvements in performances, ranging from 1.27 per cent to 13.22 per cent. The subjects include Syariah; Usuluddin; Bahasa Melayu; Food Studies; History; Computer Science; Business; Information Technology; Sociology; Biology; Chemistry; Physics; Design and Technology; Accounting; Economics; Mathematics; and Psychology.

Four other subjects have retained 100 per cent achievements since 2019: which are Hafaz Al-Quran; Further Mathematics; Physical Education; and Media Studies.

## 1,211 candidates achieve 3 'A' Levels and above (continued)

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On the other hand, 543 (68.3 per cent) out of 795 candidates who sat for the BCGCE 'AS' Level Examinations managed to obtain at least two 'AS' Levels, which is a 5.20 per cent increase. At the same time, 784 (98.62 per cent) achieved

at least one 'AS' Level, showing a 6.90 per cent increase in comparison with the results from October/November 2019. As for their overall achievements, 120 of the candidates successfully attained 'A' grades for at least two subjects.

## Hero receives Community Excellence Award

**SALAMBIGAR, January 10** – The Fire and Rescue Department (FRD), through their Operation 'G' Branch, conducted a Community Excellence Award Presentation Ceremony for Awang Md. Asyari Amni bin Md. Ariff, a hero who saved a victim from drowning on December 28, 2020 at the Air Tenab Recreational Park, Kampong Selapon, Temburong District.

The ceremony was held at the Sultan Sharif Ali Secondary School, Salambigar. The award was presented by Operation 'G' Commanding Officer SSFR, Awang Haji Afiq bin Haji Julah. Also present at the ceremony was Bangar Fire Station Commander, SO Awang Jamaludin bin Ahmad.

Also in attendance was the Acting Principal of the Sultan Sharif Ali Secondary School, Dayang Hajah Noor Zinatul Ashiqin binti Haji Ibrahim.

On a related note, FRD advises the public to avoid swimming alone, or swimming beyond their capability. The public is also reminded to constantly monitor their children when playing or swimming in beaches, pools or rivers. In addition, life jackets should be used when participating in activities, such as jet skiing



Md. Asyari Amni bin Md. Ariff receiving the Community Excellence Award from the Operation 'G' Commanding Officer SSFR.

or surfing.

In the case of emergencies, the FRD can be contacted directly via their hotline: 995.

## Hengyi contributes USD3.5 bilion to national GDP growth

**JERUDONG, January 14** - Hengyi Industries Sdn. Bhd. (Hengyi) successfully exported over 6.38 million tonnes of petroleum products and 1.7 million tonnes of petrochemical products – further achieving sales revenue of USD3.5 billion last year; and directly contributing to Brunei Darussalam's gross domestic product (GDP) growth for the year 2020.

According to the Department of Economic Planning and Statistics (DEPS) and Hengyi's internal trade statistics, Hengyi's production value from January to September 2020 accounted for 4.48 per cent of the country's total GDP, and 50.57 per cent of Brunei's total trade, with exports accounting for 44.6 per cent and imports as much as 59.27 per cent of the national figure.

The matter was explained by Chen Lian Cai, Hengyi's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in his speech, during the Hengyi Industries Media Appreciation Day at Pondok Sari Wangi Restaurant, Jerudong Park.

He further stated that Hengyi also achieved several new milestones in 2020. Hengyi has entered into a commercial agreement with Brunei Shell Marketing, as part of its commitment to supply fuel products to the local market. Between May to December 2020, Hengyi had supplied a total of 283 thousand tonnes of fuel products to the local market.

The CEO also expressed that with this new milestone, Hengyi



The Chief Executive Officer of Hengyi Industries Sdn. Bhd. delivering his speech at the event.



Among the members of the media who were present at the Hengyi Industries Media Appreciation day, which was held at the Pondok Sari Wangi Restaurant, Jerudong Park.

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can help contribute to Brunei's downstream industry, and make significant progress in helping the country realise the goals of Brunei Vision 2035 in creating a dynamic and sustainable economy.

