

بروني دارالسلام

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

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More houses under government's housing schemes

The efforts by the Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam to provide modern and comfortable housing for citizens are running smoothly with the latest batch

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Loyal subjects crowd their beloved ruler as he toured the housing scheme shortly after he presented the keys to the owners of the houses.

Brunei-Malaysia Joint Commission



The Brunei Darussalam Foreign Affairs Minister, His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah and his Malaysian counterpart, Datuk Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi signing the agreed minutes of the first meeting of the Brunei-Malaysia Joint Commission For Bilateral Cooperation.

Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia have established a joint commission for bilateral cooperation.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the commission called the Brunei Darussalam-Malaysia Joint Commission For Bilateral Cooperation, was signed in the Malaysian resort island of Langkawi on April 23.

Brunei Darussalam's Foreign Affairs Minister, His Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Perdana Wazir Sahibul Himmah Wal-Waqar Pengiran Muda Mohamed Bolkiah signed for His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam's Government, while his Malaysian opposite number, Yang Berhormat Datuk Abdullah Haji

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BRUNEI DARUSSALAM NEWSLETTER

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YOUR TURN

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The Foreign Affairs Ministers of Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia exchange documents following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, MOU, on the establishment of a Joint Commission For Bilateral Cooperation between the two countries.

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Ahmad Badawi represented the Malaysian Government.

The commission is regarded as the umbrella under which cooperation in various areas between the two ASEAN neighbours would be coordinated and implemented.

It is also expected that with the Joint Commission's establishment, existing cooperation between the two countries would be strengthened and enhanced, and new areas of cooperation explored.

The signing of the MOU on the joint commission's establishment was followed the following day by the First Meeting At Ministerial Level of the Joint Commission, at which

the delegations of the two countries were led by their respective foreign minister.

Speaking at the meeting, His Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Perdana Wazir Sahibul Himmah Wal-Waqar Pengiran Muda Mohamed Bolkiah stressed the close relations between Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia, saying: "Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia do not only have relations, we are relations".

He said the relations are not only based on language, culture and religion which have long been forged, but through the feeling of kinship and personal rapport between their leaders and peoples.

"This joint commission is meant

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Before attending the first meeting of the Brunei Darussalam-Malaysia Joint Commission, the foreign ministers of the two countries held a 50-minute 'four-eyes' meeting.



The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dato Paduka Awang Lim Jock Seng (3rd from left) led the Brunei Darussalam delegation at the Senior Officials' Meeting of the Brunei Darussalam-Malaysia Joint Commission. Also in the delegation were the Permanent Secretary of the Home Affairs Ministry, Dato Paduka Awang Haji Omar (4th from left) and the Communication Ministry's Permanent Secretary, Dato Paduka Malai Ali (extreme left) as well as several heads of government department.

• *From page 2 (Joint-Commission)*

to strengthen further such long-standing relations.

Added the Foreign Minister, "The commission will not only have legal powers and formal arrangements, more importantly, it would be based on the goodwill of the people who have many similarities".

The Brunei Darussalam Foreign Affairs Minister said that from such good relations forged through exchanges of visits at all levels, Brunei Darussalam has benefited much, especially in the fields of education and training.

"In implementing the development programme of the respective country, we have given new opportunities to the peoples of both countries", His Royal Highness went on.

"In relation to this, he congratulated Malaysia for the success in its industrial programme, attributing it to the country's far-sighted leadership.

"This has become an example to developing nations", he stressed.

In light of this, he added, the formation of the joint commission is timely, for it provides opportunities

for the enhancement of bilateral co-operation in various areas as well as ways and means of resolving problem.

Speaking at the same meeting, the Malaysian Foreign Minister said that the bilateral relations between Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia moved another step forward with the establishment of the joint commission through the signing of the MOU. It has opened another chapter in the development of their bilateral relations.

"A forum has been created where both parties can discuss various aspects related to relations and cooperation, as well as to finding ways of solving whatever problem may arise"; he said.

