



## Expressing hope for a pandemic-free country



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 a special message for the year 1443 Hijrah/2021 Masihi.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 17** - As an *ummah* of faith, we shall continue to hope that Allah the Almighty will grant our prayers to cleanse Brunei Darussalam from the coronavirus pandemic.

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam stated the matter in a *titah* (royal speech) in a special message for

the year 1443 Hijrah/2021 Masihi, which was broadcasted nationwide.

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam stressed that nothing will take place without Allah's consent and will – as what has happened to the country.

According to His Majesty, "For over a year, Brunei Darussalam has been able to enjoy an environment safe (sequestered) from infection. *Alhamdulillah* (all praises to Allah), we have not neglected to be grateful to Allah for this blessing."

"However, on August 7, 2021, we were caught off guard by local transmissions involving seven individuals. The infection increased in the following days, indubitably adding to the fear," said His Majesty.

"As an *ummah* of faith, we understand that no misfortune will occur unless it is due to sin, and it will not subside except with repentance or *istighfar* (seeking forgiveness from Allah)," His Majesty added.

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## Preparing ASEAN for future challenges

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 7** - 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 ASEAN Day said that ASEAN will continue to prepare for future challenges through collective and coordinated efforts with all partners.

In the *titah*, His Majesty the Sultan and

Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam said that as 2021 marks the 54<sup>th</sup> year since the inception of ASEAN, the commemoration of ASEAN Day gives an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the Association and contemplate on how best to realise a politically cohesive, economically integrated, socially responsible, and truly people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN.

ASEAN Day is celebrated every August 8.

His Majesty said that this is a special occasion for Brunei Darussalam, as Chair of ASEAN this year, under the theme "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper", which

focuses on mitigating the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic while ensuring that the ASEAN Community continues to prosper.

"While the pandemic continues to adversely affect the region, ASEAN is working closely amongst its members and with external partners to advance the region's recovery by caring for the people – which includes securing vaccines, enabling safe travel and restarting economic activities through innovative ways," His Majesty added.

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AUGUST 2021 - VOLUME 36 ISSUE 8

**BRUNEI DARUSSALAM NEWSLETTER**

is published monthly by the Department of Information. It reports on government, social and business events in the country. All money values are expressed in Brunei dollars \$, unless otherwise stated. Any information in this newsletter may be reproduced; a clipping of the publication would be appreciated. For free subscription (excluding postage) please write to the Distribution Unit, Department of Information, Prime Minister's Office, Old Airport, Berakas BB 3510, Brunei Darussalam.

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**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 the Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, following the conferment of the United Kingdom as Dialogue Partnership of ASEAN on August 4.
- His Excellency Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, following his recent appointment as the new President of the Islamic Republic of Iran on August 5.
- Her Excellency Madam Halimah Jacob, President of the Republic of Singapore; His Excellency Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore; the Government and people of the Republic of Singapore on the occasion of its 65<sup>th</sup> National Day on August 9.
- His Excellency Dato Laila Utama Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia; as well as the Government and people of the Republic of Indonesia on the occasion of its 76<sup>th</sup> National Day on August 17.
- Yang Amat Berhormat Dato' Sri Ismail Sabri bin Yaakob following his appointment as the 9<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister of Malaysia on August 21.
- His Majesty Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah Al-Musta'in Billah, the 16<sup>th</sup> Yang Di-Pertuan Agong of Malaysia; Yang Amat Berhormat Dato' Sri Ismail Sabri bin Yaakob, Prime Minister of Malaysia; as well as the Government and people of Malaysia on the occasion of the 64<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Malaysia's Independence Day on August 31.

*News*

**Expressing hope for a pandemic-free country (continued)**

From front page

His Majesty continued, "This was long commanded by Allah, as stated in Surah Hud, verse 52."

His Majesty explained that this is one of the verses of *istighfar* which encourage us to repent. When such repentance occurs, Allah will bestow His mercy – which, *insyaaAllah* (if Allah wills), includes the withdrawal of misfortunes and diseases;

alongside the bolstering of our existing strengths by means of health, prosperity and security.

His Majesty also reminded that as servants of Allah, we should not be ashamed to admit our sins and feel too burdened to repent. We do not know how heavy our sins are; whether they are knowingly committed or otherwise. Only *istighfar* or repentance can expurgate them.

"We wash our hands with water or sanitisers, but sins are cleansed with *istighfar* and repentance," His Majesty highlighted.

Before concluding the *titah*, His Majesty invited the public to join in; as he recited a prayer asking Allah for forgiveness, as well as the removal of the coronavirus pandemic from the country, along with any other diseases.

**Preparing ASEAN for future challenges (continued)**

From front page

During such challenging times, it is especially crucial that ASEAN centrality and unity is upheld for the interest of all ASEAN Member States and their people, so that no one is left behind.

It is only through close cooperation and coordination that ASEAN will be

able to resolve its problems, overcome challenges, succeed as a family as well as preserve and build on the significant economic progress and technological advancements it has gained over the years.

Looking ahead, ASEAN will continue to prepare for future challenges through collective and coordinated efforts

with all of our partners, as the region builds resilience and safeguards the well-being and livelihoods of its people.

In ending the *titah*, His Majesty gave his best wishes for a very happy ASEAN Day and for continued encouragement to ASEAN in its pursuit of a bright future for the region and its people.

**Building a leading digital community and economy bloc**

**BERAKAS, August 23** - Brunei Darussalam once again chaired the 42<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) General Assembly, which was held virtually via video conference. The event was hosted by the State Legislative Council (LegCo); with Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Lela Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdul Rahman bin Dato Setia Haji Mohamed Taib, Speaker of LegCo as the President of the 42<sup>nd</sup> AIPA. The Official Opening Ceremony for this

year's AIPA General Assembly took place at the Musyawarah Hall, International Convention Centre, Berakas.

Officiating the virtual opening 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, who delivered a *titah* (royal speech); urging the Parliamentarians to uphold AIPA as the

key organisation and platform to enhance multilateral cooperation.

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam added that this is also to promote understanding and widen cooperation with AIPA observer countries; in ensuring peaceful, harmonious and prosperous communities in each respective region.

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## Building a leading digital community and economy bloc (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 Official Opening Ceremony of the 42<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) General Assembly.

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His Majesty further urged AIPA and ASEAN to continue addressing issues of common concerns, as well as regional and global challenges collectively during this difficult time.

His Majesty also highlighted AIPA and ASEAN's strong collaboration in building a more integrated and successful regional community. In line with the theme of the ASEAN Chair 2021, "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper", ASEAN has continued to respond rapidly in providing care for its people and preparing its community towards development.



Yang Berhormat Speaker of the State Legislative Council (LegCo) presenting his welcoming speech as the President of the 42<sup>nd</sup> AIPA.

Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Pendikar Alam Dato Paduka Seri Awang Haji Hasrin bin Dato Paduka Awang Haji Sabtu, Member of LegCo representing Brunei Darussalam as the head of delegation at the 42<sup>nd</sup> AIPA General Assembly.

According to His Majesty, the theme for the 42<sup>nd</sup> AIPA General Assembly – "Forging Parliamentary Cooperation in Digital Inclusion Towards ASEAN Community 2025" – calls to attention AIPA's commitment in building ASEAN as a leading digital community and economy bloc. Through AIPA, harmonising regulations as well as standardising policies and appropriate legislations across ASEAN can be promoted.

The Speaker of LegCo also presented his welcoming speech at the opening ceremony; where he stated that it is time for ASEAN countries to ensure inclusive digital transformation to build endurance and prepare present and future generations for the period after the pandemic.

He further stressed that rapid digital transformation and adoption caused by the pandemic underscores the importance of digitalisation, especially as we go through these challenging times.

Brunei Darussalam has paid close attention to relevant issues, such as women empowerment, climate change, cybersecurity and economic integration as part of the agendas of the AIPA general assembly this year.

The ceremony was virtually attended by parliamentary representatives from ASEAN countries and observer countries; as well as special guests of AIPA.

Afterwards, the First Plenary Session was held, chaired by the President of the 42<sup>nd</sup> AIPA. Speakers of AIPA Member States were invited to deliver their speeches; representing Brunei was Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Pendikar Alam Dato Paduka Seri Awang Haji Hasrin bin Dato Paduka Awang Haji Sabtu, Member of LegCo.

Observers from several countries; the Secretaries-General of AIPA and ASEAN; as well as special guests of Brunei Darussalam, were also invited to the session.

The 42<sup>nd</sup> AIPA General Assembly will convene for three days to discuss political, social and economic matters, as well as issues concerning women in parliament and AIPA.

A total of 28 agendas will be discussed for approval in the Joint Communique, which will convene in the Second Plenary Session on the last day of the general assembly.



## His Majesty's 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration

**BELAIT, August 3** - His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei

Darussalam graced a Get-Together Ceremony with the citizens and residents of the Belait District in conjunction with His Majesty's 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration. Belait District was the last district to hold

the ceremony, which took place at the Municipal Field, Kuala Belait.

Accompanying His Majesty the Sultan and

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## His Majesty's 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration (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; and His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in a group photo.

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Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam were His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and

Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO); and other members of the royal family.

The ceremony commenced with the

singing of the national anthem, followed by a special performance themed "Raja Mahkota Negara", involving 450 participants comprising of students from the district's primary and secondary schools.