He further affirmed that Hengyi will continue its commitment towards hiring local workers, and that the company is also making progress in supporting the 'Bruneianisation Directive'. Currently, Hengyi has employed a total of 675 local employees – that is, 40 per cent in its first year of operation. The company further intends to increase its localisation efforts every year.

The CEO added that Hengyi also provides opportunities for local workers to develop their skills with various training programmes, while encouraging experienced staff to share their knowledge.

"Our commitment is to support Brunei Darussalam's economic growth, and we have made significant progress in increasing domestic value or expanding in-country value (ICV) by opening up more opportunities with local traders," said the CEO.

In total, Hengyi has worked with 87 local traders, and created a total of 1,500 jobs indirectly, be in in the engineering services or in the logistics sector.

The CEO further explained that through the Corporate Social Responsibility initiative, Hengyi has also positively contributed to the Bruneian youths, society and environment.

"To enhance the knowledge and skills of local youth talents, we provide a scholarship programme through collaborations between Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) and Zhejiang University; as well as the Institute of Brunei Technical Education (IBTE) and Lanzhou Petrochemical Polytechnic, China.

"In total, Hengyi has sent a total of 203 Bruneian students to continue their studies in China, in the field of Petrochemical Engineering. In 2020, we launched a new collaboration with Politeknik Brunei, and we are also discussing with local universities and other technical schools to create new scholarship programmes," he said.

In facing the COVID-19 pandemic, Hengyi has also actively supported local communities to help each other overcome this difficult time. In 2020, the Zhejiang Hengyi Group contributed USD 1 million to the Ministry of Health (MoH), in helping the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam fight the pandemic.

## Students snatch Bronze Award in ASEAN Cyberkids Camp 2020

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, January 17** – Two young contestants were given the honour to represent Brunei Darussalam in the ASEAN Cyberkids Camp 2020, which was conducted online by the Ministry of Communications and Informatics (MCI), Republic of Indonesia.

The participants consisted of Awang Muhammad Musa Saifullah bin Mohammad Satria Alam Shah, a Year 7 student from Paduka Seri Begawan Sultan Science College; and Awang Redzuan bin Shahrinan, a Year 6 student from DES School. The students were supervised by Awang Mohamad Zuno Kartono bin Haji Ali from the ICT Unit of the Curriculum Development Department, Ministry of Education (MoE).

At the competition, the two students had the opportunity to interact with participants from other ASEAN member states (AMS), and use their knowledge of Scratch programming to create a multimedia computer project based on the selected topic, which was "Artificial Intelligence (AI)".

The students received the Bronze Award for their hard work in the competition.

The ASEAN Cyberkids Camp is an annual event that involves primary school students from AMS, where each state takes turns to organise the programme every year.

Only eight AMS participated in this year's event. Each AMS was represented by a team consisting of two students aged 7 to 12, and a supervising tutor.

The ASEAN Cyberkids Camp is aimed at improving the students' skills in critical thinking, problem solving and working in a team; as well as to enhance their ability to creatively use ICT; while increasing their awareness of cross cultural issues.

The camp also serves as an initiative under the ASEAN Digital



Awang Muhammad Musa Saifullah bin Mohammad Satria Alam Shah and Awang Redzuan bin Shahrinan representing Brunei Darussalam at the ASEAN Cyberkids Camp 2020, which was held online.

Ministers Meeting (ADGMIN), which is supported by the ASEAN Digital Senior Officials Meeting (ADGSOM). The initiative is intended to raise the students' awareness, so that they are more proficient in using the available software, and are able to grasp how technologies can assist their learning progress.

In addition, the activity also contributes to the creative content and applications among students in the ASEAN region.

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- ✈ To ensure that cultural differences among ASEAN Member States can be shared and exposed within ASEAN Community (Cultural Exchange)
- ✈ "One-Stop Facility" that provides information on ASEAN and 10 ASEAN Member States.
- ✈ Supports Paperless and Green IT



Project under Sub-Committee of Information (SCI)  
ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information (COCI)