He said the agenda of this first meeting was wide in scope, but as a starting point, the commission should concentrate and take follow-up actions on matters agreed between His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and the Malaysian Prime Minister, both of whom had agreed that the investment and trade relations between the two countries be enhanced.

The scope in this field is wide,

Datuk Abdullah said, and he urged both parties to together take advantage of the opportunity that exists in the intensive economic development taking place in the region.

The First Meeting of the Brunei Darussalam-Malaysia Joint Commission at the ministerial level was preceded by a two-day meeting of senior officials, (21-22 April), at which the Brunei delegation was headed by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dato Paduka Awang Lim Jock Seng, while the Malaysian side was led by Tan Sri Ahmad Kamil bin Jaafar, Chief Secretary of the Country's Foreign Affairs Ministry.

Included in the Brunei Darussalam delegation were the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Dato Paduka Awang Haji Omar bin Haji Serudin, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Communication, Dato Paduka Malai Ali bin Haji Malai Othman and several government department heads and senior representatives.

The two foreign ministers also had a 50-minute 'four eyes' meeting before proceeding to the first meeting of the joint commission.

Audience with HM Sultan for pilgrims prior to departures to holy land

Brunei Darussalam's nearly 3,000 pilgrims have had an audience with His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam prior to their departures to Mecca, to perform the haj.

The ruler granted the audience at the Istana Nurul Iman on April 20, two days before the first flight ferrying the pilgrims to the holy land.

This year the Bruneian pilgrims are being flown by Royal Brunei



Each of the nearly 3,000 prospective pilgrims filed past and greeted the ruler during an audience before their departures to the holy land.

Airlines which is operating some 13 special haj flights up to the first week of May.

The pilgrims will be in the holy land for about six weeks, and they are being accompanied by a team of 31 medical officers and 22 Islamic religious teachers who will act as

liaison officers.

On average, some 4,000 Bruneians go to the holy land each year to perform the haj - Islam's fifth tenet, and the ruler grants them an audience annually prior to leaving Brunei Darussalam.

Efforts towards health care have proved successful

Yang Teramat Mulia Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Puteri Hajjah Rashidah Sa'adatul Bolkiah said it is evident that the Government's efforts towards health care has proven to be successful, in view of the satisfactory standard of health of the people in the country.

The people in Brunei Darussalam are fortunate that His Majesty's Government continues to give due attention towards health care. This includes providing health services to the people from all walks of life in urban and rural areas, said the princess.

Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Puteri Hajjah Rashidah Sa'adatul Bolkiah, the eldest daughter of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam,



Yang Teramat Mulia Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Puteri Hajjah Rashidah Sa'adatul Bolkiah, eldest daughter of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam.

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was speaking before launching a National Campaign on dental health in conjunction with this year's World Health Day at the Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha Hospital in the capital on April 7.

Health care services in the country also covers preventive measures through various related programmes, including creating awareness among members of the public about the importance of health care.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has chosen "Kesihatan Pergigian Untuk Kehidupan Yang Sihat" or "Dental Health for Healthy Living" as the theme for this year's World Health Day.

Her Royal Highness in her sabda (speech), said the theme is timely and relevant because dental health is an important aspect of one's health.

Speech by Minister of Health

The Minister of Health, Yang Berhormat Dato Paduka Dr. Haji Johar bin Dato Paduka Haji Noordin in his speech highlighted the high incidence of people with tooth problems in the country. One of the



The Health Minister, Yang Berhormat Dato Paduka Dr. Awang Haji Johar bin Dato Paduka Haji Noordin.

main reasons is the habit of consuming food and drinks with a high sugar content.

Parents and teachers should advise children about the risk in taking food with a high sugar content, stressed the Minister. Preventive programmes could help reduce the problems of tooth decay and gum disease, he added.