Following the performances, His Majesty and members of the royal family proceeded to the field to congratulate the performers, as well as to greet the citizens and residents of the Belait District.

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His Royal Highness the Crown Prince in a group photo with officers, teachers, staff and students of St. Margaret's School at the Get-Together Ceremony in Belait District.



Pictures of the colourful special performance themed "Raja Mahkota Negara" at the Get-Together Ceremony in Belait District.

## His Majesty's 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration (continued)



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam mingling with the students at the Get-Together Ceremony with citizens and residents of Belait District.



His Majesty; His Royal Highness the Crown Prince; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen; and other members of the royal family at the Get-Together Ceremony with the citizens and residents of Brunei-Muara District.



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A similar event was also held in the Brunei-Muara District on August 1 at the Taman Haji Sir Muda Omar 'Ali Saifuddin. Hundreds of students lined up along the

streets leading towards the site to greet the arrival of His Majesty.

Also present were His Majesty's sons: His Royal Highness the Crown Prince, His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik, His

Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen; as well as other members of the royal family.

The event commenced with the national anthem shortly after their arrival; followed by a special performance themed "Raja Tersohor Kegemilangan Rakyat" presented by 200 performers comprising youths, students, as well as employees in the public and private agencies.

The performance reflected the citizens' love towards His Majesty's sovereignty as the nation's pioneer. The special performance was divided into four main segments, concluding with cheers of *Daulat Kebawah Duli Tuan Patik* from all performers.

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His Majesty and other members of the royal family during the ceremony.

## His Majesty's 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration (continued)

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After the performance, His Majesty and other members of royal family proceeded

to the stage platform for a group photo and mingled with the performers. This was followed by a traditional

get-together session with the members of the Executive Committee of Governors; Continue on page 8



His Majesty mingling with the students and performers.



His Majesty signing a picture at the Department of Information, PMO booth during the Get-Together Ceremony in Brunei-Muara District.



His Majesty and His Royal Highness the Crown Prince at the Get-Together Ceremony with the citizens and residents of Brunei-Muara District.



His Majesty and His Royal Highness the Crown Prince with citizens of Brunei-Muara District.



His Majesty and His Royal Highness the Crown Prince mingling with the students.

His Majesty and other members of the royal family during the Luncheon at the Dewan Persantapan Lapau.



## His Majesty's 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration (continued)



His Majesty and other members of the royal family in a group photo with the performers at the Taman Haji Sir Muda Omar 'Ali Saifuddien.



His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik (left); and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen (right) mingling with the people and students of Brunei-Muara District.



## Resilience as key to youths' success



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) at the 16<sup>th</sup> National Youth Day Celebration 2021.

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at the ceremony.

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Celebration Committees; government and private agencies; the Mukim and Village Consultative Council; non-governmental organisations (NGOs); as well as the citizens and residents of Brunei-Muara District.

After the ceremony, His Majesty and other members of the royal family proceeded to the Dewan Persantapan Lapau for Luncheon.



Among those participating at the Get-Together Ceremony in Brunei-Muara District (above and below).



**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 7** - To show recognition of youth significance in empowering the country's future progress, the 16<sup>th</sup> National Youth Day Celebration was held at the International Convention Centre, Berakas.

Present to grace the event 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); His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik; along with other members of the royal family.

Following a welcoming speech 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; His Majesty consented to deliver a *titah* (royal speech), where he urged the youth to not ruin their good identity, in order to help maintain the community's confidence in them.

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam further stated that the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic has allowed the youth to step forward as an energy source for the community and nation.

"Youths who do not give into exhaustion are capable of becoming meritorious volunteers. Youths deserve to be emulated in matters related to helping the country. When needed, they usually come quickly to answer the call – this is the nature of youths," said His Majesty.

"They will come out with a high fighting spirit and fresh energy, compared to other groups. This is no doubt, a special feature of the youth," added His Majesty.

His Majesty hoped that these characteristics will remain to colour the lives of the youth, so that they will continue to excel and be appreciated by all levels.

The Monarch further mentioned society's sensitivity towards the youth. If the youth are good, then the community will praise them. However, if it is otherwise, the community will shun them. Hence, the youth need to realise that they are like a 'mirror' to society; through which the good or bad of the situation can be seen.

His Majesty then brought up some of the examples that bring delight from this 'mirror': the youth entrepreneurship

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The Youth Oath read by 50 youths involved in volunteering and among those who have achievements in various fields (left and right).



Recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah and Doa Selamat led by the State Mufti.

## Resilience as key to youths' success (continued)



His Majesty awarding the National Youth Day 2020 and 2021 Awards to recipients.

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ecosystem and the i-Usahawan Programme (which has been growing well since its launching on the 13<sup>th</sup> National Youth Day Celebration in 2018).

His Majesty added that as preliminary evidence of their success, the ecosystem and i-Usahawan Programme have resulted in the specialisation of 35 contracts in the energy sector – 19 of which have been awarded to 24 youth entrepreneurs, with an estimated contract value of \$29 million.

His Majesty also lauded the success of youth entrepreneurs in providing employment opportunities to some 300 locals.

“All this is a clear indication that the youth of Brunei are already able to achieve and record success at a high level,” said the Monarch.

His Majesty also stated his opinion that the i-Usahawan Programme should be extended to non-energy sectors, especially the public sector and the overall desired investment. Here, we can understand that resilience is the key to youth success, in addition to personal qualities and the attitude of not wanting to give up from competing – that is, to compete in achieving excellence in *duniawi* (worldly matters) and *ukhrawi* (matters of afterlife).

His Majesty then concluded the *titah* by congratulating the country's youth on their commitment in building and developing the nation.

The *Ikrar Belia* (Youth Pledge) was also recited at the ceremony, consisting of 50 youth members who have been involved in volunteerism and have attained achievements in various fields. The pledge was led by Awang Muhammad Yusof bin Haji Abdul Majid, Special Duties Officer at the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA); accompanied by Awang Haji

Abdul Mateen Bolkini bin Haji Ahmad and Dayang Nurhani Basirah binti Haji Chipli.

The ceremony also witnessed a performance by the B'Sharp choir group, which was established by 16 students from Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD).

The highlight of the event consisted of the National Youth Day 2020 and 2021 Award presentation, which was awarded by His Majesty. The awards comprised of four categories: Excellent Youth Award; Youth Service Award; Young Youth Leaders Award; and Excellent Project for Youth Award.

The Excellent Youth Awards were given to recipients who are successful in their respective fields – particularly those who made a name for the country. The awards were conferred to Awang Mohd. Adi Salihin bin Roslan from the Brunei Darussalam Wushu Federation (who was selected for the award in 2020); and Chong Chin Yee from Memori BN Enterprise / Startup Brunei (who received the award for the year 2021).

Meanwhile, the Youth Service Awards were presented to the youths who have made significant contributions in voluntary service to the nation or other parties. They were Awang Haji Abdul Mateen Bolkini bin Haji Ahmad from Tambang.BN / Belia Masjid Hassanal Bolkiah / Leadership and Strategic Planning, Guild of Graduates, UBD / Youth Advisory Group, National Youth Policy and Strategy (DBNS) / Young Professionals Network; and Awang Muhd. Syahmi bin Halimshah from the Brunei Scouts Association. Each of the recipients were bestowed the award for the year 2020 and 2021 respectively.

The Young Youth Leaders Awards were conferred to those who have excelled in coordinating their subordinates for good cause. The recipients under the category were Awang Haji Mohammad Loqman Al Hakim bin Haji Hamdan from Al-Huffaz Management, who received the award

for the year 2020; and Kwan Pei Yun (Joanna) from Sekolah Tinggi Perempuan Raja Isteri, who received the award for the year 2021.

The Excellent Project for Youth Awards – designated for projects that have significantly benefitted the youth – were given to Dayang Noorhafizah binti Haji Rashid from the Big BWN Project; and Dayang Siti Kailene binti Mohd. Jazlan Kashfi from the HIV Awareness Programme for Peers and Youth (HAPPY). They each received the awards for the year 2020 and 2021 respectively.

Those receiving the Excellent Youth Awards; the Youth Service Awards; and the Young Youth Leaders Awards were each bestowed a trophy; *kain tenunan* (traditional woven fabric); a certificate of appreciation; and cash prize amounting to \$3,000 for their project development and progress.

On the other hand, the Excellent Project for Youth Awards each came with a trophy; a certificate of appreciation; and an encouragement grant (C-Grant) for their project development and progress (amounting to \$3,500).

His Majesty and members of the royal family then toured the Youth Day Exhibition at the building's concourse area; where His Majesty launched an application for volunteers called 'Mengalinga'.

Afterwards, His Majesty consented to sign a commemorative parchment. Following the Luncheon, His Majesty also joined a group photo session with the Executive Committee for the 16<sup>th</sup> National Youth Day Celebration prior to leaving the ceremony.

This year's celebration still maintains the theme "*Belia Siaga Masa Depan*" (Future Ready Youth), which has been ongoing for the past three years since 2019. This is in line with His Majesty's aspiration

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## Resilience as key to youths' success (continued)



His Majesty touring the Youth Day Exhibition held at the International Convention Centre's concourse area.

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to see Bruneian youth who are ready to face future challenges (especially in the context of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution), and who are adapting to the new norm that allows several changes and opportunities; as well as to promote the National Youth Policy and Strategy (DBNS).

However, the exhibition for this year is scaled down – consistent with the previous concept, which focused on information, interaction and tech-savvy.

The exhibition showcases the success, achievements and impacts of the Bruneian youth; while also serving as

a platform for young entrepreneurs to provide opportunities for other youths to learn and gain knowledge.

It is centred on four main clusters: Digital Economy; Economic Development; Social Enterprise / Youth Movement; as well as Creative Industry and Media.



His Royal Highness the Crown Prince (left) ; and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik (right) at the exhibition.

## Take lessons from Hijrah, obey the orders of Allah

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 9** - The opportunity to celebrate the Islamic New Year is a very precious one – as it is with this opportunity that we are able to appreciate a new year full of *hikmah* (wisdom).

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassan al Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam stated the matter in a *titah* (royal speech) in conjunction with the 1443 Hijrah Islamic New Year at Istana Nurul Iman.

According to His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, we are not only advancing into the new year; but we are also gaining several lessons from it.

The new Hijrah refers to the history of our Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam's migration. This history is unparalleled and occurred with the command of Allah the Al-Mighty, to save the faith of the *ummah*.

Through the migration, various *iktibar* (lessons) can be pointed out – including how Allah granted His remarkable help to Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam; by sending weak creatures such as spiders, pigeons and trees to protect the prophet.

“This is indisputably the event's greatest lesson,” said His Majesty, “whereby Allah is capable of doing what He wills through His power – including forestalling the efforts and plans of the enemy to capture and murder Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam.”

“Is this not a clear evidence of Allah's supremacy?” His Majesty argued, “He did not send lions or elephants to destroy the enemy; but only spiders and pigeons – two creatures that are too frail to confuse the opponent and thwart their bad intentions.”

“This, is one of the event's big lessons that serve as a guidance from Allah – which contains great wonders or *hikmah*,” asserted His Majesty.

His Majesty added that among the wonders or *hikmah* of the migration is a reminder for us to not underestimate creatures that are seen as small and weak. With Allah by their side, they can be turned into powerful armies that can teach stronger creatures a lesson.

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## Take lessons from Hijrah, obey the orders of Allah (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) in conjunction the 1443 Hijrah Islamic New Year at the Istana Nurul Iman.

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His Majesty then brought up an example of another weak creature: the bacteria – and even smaller than that are viruses, which are capable of generating communicable diseases.

Referring back to the concept of *hikmah*, the Monarch further posed the questions: Is the human race not currently faced with the threat of a virus (where, up to the time of the *titah* the victims of the virus had surpassed four million lives)? Hence, where is the strength of a human being in comparison to the virus – a very small and frail creature?

“From here, we can also learn from the history of Namrud, the leader who consigned Prophet Ibrahim Alaihissalam into a blazing fire. This cruel and mighty leader was fated to meet his end in the hands of a mosquito sent by Allah,” explained His Majesty.

“Such is the case – if Allah so wills it, a weak creature can be capable of destroying or bringing chaos upon strong and mighty creatures. This is among the lessons that can be learnt from the history of Hijrah,” said His Majesty.

“When we truly delve into the wonders or *hikmah* of such lessons, we will be mindful that there is no power that can overcome the supremacy of Allah,” elaborated the Monarch.

His Majesty further stated that in life, realising and admitting the supremacy of Allah is very much required. By doing so, our servile nature towards Him will grow – compelling us to humble ourselves before Allah; unlike the ancient societies, who were so arrogant and refused to attest to the supremacy of Allah – leading to their eventual extinction, one by one.

“The positive outcome for one who is humble before Allah is that he will become a pious person, who is always obedient to the commands and dictates of Allah,” His Majesty highlighted.

This, stressed the Monarch, is what we want for Brunei Darussalam. If this happens, *insyaaAllah* (if Allah wills), the people and the country will be safe and prosperous – as promised by Allah in Surah Al-A'raf, verse 96.

At the end of the *titah*, His Majesty conveyed his and the royal family's sincere greetings for the 1443 Hijrah Islamic New Year to all citizens and residents of the country.

the ASEAN Community in achieving peace, continued stability and prosperity for the people of the region.

Yang Berhormat further added that this year's assembly also welcomed two new AIPA observers: the Parliament of Ukraine; and the National Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Yang Berhormat also expressed his gratitude to the members of AIPA Parliaments, observers and partners present during the general assembly. The closing ceremony ended with the Transfer of Office; where Cambodia will be the next country to host the assembly.



The closing ceremony ended with the Transfer of Office; where Cambodia will be the next country to host the assembly.

## AIPA fosters ASEAN friendship and unity

**BERAKAS, August 25** - The virtual 42<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) continued with the Third Plenary Session held in the afternoon at the International Convention Centre, Berakas.

The session was chaired by Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Lela Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdul Rahman bin Dato Setia Haji Mohamed Taib, Speaker of the State Legislative Council (LegCo) as the President of the 42<sup>nd</sup> AIPA.

The three-day conference saw the approval of 25 resolutions and the issuance of a joint communique signed by the Heads of Delegation of AIPA Members.

A closing ceremony was also held on the same day to mark the event's completion. At the ceremony, Yang Berhormat President of the 42<sup>nd</sup> AIPA presented a speech stating that the assembly concluded successfully with productive and conducive discussions, held in the spirit of friendship, unity and cooperation with ASEAN countries.

The issues discussed outlined parliamentary cooperation and demonstrated the commitment of members of AIPA Parliaments to develop



Yang Berhormat Speaker of the State Legislative Council (LegCo) as President of the 42<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) chairing the event.

## Sufficient food through digitalisation, innovation, and productivity

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 19** - Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Ali bin Apong, Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism virtually attended the 6<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Ministerial Meeting on Food Security, which was chaired by The Honourable Damien O'Connor, New Zealand's Minister of Agriculture.

During the meeting, APEC Ministers responsible for food security acknowledged the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the well-being and safety of all people in the APEC region, especially in terms of food security and supply chains. The Ministers also supported APEC's emphasis on the response towards immediate global health crisis and the unprecedented economic shock.

The meeting further endorsed 'The Food Security Roadmap Towards 2030' – which focuses on digitalisation and innovation, productivity, inclusivity and sustainability. The Roadmap identifies actions and targets to achieve sufficient, safe, nutritious, accessible and affordable food for all; and promotes the inclusion of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), women, youth, indigenous communities, as well as the sector's elderly.

The meeting also stated that the Roadmap is coherent with and will contribute to achieving the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040.

The APEC Ministers welcomed and



Yang Berhormat Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism during the 6<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Ministerial Meeting on Food Security, chaired by The Honourable Damien O'Connor, New Zealand's Minister of Agriculture.

encouraged the involvement of the private sector in implementing the Roadmap; while reiterating the importance of continued engagement with other relevant international and regional organisations.

The APEC ministers further welcomed the forthcoming United Nations (UN) Food Systems Summit and its efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They expressed their appreciation for the ASEAN Business Advisory Council's (ABAC) ongoing role as Vice-Chair of the Policy Partnership for Food Security (PPFS); as well as encouraged the continued high-level dialogues between the public and private

sector. The member countries also took note of the meetings of the Policy Partnership on Food Security; the Agricultural Technical Cooperation Working Group; the High-Level Policy Dialogue on Agricultural Biotechnology; and the Ocean Fisheries Working Group.

Also present at the dialogue were Permanent Secretary, Deputy Permanent Secretary, and senior officials of the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT); the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food; and Department of Fisheries.

## COVID-19: Over 2,000 cases recorded in August



**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 31** - This month saw the outbreak of the second wave of COVID-19 in Brunei Darussalam, which started on August 7 – and bringing the total number of new cases recorded in August 2021 to 2,374.

From the figure, 2,340 were local infection cases; whereas the other 34 were imported cases. This brings the total number of COVID-19 infections in the country as of date to 2,712 cases.

On the other hand, this month also recorded a total number of 683 newly recovered cases; alongside nine other deceased cases.

A total of 3,386 samples have been tested for the SARS-CoV-2 virus which brings the total number of laboratory tests conducted since January 2020 to 232,227 tests.

The cases were announced by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Md. Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health, during the daily press conference sessions on the current situation of COVID-19 infections in Brunei Darussalam.

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

## Vaccine donations arrive from Singapore

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 20** - A total of 100,000 doses of the COVID-19 Moderna vaccine donated to Brunei Darussalam safely arrived from Singapore via flight BI424 on August 19.

Present to receive the donations at the Brunei International Air Cargo Centre (BIACC) were Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Md. Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health; and His Excellency Heng Aik Yeow, High Commissioner of the Republic of Singapore to Brunei Darussalam.

Also present were Awang Maswadi bin Haji Mohsin, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Health (MoH); Raymond Chow, Deputy High Commissioner of the Republic of Singapore to Brunei Darussalam; Dr. Haji Zulaidi bin Haji Abd. Latif, Deputy Permanent Secretary at MoH; Dayang Hajah Zanatul Aini binti Haji Zainin, Acting Director of Pharmaceutical Services; as well as senior officials from MoH and the High Commission of the Republic of Singapore.



Yang Berhormat Minister of Health receiving the vaccine donations from His Excellency High Commissioner of the Republic of Singapore to Brunei Darussalam.

## AirLab increases capacity for COVID-19 testing



Yang Berhormat Minister of Health; and Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and Second Minister of Finance and Economy during the visit to the Brunei COVID-19 AirLab.