Yang Berhormat also underlined the programmes carried out by the Ministry of Health to upgrade the standard of dental health of the rakyat and people of the country. Such programmes include the provision of dental clinics in schools, health centres and hospitals. There are also mobile dental health teams which visit rural areas. The Ministry also provides education on dental health for expectant mothers and children and provides training on tooth-

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National committee on the environment monitors implementation of agenda 21 and addresses environmental issues

Brunei Darussalam has set up a National Committee on the Environment which is charged with the task of monitoring the implementation of Agenda 21, and addressing the broader issues of environment, the Development Minister said.

Brunei Darussalam like other members of ASEAN "takes Agenda 21 seriously" and although reservation on its global funding exists, Asean is committed to the implementation of specific recommendations of Agenda 21 relevant to the region. ASEAN in fact, has implemented the recommendations of Agenda 21 according to its national needs and priorities.

(Agenda 21, adopted by the UN Conference on Environment and Development, UNCED, at Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, lays down a comprehensive blueprint for action

in all areas relating to sustainable development and environmental management. Agenda 21, which is an action plan for the 1990s and the twenty-first century, covers 115 programme areas).

In his speech at the opening of the Sixth ASEAN Ministerial Meet-



Yang Berhormat Pengiran Dato Seri Paduka Dr. Haji Ismail, the Minister of Development.

ing on the Environment, 25 April 1994 at the Brunei International Convention Centre, Yang Berhormat Pengiran Dato Seri Paduka Dr Haji Ismail, Minister of Development also spoke on such problem as biodegradable domestic waste.

"Domestically, one of our main areas of concern is the increasing volume of non or very slow biodegradable domestic waste such as plastics. Economic growth, rising population and increased daily dependence on cheap disposable materials such as plastics for packaging could lead to long-term pollution problem."

Plastic are attractive because they are cheap and lasting. And because they are easily disposable, they remain in their inert state almost forever, thus, leading to the

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228 move into new houses after receiving their keys from HM Sultan

• From page 1
(houses)

of 228 people moving into new houses under the National Housing Programme, and the Housing Scheme for Landless Citizens at Kampong Pandan (kampong: village) in Mukim Belait (Mukim: made up of several villages) in the Belait district.

His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam presented the owners the keys to their houses when he visited Mukim Belait on April 12. The presentation ceremony took place at the Kampong Pandan Secondary School.

The ruler was accompanied on the visit by one of his brothers, His Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Digadong Sahibul Mal Pengiran Muda Haji Jefri Bolkiah.

Of the number, 152 people received the keys to houses under the National Housing Programme stage 1, phase 2; stage 2; and stage 3, phase 1; while the rest got houses under the Housing Scheme for Landless Citizens' stage 3 and stage 4.

Houses built under the National Housing Programme are of five types categorised as Class A, priced at B\$106,160; Class B at B\$89,160; Class C at B\$80,160; Class D which costs B\$72,160 each, and the E type costing B\$58,480.

Meanwhile, houses under the Housing Scheme for Landless Citizens are priced at B\$80,000 for a class B type; B\$72,000 for Class C; B\$60,000 for Class D; while the E type costs B\$45,000.

They are repayable at low, interest – free monthly instalments over a period of between 15 years and 30 years, whichever the owner chooses.

Kampong Pandan in Mukim Belait in the Belait district is just one of many sites selected for both the National Housing Programme and the Housing Scheme for Landless Citizens. In all, at least fourteen sites have been chosen for the two projects throughout the country.



His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and His Royal Highness Prince Haji Jefri Bolkiah at the start of the visit to Mukim Kuala Belait, during which the ruler presented keys to 228 houses to their owners. Below: One of the more than 200 latest recipients of houses under the government's housing provision schemes receiving the key to his house from the monarch. Bottom picture: The monarch talking to a student while he toured the Jefri Bolkiah College of Engineering.



HM Sultan tours Royal Brunei Police Force

His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam toured the Royal Brunei Police Force on 25 April.

On arrival at the Royal Brunei Police headquarters in Gadong, the monarch was greeted by the Commissioner of Police, Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Abdul Rahman bin Haji Awang Besar and senior police officers and proceeded to the dais, where he returned the salute from a guard of honour mounted by 110 men, which he also later inspected.

The police headquarters was officially opened in 1969 by the monarch, who is the Inspector General of the police force.

His Majesty was briefed on various aspects by the respective head of divisions in the police department.

The Royal Brunei Police Force was formed on 1 February, 1921. The ruler ended his visit with a tour of the force's training centre, where he watched various drills and demonstrations.



Above: His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam inspected a guard of honour on arrival at the Royal Brunei Police Force during his latest visit. Apart from the drills (bottom left), an assortment of weapons was on display (left).

Below: A private chat with the Commissioner of Police, Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Abdul Rahman bin Haji Awang Besar.



degradation in the quality of the environment, the Minister stressed.

This problem is not confined to Brunei Darussalam alone, he added. Therefore there is need to pool resources, share experience and expertise, and take measures to tackle this problem comprehensively—from educating the public on the hazards of pollution from plastics, to finding alternative packaging materials which are more easily biodegradable and finding the most effective way to recycle or dispose plastic waste.

Global developments and implication to environment

The Meeting in Brunei Darussalam is timely, the Minister said, “for us to take stock of our state of environment. Apart from UNCED, other global developments such as the successful conclusion of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade or GATT, and in ASEAN, the quickening process of ASEAN Free Trade Area or AFTA, will no doubt generate activities which will put pressure on our natural resources and fragile environment.”

ASEAN Strategic Plan of Action on the Environment

In preparation for the coming ASEAN Summit, in addition to consolidating earlier achievements, the Minister also underlined the need to formulate new programmes and strategies to address various post-UNCED issues and other environ-



The acting Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Development, Dato Paduka Awang Haji Mohammad bin Haji Serudin at the head of the Brunei delegation to the Sixth Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM), which preceded the Sixth ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Environment (ASEAN-AMME).

mental matters concerning ASEAN.

The ASEAN Strategic Plan of Action on the Environment formulated by officials and the two-day discussions in Brunei Darussalam, 25-26 April 1994, would generate clear directions in addressing various environmental issues, the Minister said.

“ASEAN has a lot to offer, not only as a vibrant economic grouping, but also as a region with some of the world's best natural heritage which need to be protected and conserved and developed to its full potential. Brunei Darussalam shares this view and we believe that the various programmes and projects formulated under the ASEAN Strategic Plan for Action on the Environment will no doubt further strengthen our capacity in the management of our own environment including the conservation of our heritage.”

At the international level, ASEAN should continue to coordinate and assert its common views on the environment so its positions are

better understood in the global context, and so as to protect its interests as a group. The mechanism for exchanging information should be strengthened for closer cooperation is the key to successful management of the environment, the Minister asserted.

The ASEAN Ministers' Meeting on Environment was preceded by a Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM-AMME) at which the acting Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Development, Dato Paduka Awang Haji Mohammed bin Haji Serudin led the Brunei Darussalam delegation.

In his own speech at the SOM, the official among other things said that the environmental issue has now become even more complex than those issues of economy and trade.

He stressed that in the midst of intensive economic growth in this region, there has to be a united strategy to ensure the region's environment.

Give Greater Priority To Widespread Dissemination Of Information On ASEAN

The Working Group on Literary and ASEAN Studies should give greater priority to the wider dissemination of information on ASEAN. This would help provide a more accurate picture of ASEAN and to correct some of the misinformation still existing among the

international community.

The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports' Permanent Secretary, Pengiran Dato Paduka Mohammad Yassin, expressed this concern before declaring open the 9th Meeting of the ASEAN Working Group on Literary and ASEAN Studies, in

one of the hotels in Bandar Seri Begawan, April 18.