**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 26** - The establishment of another virology laboratory known as the Brunei COVID-19 AirLab is hoped to increase the country's capacity for SARS-CoV-2 testing.

With the lab fully operational since August 19, alongside the additional virology laboratory in Jalan Sumbiling; both labs should have the capacity to conduct around 8,000 to 10,000 swab tests within a time span of 24 hours.

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Haji Mohd. Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health; and Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Haji Mohd Amin Liew bin Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and Second Minister of Finance and Economy recently made a visit to the Brunei COVID-19 AirLab.

The mobile laboratory – which is a collaboration between the Government of Brunei Darussalam and Beijing Genomics Institute (BGI) – is of Biosafety Level 2. The lab is currently located at BRIDEX, Jerudong; and is capable of carrying out up to 5,000 tests in a day.

Yang Berhormat Ministers in a group photo with the staff members of the laboratory.

## Financial literacy plays crucial role in inclusivity

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 30** - The ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ABAC) organised the ASEAN Business and Investment Roundtable 2021 on Fintech and Financial Literacy. Three hundred participants across Southeast Asia attended the virtual event, consisting of figures and

experts from the public and private sectors.

The roundtable included discussions on issues brought forward by Brunei Darussalam in ensuring ASEAN's economic recovery and inclusive continuous development.

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 delivered a keynote address at the event.

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## Financial literacy plays crucial role in inclusivity (continued)



Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and Second Minister of Finance and Economy during the virtual ASEAN Business and Investment Roundtable 2021 on Fintech and Financial Literacy.

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In his address, the Minister stated that as this year's Chair of ASEAN, Brunei Darussalam has outlined 13 priority economic deliverables – which are driven by the strategic thrusts: "Recovery, Digitalisation and Sustainability".

According to the Minister, the roundtable reflects both the strategic thrusts and a number of Brunei Darussalam's priority economic deliverables – which will contribute towards e-Commerce; Cyber Security; the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (that focuses on financial services liberalisation); and particularly, financial literacy (in which a summit has been planned for the end of this year in conjunction with ASEAN Savings Day 2021).

The Minister also mentioned the Bain and Company's 'e-Economy Southeast Asia' report, which noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has created big shifts across Southeast Asia – where the total number of internet users in the region to has increased to 400 million.

On the other hand, the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia has

pointed out that ASEAN consumers are leading globally in terms of e-wallets and digital payment adoption. This offers great opportunities but also challenges, as the rapid rate of technological change will affect everyone.

In this regard, the Minister emphasised that financial literacy plays a crucial role in inclusivity; and that digital financial literacy has become essential in ensuring that everyone can benefit from the advancements in Fintech.

The Minister further assured that ASEAN leaders will continue to discuss the steps that can be taken for the region to remain vibrant as they draw closer to the Summit in October.

Participating at the event were Yang Mulia Dato Seri Paduka Awang Haji Ahmaddin bin Haji Abd. Rahman, Deputy Minister of Finance and Economy (Fiscal) as Chairman of the Brunei Darussalam Central Bank (BDCB); His Excellency Nguyen Kim Ahn, Deputy Governor of the State Bank of Viet Nam (SBV); and Yang Berhormat Fdr. Ar. Dayang Siti Rozaimeryanty binti Dato Seri Laila Jasa Awang Haji Abdul Rahman, Member of the State Legislative Council (LegCo) as the Chair of ABAC.

Earlier in the event, Dayang Haslina binti Taib, Chair of the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit 2021 presented her welcoming speech.

Mubashar Khokhar, Managing Director of Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam (BIBD) also delivered his special remarks at the event; where he touched on the nature of Islamic Finance and the role that BIBD plays in promoting inclusivity and sustainability through Fintech and financial literacy.

With digital platforms emerging as the catalyst for sustainable transformations, the Managing Director added that BIBD's digital banking ecosystem gives a platform for Fintech innovation, while also promoting



Mubashar Khokhar, Managing Director of Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam (BIBD) delivering his special remarks at the event.

greater financial literacy.

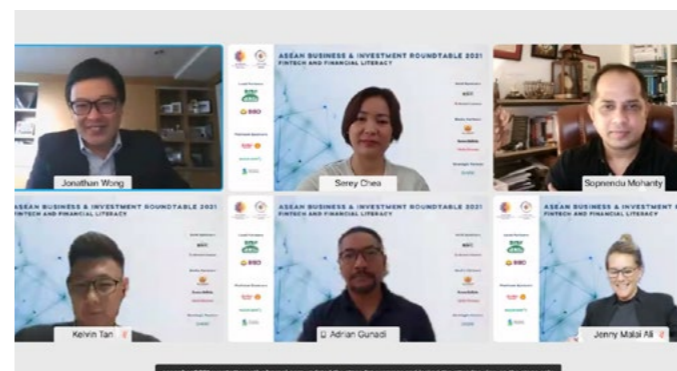
The bank has launched the Go Cashless Go Digital Campaign to encourage cashless and digital payments to stay safe during the pandemic; while providing a virtual marketplace to empower and develop micro-enterprises with digital skills through its latest corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative: Community for Brunei.

The roundtable also featured two panel discussions: focusing on "Fintech for an Inclusive and Sustainable ASEAN"; and "The Role of Financial Literacy in ASEAN's Economic Prosperity".

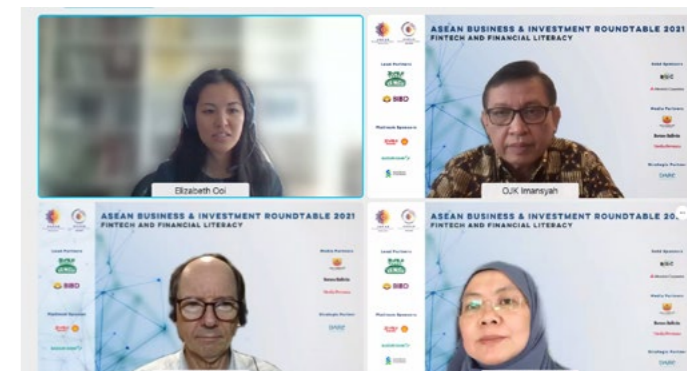
In the latter, Dayang Hajah Noraini binti Haji Sulaiman, the First Deputy Managing Director of BIBD as a member of the panel stated that financial literacy and the importance of savings are emphasised across all levels of society in Brunei Darussalam.

At the national level, various initiatives have been carried out – including the introduction of the Credit Bureau (which determines the borrower's credit worthiness); and the introduction of the total debt service ratio (TDSR) in 2017.

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Participants across Southeast Asia attending the event, consisting of figures and experts from the public and private sectors.



Dayang Hajah Noraini binti Haji Sulaiman, the First Deputy Managing Director of BIBD (bottom, right) attending the event as a member of the discussion panel on 'The Role of Financial Literacy in ASEAN's Economic Prosperity'.



## Financial literacy plays crucial role in inclusivity (continued)

From page 15

Brunei has also established the Centre for Islamic Banking, Finance and Management (CIBFM) – now known as the Brunei Institute of Leadership and Islamic Finance (BILIF) – in 2010, to provide an avenue for continuous learning among professionals and the public.

More importantly, the nation has made Islamic financial literacy as part of its national policy; which is included in the Brunei Darussalam Financial Sector Development Plan 2016-2025.

The First Deputy Managing Director also shared that there is active involvement by

both Islamic and conventional financial institutions in promoting financial literacy among all levels of society in the country.

BIBD is the Co-Lead Partner for the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit, which will be held later in the year.

## ASEAN welcomes the United Kingdom as 11<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Dialogue Partner

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 5** - ASEAN hopes to promote cooperation with the United Kingdom (UK) to achieve common aspirations in peace, security, stability and prosperity in the region.

The UK has long established engagement and cooperation with ASEAN Member States for decades and expressed its commitment to further strengthen such cooperation.

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Erywan bin Pehin Datu Pekerma Jaya Haji Mohd. Yusof, Second Minister of Foreign Affairs explained the matter while chairing the Conferment Session of ASEAN Dialogue Partnership Status to the United Kingdom held via video conference at the International Convention Centre, Berakas.

In his speech, the Second Minister of

Foreign Affairs also welcomed the UK as the 11<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Dialogue Partner.

According to the Minister, ASEAN believes that the UK will contribute towards the development of the ASEAN community and as a dialogue partner. There is a great potential for the UK to transform this strong commitment into tangible cooperation with ASEAN as a whole in political security; economic and socio-cultural communities; as well as in exploring new areas and opportunities.

The Minister elaborated that economic cooperation between ASEAN and the UK is very encouraging: covering various sectors, including education; energy; infrastructure and technology; finance; as well as banking and professional services. Although bilateral trade and investment continue to increase, efforts still need to be continued to



Yang Berhormat Second Minister of Foreign Affairs chairing the Conferment Session of ASEAN Dialogue Partnership Status to the United Kingdom.

attain even higher levels of achievement.

Meanwhile, Dominic Raab, the UK's Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs said that the UK is committed to deepening ties with Southeast Asia – which includes working together for sustainable post-pandemic economic recovery, trade, climate and regional security issues.

The session also saw the signing of a letter of agreement for the Conferment of ASEAN Dialogue Partnership Status to the United Kingdom by His Excellency Dato Paduka Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of ASEAN.

The Conferment Session of ASEAN Dialogue Partnership Status to the United Kingdom held via video conference at the International Convention Centre, Berakas.



## Address challenges, promote ASEAN recovery

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 7** - The 54<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM), which commenced on August 2 via video conference, ended this afternoon with a press conference held at the Sejati Room of the International Convention Centre, Berakas.

The meeting themed "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper" was chaired by Brunei Darussalam.

At the conference, Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Erywan bin Pehin Datu Pekerma Jaya Haji Mohd.

Yusof, Second Minister of Foreign Affairs presented a statement; where he touched on ASEAN's agreement towards the ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

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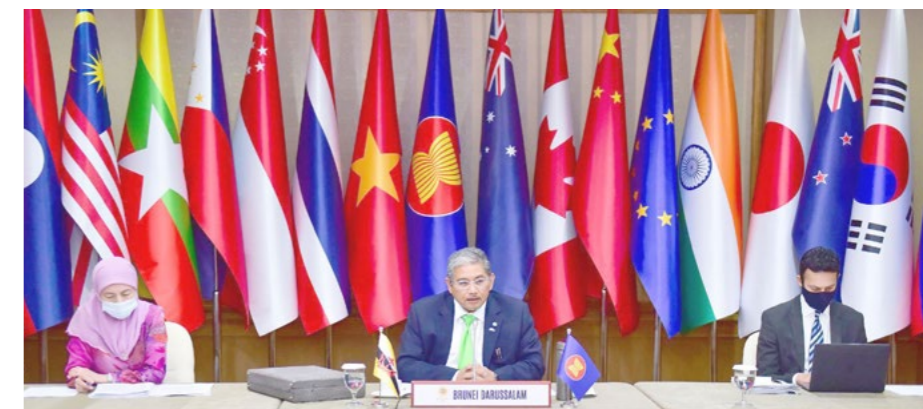
## Addressing challenges, promoting ASEAN recovery (continued)

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The Second Minister of Foreign Affairs explained that the meeting reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen the ASEAN community; as well as ASEAN unity and centrality in handling challenges while developing the region's comprehensive recovery from COVID-19.

The meeting identified the importance of promoting ASEAN identity and awareness in fulfilling the desire to live in a peaceful region, with long-lasting stability, sustainable economic growth, communal prosperity and social progress.

The Minister also brought up the situation in the Middle East, and expressed concern on the region's latest developments; as well as the current situation in Myanmar.

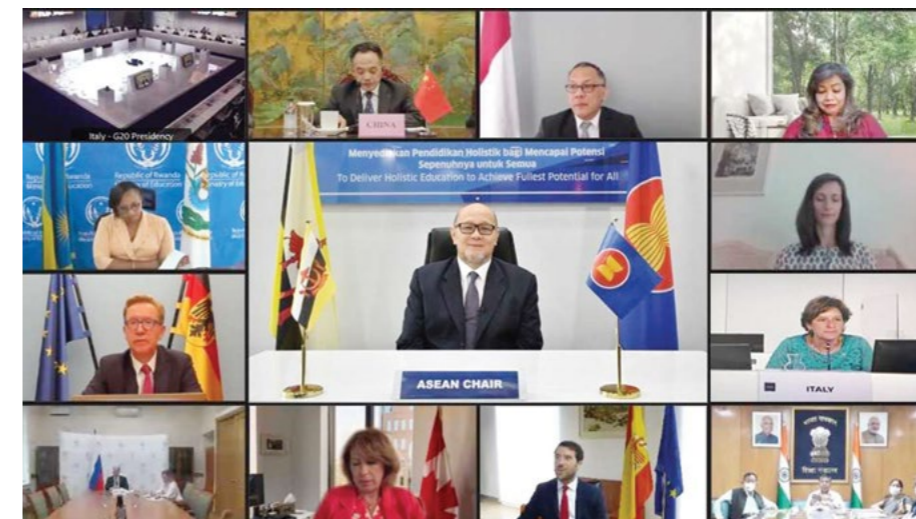


Yang Berhormat Second Minister of Foreign Affairs at the press conference held at the Sejati Room, International Convention Centre.

The 55<sup>th</sup> AMM; the 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Foreign Ministers' Meeting; the 12<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit (EAS) Foreign

Ministers' Meeting; and the 29<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) will be scheduled to convene in Cambodia in 2022.

## Enhancing ASEAN's higher education



Yang Berhormat Minister of Education attending the virtual G20 Research Ministers' Meeting.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 6** - Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Hamzah bin Haji Sulaiman, Minister of Education attended the virtual G20 Research Ministers' Meeting.

The G20 is an international forum that has been bringing together the world's major economies since 1999.

Brunei Darussalam as Chair of ASEAN for 2021, was invited as a special guest of the Republic of Italy as the G20 President for 2021.

This year's meeting was attended by

Ministers, Deputy Ministers, as well as representatives in research and higher education of the G20 members: including Australia; Canada; Germany; Japan; the Russian Federation; the Republic of South Korea; the United Kingdom (UK); and the United States (US).

Also present were the Republic of Singapore, Spain and the Netherlands as special guests to the G20 meetings.

Regional and international organisations, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO); the Organisation for

Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); and the African Union (AU) also attended the meeting.

The Minister of Education shared at the G20 Research Ministers' Meeting several initiatives implemented by ASEAN and the Ministry of Education (MoE) of Brunei Darussalam in the field of research and higher education.

This includes ASEAN's focus on strengthening the role of ASEAN higher education institutions through the provision of flexible, innovative, multi-disciplinary, cross-border, educational and research collaborations.

In addition, ASEAN also emphasises the promotion of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in its efforts towards digital transformation.

The Minister also mentioned MoE's initiatives in equipping graduates for the digital future, in line with the country's Digital Economy Master Plan.

Learning programmes are designed to focus on new technologies, especially in the fields of Artificial Intelligence, robotics, analytic data and science data in Brunei Darussalam's higher education institutions.

The meeting was concluded with the adoption of the Declaration of the G20 Research Ministers' Meeting.

## Women's roles highlighted in G20 conference

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 26** - Yang Berhormat Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Aminuddin Ihsan

bin Pehin Orang Kaya Saiful Mulok Dato Seri Paduka Haji Abidin, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports as the Chair

of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community

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## Women's roles highlighted in G20 conference (continued)



Yang Berhormat Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports as the Chair of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Pillar 2021 attending the G20 Ministerial Conference on Women's Empowerment.

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Pillar 2021 attended the G20 Ministerial Conference on Women's Empowerment as an invited guest of the Republic of Italy: the country holding the G20 presidency this year.

The meeting, which was held in a hybrid format (physical and virtual), was chaired by Elena Bonetti, the Republic of Italy's Minister for Equal Opportunities and Family. The event was attended by Ministers responsible for women affairs from G20 members and guest countries; high-level representatives and delegations from institutions; international organisations; as well as G20 engagement groups and social partners.

The Ministerial Conference on Women's Empowerment was the first of its kind to be organised in the G20 System. It is intended to highlight the quality of women's roles in society; the implementation of policies aimed at increasing women's participation in public and private spheres; and the protection of their rights as well as their protection from gender-based violence.

The conference not only serves as a platform to promote synergetic actions and shared commitments by systematising and organising the many references

to gender equality and women's empowerment that emerge from the G20; but it also ensures policy coherence and coordination across a wide spectrum of institutions and partners.

The two thematic areas discussed were Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), financial and digital literacy, environment and sustainability; and labour and economic empowerment and work-life balance.

During the conference, the Minister highlighted ASEAN's 2021 theme: "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper"; and emphasised ASEAN's mission towards gender equality, as well as women and girls' empowerment.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, ASEAN continues to ensure that the rights and opportunities of all women and girls – especially the most vulnerable – are protected.

The Minister also shared ASEAN's commitment to the ASEAN Declaration on Gender Responsive Implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); as well as the ASEAN Action Agenda on Women's Economic Empowerment.

The Minister then touched on several of

ASEAN's initiatives, including the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework and its Implementation Plan, which acknowledges that women and girls are among those who have been hit hardest by the pandemic.

In this regard, ASEAN's recovery efforts and decisions are also complemented by the ASEAN Gender Outlook 2020 report; as well as the ASEAN Regional Study on Women, Peace and Security. ASEAN remains steadfast in generating gender data and statistics to overcome inequalities and barriers to women's empowerment.

Meanwhile, ASEAN also continues to enhance its social protection in ensuring that no one is left behind. As the Chair of ASEAN 2021, Brunei Darussalam is championing the development of the ASEAN Comprehensive Framework on Care Economy, to address current and future needs arising from demographic change, inequalities, and sustainable development challenges.

This is hoped to drive the progress on women's empowerment; by addressing the gender gap in care work, which bars most women and girls from developing their fullest potentials and abilities.

As a way forward, ASEAN is working to develop the ASEAN Master Plan on Women's Development. This will fuse various initiatives related to women's development to foster synergy and cooperation; thus ensuring a more cohesive and comprehensive framework in promoting overall equality and empowerment of women and girls in the region

Also present were Hajah Nor Ashikin binti Haji Johari, Permanent Secretary (Community and Culture) at the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS); and senior officials from MCYS.

## Enhancing youth leadership and self-development

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 28** - The six-day of the 11<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Youth Forum took place on August 8, 14, 21, 25, 26 and 27 via video conference.