He earlier spoke about the many on-going and completed projects under the Working Group, including the publications of books of high

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The Commander of the Malaysian Armed Forces, General Tan Sri Borhan on arrival at the Istana Nurul Iman for his audience with His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam. The general's wife, Puan Sri Suzlina Abdullah had separate audiences at the Istana Nurul Iman with Her Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajjah Saleha (left picture, below) and at the Istana Nurul Izzah with Her Royal Highness Pengiran Isteri Hajjah Mariam.



HM grants audience to Commander of Malaysian Armed Forces

His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam granted an audience at the Istana Nurul Iman on 7 April to the Commander of the Malaysian Armed Forces, General Tan Sri Borhan bin Haji Ahmad.

Accompanied by his wife, the general was on a five-day visit to the

country.

On the same day, his wife, Puan Sri Suzlina binti Abdullah was granted audiences separately by Her Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajjah Saleha, at the Istana Nurul Iman, and by Her Royal Highness Pengiran Isteri Hajjah Mariam, at the Istana Nurul Izzah.

During the audiences, Puan Sri

Suzlina presented souvenirs to Her Majesty and Her Royal Highness.

This was General Tan Sri Borhan's first visit to Brunei Darussalam since he assumed command of the Malaysian Armed Forces and it was also a farewell call before coming to the end of his term as Commander of the Malaysian Armed Forces.

brushing for children at schools by using tooth-paste with fluoride and provide 'fissure sealant' filling treatment for children.

In 1987, Brunei Darussalam launched a scheme whereby fluoride was included in the supply of water, in view of the importance of fluoride in the prevention of tooth decay.

Yang Berhormat earlier highlighted that dental problem, such as tooth decay and gum disease are among the diseases afflicting the world.

Within these two decades, he

said, the incidence in the number of tooth decay is low in developed countries, but for developing countries, the situation is still on the rise except in countries where preventive programmes are already available, he pointed out.

A country that is able to include 80 per cent of its population with tooth decay and gum disease preventive programme, will be able to achieve a satisfactory level of dental health, according to the World Health Organisation, that is for children aged 12 to have no more than three teeth which are decayed, extracted or filled.

He further stressed that continuing preventive measures would reduce tooth decay problems and in ensuring healthy teeth. The increased cleanliness of teeth, the usage of tooth-paste and water supply with fluoride and the practice of taking healthy and nutritious food are effective ways and means of dental health care, the Minister pointed out.

The Minister hoped that the national campaign on dental health would further strengthen efforts of the Ministry in providing members of the public with the understanding and knowledge on their role towards dental health.

quality.

"Such works of quality should be marketed as widely as possible to all parts of the world so as to provide a more accurate picture of ASEAN and to correct some of the misinformation which, sad to say, still exist among the international community. The wider dissemination of information on ASEAN should therefore be given greater priority," he said.

The official later stressed the need to resolve the problem of copyright which has plagued ASEAN for the past few years. The Working Group and all relevant authorities should try to overcome such difficulty, he stressed.

The Permanent Secretary further touched on the many worthwhile projects which are at present funded by ASEAN's dialogue partners, particularly Japan, Canada and New Zealand, the results of which have been and continue to be of great assistance and benefit to ASEAN.

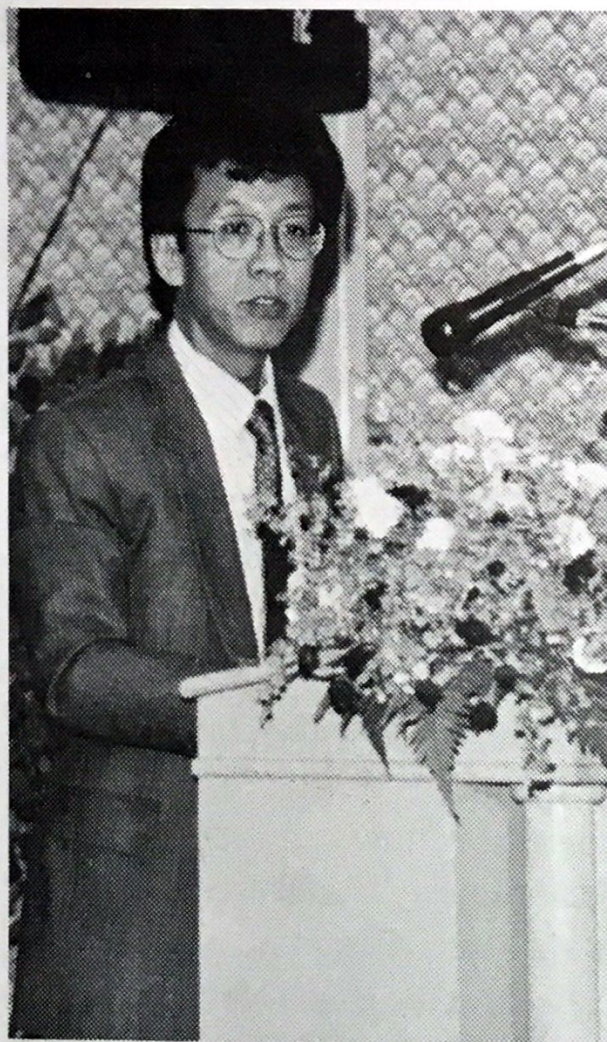
ASEAN would also be discussing and submitting a number of project proposals to its newest dialogue partner, the Republic of Korea, in areas of cooperation. He hoped that relevant authorities would give due consideration to these proposals.

The Permanent Secretary later reminded the Working Group to con-

centrate on quality rather than quantity and to implement projects of greater impact.

Speech by the Director of Language and Literature Bureau

The Director of Language and Literature Bureau, Dato Paduka Haji Mahmud bin Haji Bakyr, in his capacity as the Chairman of ASEAN COCI (Committee on Culture and Information) - Brunei Darussalam, urged the Meeting of the Working Group on Literaty and ASEAN



Pengiran Dato Paduka Mohd. Yassin, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports.

Studies to examine very important issues more closely when considering new project proposals for funding.

They should also ensure that projects have better focus with well-defined themes, greater impact and a greater integration between the culture and information sectors.

Since the last two meetings, the Working Group has formulated, implemented and completed a number of creative projects in the areas of literary works and ASEAN Studies, some of which have resulted in the publication of books of high quality that are sought after as an invaluable source for reading and reference, said Dato Paduka Haji Mahmud.

These projects, he said, have generally achieved the goals and objective of ASEAN-COCI in developing the arts and culture and in promoting ASEAN's cooperation and awareness.

"However, emerging challenges in the fields of culture and information require us to reassess and consolidate ASEAN-COCI projects and activities under the three-year programme cycle in line with its global thrusts and priorities," he said.

The Meeting of the Working Group on Literary and ASEAN Studies was held thrice in Brunei Darussalam from 1990 to 1993. Indonesia will serve as the next host country for the meeting from 1994 to 1996.

Volume of CFCs used in Brunei Darussalam still very small compared to developed nations

The total volume of CFCs (Chlorofluorocarbons used in air-conditioners and refrigerators which are harmful to the environment) consumed in Brunei Darussalam, in per capita term "is still very small" compared to the total volume of CFCs used by developed nations. Even compared to the total volume used in ASEAN, developed nations have the highest consumption, the Development Minister said on 26 April.

"We don't want developed nations to dump CFCs on us," the Minister stressed. "We also need to find alternative materials for CFCs in order to save the environment," the Minister asserted at the Brunei International Convention Centre at the end of the Sixth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment (ASEAN-AMME) in Bandar Seri Begawan.

Yang Berhormat Pengiran Dato Seri Paduka Dr Haji Ismail, the Development Minister, was responding to a question from the Daily News Digest of Brunei Darussalam/Brunei Darussalam Newsletter about what guidelines members of the public could be given should they want to dispose of in the right manner, unused refrigerators and air-conditioners which contain CFCs that are harmful to the environment.