The event was organised by the Brunei Youth Council in collaboration with the ASEAN Youth Advocates Network (AYAN); with the support of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) and the ASEAN Secretariat. It was also supported by the ASEAN Youth Forum, an Indonesian non-government organisation (NGO), as media partner.

The programme was aimed at enhancing youth leadership and self-development; as well as promoting cross-sectoral collaboration among the 10 ASEAN Member States.

Aside from a forum, the event also consisted of a workshop held online; with over 200 participants, including observers.

With its theme "Future Ready in the New Normal", the forum also served to formulate ideas and recommendations on how to elevate the role of ASEAN youth

in realising sustainable development; to ensure ASEAN youth preparedness in facing future challenges and opportunities during 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution (4IR) and the post-pandemic new normal; as well as to promote substantive dialogues with leaders and organisations.

Among those who attended the event was Yang Berhormat Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Aminuddin Ihsan bin Pehin Orang Kaya Saiful Mulok Dato Seri

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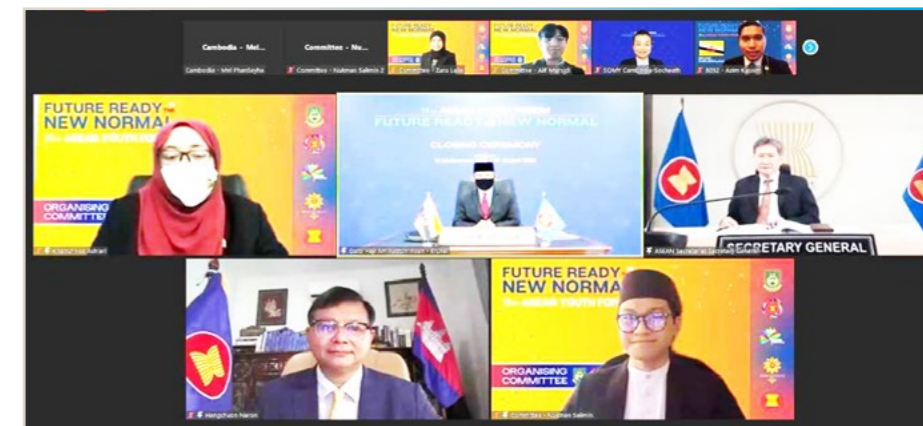
## Enhancing youth leadership and self-development (continued)

From page 18

Paduka Haji Abidin, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports as the country's ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth (AMMY) Leader and Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN Chair 2021; along with His Excellency Dr. Hang Chuon Naron, Cambodia's Minister of Education, Youth and Sports as the Chair of ASEAN 2022; His Excellency Dato Lim Jock Hoi, ASEAN Secretary-General; and Malaysia's ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Youth (SOMY) Leader, who was represented by the Under Secretary of the International Relations Division, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Malaysia.

Also present as observers were ASEAN High Commissioners and Ambassadors to Brunei Darussalam.

During the event's youth session with AMMY and ASEAN Secretary-General, the participants were given the opportunity to ask questions on the best practices in each country and in the



Yang Berhormat Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports and Yang Berhormat Member of the State Legislative Council (LegCo) participating in the virtual 11<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Youth Forum themed "Future Ready in the New Normal".

context of ASEAN in various fields such as access to education, employment opportunities, entrepreneurship, and youth development in the era of digitalisation.

The event also included the ASEAN Youth Statement and the launching of the ASEAN Zine.

Also present were Yang Berhormat Dayang Khairunnisa binti Awang Haji Ash'ari, Member of the State Legislative Council (LegCo) as President of the Brunei Youth Council; and Pengiran Mohammad Amirrizal bin Pengiran Haji Mahmud, Permanent Secretary (Administration, Finance and Estate) at MCYS.

## ASEAN Senior Economic Officials discuss economic field's way forward



The Permanent Secretary (Economy) at MoFE; ASEAN Senior Economic Officials from 10 ASEAN Member States; the Deputy Secretary-General for ASEAN Economic Community; and senior officials from the ASEAN Secretariat attending the Third Meeting of the ASEAN Senior Economic Officials for the 52<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Economic Ministers' Meeting (SEOM 3/52) via video conference.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 2** - The Third Meeting of the ASEAN Senior Economic Officials for the 52<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting (SEOM 3/52) officially commenced via video conference. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Hajah May Fa'ezah binti Haji Ahmad Ariffin, Permanent Secretary (Economy) at the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE).

ASEAN Senior Economic Officials from the 10 ASEAN Member States; the Deputy Secretary-General for ASEAN Economic Community; and senior officials

from the ASEAN Secretariat attended the meeting.

The three-day meeting, which concludes on August 4, is a follow-up to the outcomes of the SEOM 2/52; and is a preparation for the 53<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Economic Ministers' (AEM) Meeting and its related meetings in September.

The meeting welcomed the steady progress of the Priority Economic Deliverables (PEDs) under Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN Chairmanship this year.

The meeting also took note of the latest developments on the implementation of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF); exchanged views on implementing the finding and recommendations in the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025; as well as discussed the reports of Sectoral Bodies ASEAN Senior Economic Officers under the SEOM's purview.

The meeting further finalised the expanded list of essential goods under the "Memorandum of Understanding on the Implementation of Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) on Essential Goods under the Hanoi Plan of Action on Strengthening ASEAN Economic Cooperation and Supply Chain Connectivity in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic".

The list includes food and agricultural products, which will be submitted for the Ministers' endorsement at the 53<sup>rd</sup> AEM Meeting.

The meeting also exchanged views on enhancing ASEAN's economic relations with its dialogue partners: including preparations for the consultations with ASEAN's Dialogue Partners. The SEOM with dialogue partners will be held via video conference on August 5, 11 and 16.

## Six receive Fulbright Programme Scholarships

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 6** - Six Fulbright scholars were announced in the Fulbright Programme's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.

Nazirul Rusydi Roslan and Samuel Shie Song Fa were awarded the 2021 Fulbright Foreign Student Programme Scholarships; while the 2021 Fulbright United States (US) – ASEAN Visiting Scholarship was awarded to Norhayatunajibah Kifli.

Meanwhile, three 2020 awardees who were unable to travel to US due to the COVID-19 pandemic were also formally announced. Dayang Tiwin Aji was awarded the Fulbright Foreign Student Programme Scholarship; whereas Dr. Helena Hurairah and Dr. Roslyna Rosli were the recipients of the 2020 Fulbright US – ASEAN Visiting Programme.

The announcement was made by Emily Fleckner, Charge' d'Affaires of the US Embassy in Brunei Darussalam, at the US Chief of Mission residence in Kampung Katok.

To date, 29 Bruneians have received the Fulbright Scholarships – including Yang Dimuliakan Pehin Orang Kaya Indera Pahlawan Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Suyoi bin Haji Osman, who was the first to receive the scholarship in 1985; and Yang Dimuliakan Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Utama Dato Seri Setia Haji Yahya bin Begawan Mudim Dato Paduka Haji Bakar, who was awarded the scholarship in 1986.

Upon graduation, Fulbrighters are expected to continue building mutual understanding between the US and Brunei Darussalam through their professional activities.

Charge' d'Affaires of the United States (US) Embassy in Brunei Darussalam and the country's first Fulbright Programme recipient cutting a cake in conjunction with the Fulbright Programme's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.



Charge' d'Affaires of the US Embassy in Brunei Darussalam in a group photo with current and former Fulbright Scholarship recipients.

## Ambassador makes visit to 4<sup>th</sup> PMCA recipient



Her Excellency Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Thailand to Brunei Darussalam with the recipient of the 4<sup>th</sup> Princess Maha Chakri Award (PMCA) on behalf of PMCA.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 3** - Pengiran Haji Mohd. Wahab bin Pengiran Haji Abdullah, Senior Assistant Technical Instructor at the School of Hospitality and Tourism, Institute of Brunei Technical Education (IBTE) Sultan Saiful Rijal Campus has been selected to receive the 4<sup>th</sup> Princess Maha

Chakri Award (PMCA) 2021.

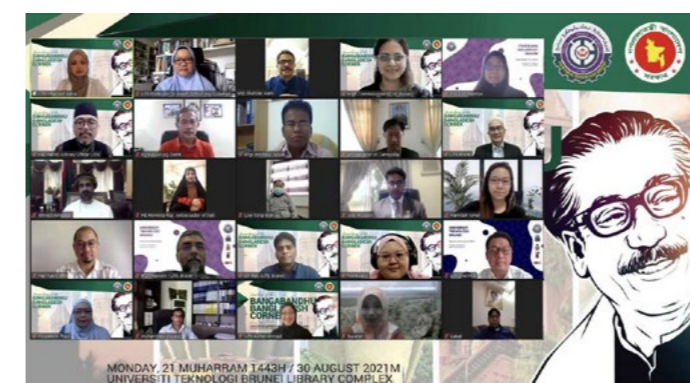
On behalf of PMCA, Her Excellency Wanthanee Viputwongsakul, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Thailand to Brunei Darussalam, made an official visit to the award recipient at the School of Hospitality and Tourism, IBTE Sultan Saiful Rijal Campus, Berakas.

During the visit, Her Excellency presented a speech, where she congratulated Pengiran Haji Mohd. Wahab for achieving the award; and expressed appreciation to the Ministry of Education (MoE) for their assistance and support in the nomination.

The PMCA is a biennial award given to educators for their outstanding contributions and achievements in education. Usually, the award recipient would be given the opportunity to meet Her Royal Highness Princess Sirindhorn in Thailand to receive the award in person. However, due to the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, the award ceremony will be held virtually on October 29.

The purpose of the visit was to learn more about the 4<sup>th</sup> PMCA recipient, Pengiran Haji Mohd. Wahab as an educator; his curriculums; as well as his other duties in helping his students prepare for their careers in the hospitality and tourism sector.

## Book corner promotes Bangladeshi culture



The virtual Bangabandhu-Bangladesh Corner Launching Ceremony hosted by Universiti Teknologi Brunei (UTB).

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 30** - As part of the long-standing academic relationship between the High Commission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to Brunei Darussalam and Universiti Teknologi Brunei (UTB); the university hosted the virtual Bangabandhu-Bangladesh Corner Launching Ceremony at the UTB Library.

Present as Guest of Honour was His Excellency Shahriar Alam, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

At the ceremony, Her Excellency Nahida Rahman Shumona, Bangladesh High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam also presented contributions in the form of a book collection to Profesor Dr. Dayang Hajah Zohrah binti Haji Sulaiman, Vice-Chancellor of UTB.

The ceremony began with a welcoming speech from the university's Vice-Chancellor; followed by speeches from Her Excellency Bangladesh High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam, and His Excellency Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Bangladesh.

The event then proceeded with the launching of the Bangabandhu-Bangladesh Corner. The corner consists of a collection of 23 books aimed at promoting deeper understanding of the Bangladeshi culture.

The word 'Bangabandhu' in Bangladesh refers to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who was known as the Father of the Nation.

Also present at the ceremony were the Dean of Diplomatic Corps; Ambassadors of Foreign Delegations; officers and staff members of UTB; as well as the staff from the High Commission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

## His Majesty's beautiful moments with citizens on display

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, AUGUST 1** - In conjunction with the 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration 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, the Department of Information, Prime Minister's Office (PMO) is organising a photography exhibition entitled "Raja Di Hati Rakyat."

The exhibition – which is targeted for staff members of Government Departments; those interested in photography; students; associations; and the public – aims to convey historical moments of love through selected photographs in conjunction with the celebration.

The exhibition also aims to highlight His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam as a Monarch who is loving, compassionate and caring towards his people; to enliven His Majesty's 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration; to share information – in line with the main role of the Department of Information – through visual platform; and to gather a collection of the best photographs that demonstrate the close relationship between His Majesty and the people, which were taken by the photographers of the Department of Information and the Association of Photographers Brunei Darussalam.



The photography exhibition entitled "Raja Di Hati Rakyat" held at the Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Complex.

The exhibition will be held in Brunei-Muara District from August 1 to 3 at the Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Complex; and in Belait District from August 5 to 7 at the KB Sentral Shopping Centre. The exhibition is open from 11.00 am to 9.00 pm.

## UNISSA signs MoU with IBFIM

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 18** - The Faculty of Islamic Economics and Finance (FEKIm), Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA) recorded a new milestone after signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Islamic Banking and Finance Institute Malaysia (IBFIM) in a virtual ceremony.

The signing ceremony was witnessed by His Excellency Dato' Raja Reza bin Raja

Zaib Shah, Malaysian High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam; and Dr. Awang Haji Norarfan bin Haji Zainal, Rector of UNISSA,

Also present at the ceremony was Dr. Arman bin Haji Asmad, Acting Deputy Rector of UNISSA; Dr. Abdul Nasir bin Haji Abdul Rani, Dean of FEKIm, UNISSA; Yusry bin Yusoff, IBFIM Chief Executive Officer (CEO); lecturers from FEKIm,

UNISSA; as well as IBFIM senior officials and Board of Directors.

In his welcoming speech, Dr. Abdul Nasir explained that the MoU signing – which is valid for three years – was targeted to strengthen the relations between the two institutions, by enhancing the students' potential in Islamic finance;

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## UNISSA signs MoU with IBFIM (continued)

From page 21

while promoting cooperation in education and training under the Associate Qualification in Islamic Finance (AQIF) offered by IBFIM as a mutually beneficial, reciprocal arrangement by both parties.

The ties between UNISSA and IBFIM started with a programme mapping between the Bachelor of Science programme in Islamic Finance under FEKIm, UNISSA; and AQIF under IBFIM in 2017. A total of nine FEKIm undergraduates received their AQIF certificates at last year's UNISSA convocation; while another 10 is expected to receive theirs this year.

The AQIF certification is an excellent academic achievement and recognition from an international professional training institute. It also serves as a benchmark for the quality of banking and Islamic finance course curriculums, which places UNISSA on par with renowned higher institutions in Malaysia.

This year, IBFIM has conducted a competency assessment process for UNISSA's academic workforce to be accredited

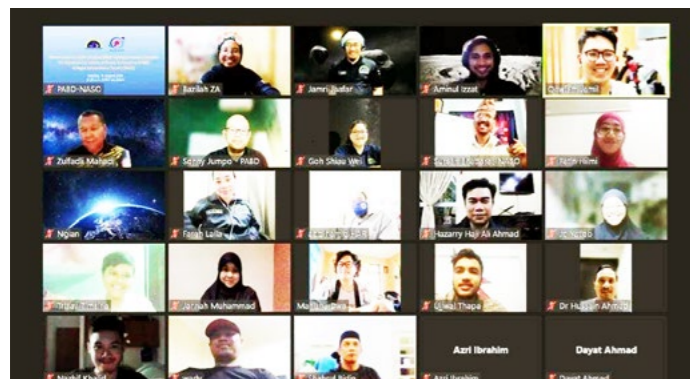


The virtual Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Signing Ceremony between the Faculty of Islamic Economics and Finance (FEKIm), Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA) and the Islamic Banking and Finance Institute Malaysia (IBFIM).

as AQIF trainees in Brunei Darussalam; where three of FEKIm's staff members have been approved as AQIF trainees.

Signing on behalf of FEKIm, UNISSA was Dr. Abdul Nasir, whereas signing on behalf of IBFIM was Yusry bin Yusoff.

## MoU between PABD and NASO in astronomical development



The virtual Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Signing Ceremony, attended by executive members of the Astronomical Society of Brunei Darussalam (PABD); and the Nepal Astronomical Society (NASO).



astronomical development.

In addition, PABD and NASO will support the development of astronomy in Brunei Darussalam and Nepal, as well as other areas of common interest.

The joint activities carried out under the MoU are hoped to result in strong scientific communities in both nations; new scientific results and discoveries; capacity building through increased scientific interaction and training; as well as an increase in joint projects.

The virtual MoU Signing Ceremony was also attended by executive members from both organisations.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 16** - Awang Haji Mahadi bin Haji Mohd. Tahir, President of the Astronomical Society of Brunei Darussalam (PABD); and Suresh Bhattarai, Chairman of the Nepal Astronomical Society (NASO) approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two organisations.

With the signing, both organisations have agreed on a 15-year partnership to publicise and implement data-driven citizen science projects.

Both parties also agreed to establish coordinated communication networks between the two countries; and facilitate fundraising activities to support the implementation of projects, especially in

## BIBD maintains A-rating

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 31** - Leading international credit rating agency, S&P Global, affirmed its A-rating with stable outlook on Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam (BIBD). The A-rating, which BIBD has maintained since 2015, puts the bank on par with other leading banks – especially in the Asia-Pacific region.

According to S&P Global, the rating reflects BIBD's established track record and robust capitalisation; while also

acknowledging BIBD's prudent capital management. The report also took note of Brunei Darussalam's solid external and fiscal balance sheet positions over the years; and expected economic growth to accelerate within the coming year, with the support of stronger energy prices and recovering external demand.

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 Chairman of BIBD expressed his gratitude for the prestigious affirmation.

According to the Minister, Brunei Darussalam was able to maintain a relatively strong and stable fiscal position; and BIBD benefited from this, as reflected in S&P's rating. The bank's encouraging performance over the past year has also enabled BIBD to serve their shareholders, customers, as well as the nation at large.

## May 2021 shows 42.1 per cent total trade increase

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 17** - In May 2021, Brunei Darussalam recorded a total trade of \$1,850.9 million – an increase by 42.1 per cent from \$1,302.8 million in the same month last year.

As for month-to-month changes, the total trade for May 2021 decreased by 15.6 per cent compared to April 2021.

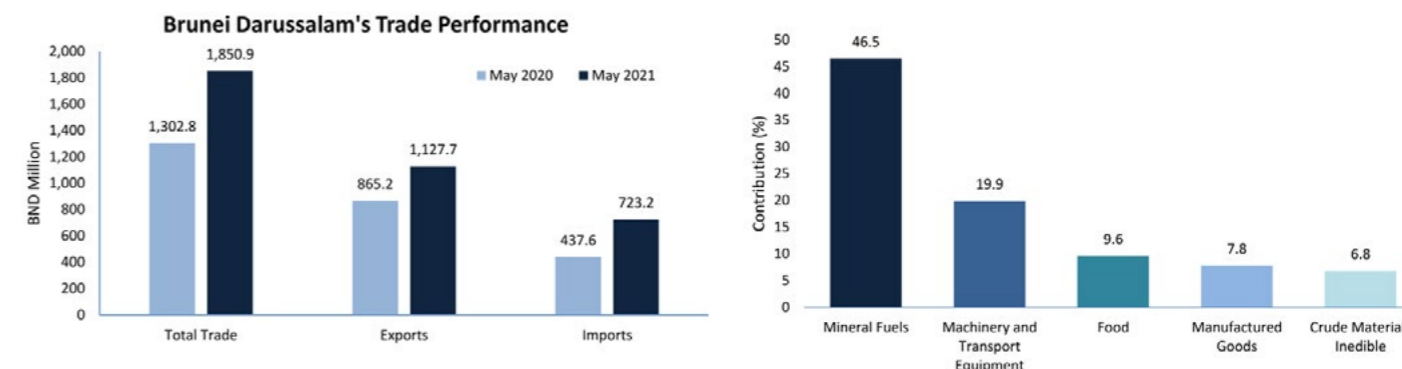
According to a press release issued by the Department of Economic Planning

and Statistics (DEPS), the total exports increased by 30.3 per cent year-on-year to \$1,127.7 million, compared to \$865.2 million in May 2020.

This was mainly due to the increase in mineral fuel exports to \$822.1 million in May 2021, from \$613.2 million in May 2020; as well as the increase in machinery and transport equipment exports to \$71.5 million in May 2021, from \$1.6 million in May 2020.

The increase in mineral fuel exports was mainly driven by the increase in exports of crude oil; exports of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG); and exports of petroleum products from downstream activities.

The increase in crude oil exports was largely attributed to the increase in the average price to USD69.96 per barrel from USD28.46 per barrel last year.



Similarly, the increase in LNG exports was due to an increase in the average price to USD8.01 per MMBtu from USD5.82 per MMBtu in 2020.

Meanwhile, the total volume of both crude oil and LNG exports recorded a decline compared to the previous year.

In terms of commodity by section, mineral fuels was the major contributor to Brunei Darussalam's exports with 72.9 per cent; followed by chemicals (19.7 per cent); and machinery and transport equipment (6.3 per cent).

The main export markets in May 2021 were the People's Republic of China (25.8 per cent); followed by Singapore (18.3 per cent); and Japan (17.3 per cent).

As for imports, the total value increased to \$723.2 million; compared to \$437.6 million in 2020. This was mainly due to the increased imports of mineral fuels, which

are largely used as input for the production of petrochemical products.

In addition, the increase in imports was, among other reasons, due to the increase in imports of crude materials inedible and food.

The press release also stated that the top five imports by commodity this month were mineral fuels (46.5 per cent); followed by machinery and transport equipment (19.9 per cent); food (9.6 per cent); manufactured goods (7.8 per cent) and crude materials inedible (6.8 per cent).

By end use category, imports of intermediate goods accounted for 57.9 per cent of the total imports; followed by imports of capital goods (36.6 per cent) and consumption goods (5.5 per cent).

Meanwhile, the biggest import trading partners were the People's Republic of China (24.1 per cent); followed by

Malaysia (18.7 per cent); and Norway (13.7 per cent).

The largest import commodities from the People's Republic of China were machinery and transport equipment, crude materials inedible, and mineral fuels.

Meanwhile, imported commodities from Malaysia and Norway are mostly mineral fuels.

According to the mode of transport, in May 2021, the highest share was transport by sea, amounting to \$1,720.4 million (92.9 per cent). This was followed by air transport (\$109.1 million or 5.9 per cent); and transport by land (\$21.5 million or 1.2 per cent).

The International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) for Brunei Darussalam adopts the General System for recording trade statistics – which covers imports, domestic exports and re-exports.

## June CPI increases by 1.7 per cent

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 25** - The Consumer Price Index (CPI) for June 2021 increased by 1.7 per cent year-on-year compared to June 2020.

The prices of food and non-alcoholic beverages increased by 1.6 per cent; while non-food prices increased by 1.7 per cent.

The increase in CPI was driven by higher

prices and costs of transport (7.0 per cent); food and non-alcoholic beverages (1.6 per cent); and restaurants and hotels (1.5 per cent).

However, this increase was moderated by the decrease in prices and costs of furnishings, household equipment and routine household maintenance (1.6 per cent); clothing and footwear (0.3 per cent); and housing, water, electricity, gas

and other fuels (0.2 per cent).

The increase in transport prices was largely due to the rise in the prices of motor cars, followed by air tickets in light of the limited number of scheduled flights.

Meanwhile, the increase in prices of food

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## June CPI increases by 1.7 per cent (continued)

From page 23

and non-alcoholic beverages was mainly due to the rise in food prices such as beef and buffalo meat; cooking oil; and vegetables.

The increase in the prices of beef and buffalo meat was, among other reasons, due to the rising cost of import. Meanwhile, the increase in cooking oil prices was, among others, in line with the increase in input prices such as palm

oil.

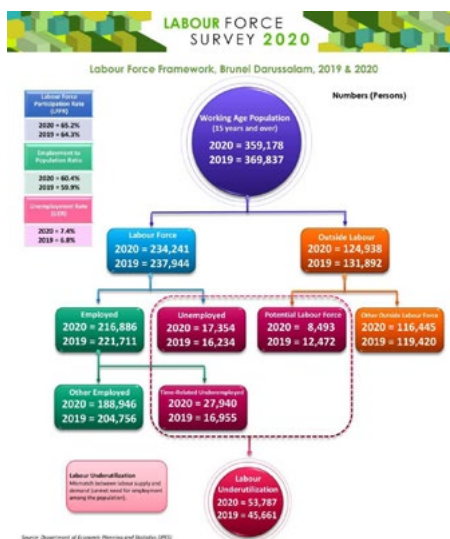
The rising cost of restaurants and hotels were driven by the increase in prices of selected menus for contract catering, as well as in restaurants and cafes. The price increase in selected menus was in line with the increase in the prices of raw materials.

On a month-to-month basis, the CPI for June 2021 increased by 0.6 per cent compared to May 2021. The food and

non-alcoholic beverages Index increased by 0.1 per cent; while the non-food index increased by 0.7 per cent.

The CPI is a measure of price changes in goods and services paid by the consumer over a specified period of time, which are compiled on a monthly basis. The list of goods and services in the CPI is based on the average expenditure per household from the Household Expenditure Survey (HES).

## DEPS releases LFS 2020 Report



Local workers accounted for the largest share, which was 72.0 per cent (156,200 persons); while 28.0 per cent (60,700 persons) were non-local workers.

The total employed persons have decreased due to the decline in the number of non-local workers by 13,600 persons: from 74,300 persons in 2019 to 60,700 persons in 2020.

However, the number of local workers has increased by 8,800: from 147,400 in 2019 to 156,200 in 2020. This improvement is parallel with the administrative data from the Manpower Planning and Employment Council (MPEC) Secretariat, which showed over 12,000 newly recruited locals in 2020.

Meanwhile, the data on local employee contributions in the Employees Trust Fund (TAP) recorded over 7,000 new registration.

in an increase in the unemployment rate to 7.4 per cent from 6.8 per cent in 2019.

This increase was due to several factors. For instance, some of those who were employed in 2019 lost their jobs in 2020; while some others who were previously outside the labour force were now active in the labour market, but were still looking for jobs.

A few additional questions related to COVID-19 were also included in the LFS 2020, as recommended by the International Labour Organization (ILO). Some of the findings include roughly 28.6 per cent (62,000 persons) of the total employed population who experienced changes in their working conditions – such as changes in the total working hours, work place or location, or working from home.

The number of non-local workers decreased by 18.3 per cent (2019: 74,300 persons; and 2020: 60,700 persons) – mainly in accommodation and food service; wholesale and retail trade; as well as manufacturing.

This was following restrictions on the entry of non-locals into Brunei Darussalam during the COVID-19 pandemic; whereby new non-local workers were only allowed to enter the country in limited numbers and only for certain sectors or occupations. Apart from that, a number of non-local workers also left the country due to contract expirations and so on.

The decrease in the number of non-local workers was balanced out by the increase in the number of locals working in the private sector. Among the economic activities that recorded an increase of local workers between 2019 and 2020 were wholesale and retail trade activities by 1.8 per cent (4,200 persons); and manufacturing by 1.0 per cent (1,800 persons).

### BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, August 21

The Department of Economic Planning and Statistics (DEPS), Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE) released their Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2020 Report, which was conducted from October 19 to November 15, 2020.

The survey covered about 3,200 selected households nationwide using a systematic sampling method. The data obtained from the selected households were extrapolated and calibrated to represent the total population living in regular households in Brunei Darussalam.

The results from the LFS 2020 have shown that there are about 86,500 households and 359,200 persons aged 15 and above.

Among the main findings included in the report stated that the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in 2020 increased to 65.2 per cent from 64.3 per cent in 2019. The number of employed persons in 2020 was 216,900 persons; compared to 221,000 persons in 2019.

The main characteristics and distribution of employed persons in 2020 showed that about 90.4 per cent (196,100 persons) were employees; while own-account workers accounted for 6.2 per cent (13,500 persons).

On the other hand, a total of 70,900 persons (32.7 per cent) were employed in the government sector – which includes public administration activities and government services such as education, health, electricity and water services.

Around 146,600 persons (67.3 per cent) were employed in the private sector. By type of occupation, service and sales workers accounted for the highest share, which was 22.8 per cent (49,500 persons); the average hours worked in the main job decreased to 44.4 hours in a week from 46.8 hours in a week in 2019.

The total number of unemployed persons in 2020 was around 17,400 persons (16,200 persons in 2019). This resulted