Developments have been made in the alternative use of CFCs, the Minister added. "If they find an alternative to CFCs, we would like them [developed nations] to make that material available to us. Here, the cost of developing or the question of the transfer of technology come in. We don't want the developed nations to say that this is a matter of property rights and therefore they cannot transfer the technology to us. This is one of the issues highlighted in Agenda 21 (of UNCED) which need to be clearly defined so that developing countries can get access to the transfer of technology from developed nations".

Environmental issue and protectionism

To a question on how Brunei Darussalam is addressing the implication to the environment as a result of recent global developments such as the completion of the Uruguay Round, the establishment of World Trade Organisation, the 1992 United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, and the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), the Minister said: "All these developments will inevitably affect the environment. We view the environment as a very important component of development. Environment and development should go hand in hand.

At the same time, there are countries which are linking the environmental issue with trade. If they consider you as environmentally unfriendly, they ban trade with you. We don't want this to take place. Environmental concerns should not be used as a protectionist measure.

We in ASEAN consider Agenda 21 of UNCED as a very meaningful instrument to base our work on. We are supporting Agenda 21 and we are working very hard to make sure that our environment in the region and the world is protected. That is why we have drawn up the ASEAN Strategic Action Plan. As a post-UNCED development, we in ASEAN should also be actively involved in the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development. We want the Commission to take note of our stand, our strategic plans and activities in ASEAN in protecting the environment. In short, ASEAN takes the environment very seriously."

Paper as alternative to plastic as packaging material

Responding to yet another question as to whether the Sixth ASEAN-

AMME came up with an alternative packaging material which is easily biodegradable and whether they discussed the most effective way to recycle or dispose plastic waste, the Minister replied:

"Brunei is not a producing country - this is the main problem. It is a consumer country. A lot of goods are imported into Brunei including plastic packaging. So we are the end receiver of this non-biodegradable packaging material [plastic]. The end product is plastic waste and this end product is not easily biodegradable. We can see that a lot of plastic is being thrown everywhere even in the rivers and dumping area. Because it is not easily biodegradable, it takes a very long time before it disintegrates. This is our dilemma and we are not producing the plastic.

Recycling the plastic packaging materials may not be an economical solution for us because if you gather all the plastic packaging in Brunei, these may [constitute] only a very small volume but the cost of recycling is prohibitive.

So one of the solutions is to educate the public about the potential hazards of plastic packaging. They have to understand that plastic packaging is hazardous to the environment and they can help to protect the environment by limiting the use of plastic or better still, they can demand that [the use of] plastic packaging be minimised.

In the old days, we use to have paper bags. Most of the items were packed in paper, and we even had paper carriers. They are environment friendly material, very easily disposable and very easily biodegradable. Within one or two months, they will turn into organic material.

This is where the private sector, members of the public, the government should work together. It is no use having just the government mak-

• *Continued on page 12*

ing the hue and cry about saving the environment. The environment belongs to everyone and so should be the concern of all. Consumers, producers, the government, the private sector must work together to find products that are environment friendly. If everyone agrees that plastic packaging is harmful to the environment, then every sector must work together with the objective of finding an alternative for plastic as packaging materials."

ASEAN Environment Year 1995

The Minister also informed that 1995 has been declared ASEAN Environment Year to highlight ASEAN environmental issues and cooperative programmes to stimulate awareness on these issues among the ASEAN populace and the world at large, stimulate regional activities in environmental area and broaden the participatory process in environmental in ASEAN.

"ASEAN Environment Year: Green and Clean" has been chosen as the theme, and member countries will launch it on 1 January 1995. Regional and national activities will be held during the year.

ASEAN Strategic Plan of Action on the Environment

The Ministers adopted the Bandar

Seri Begawan Resolution on Environment and Development which spells out ASEAN's commitment to adopt and implement among others, the ASEAN Strategic Plan of Action on the Environment (1994-1998).

According to a joint press statement, it is aimed at responding to specific recommendations of Agenda 21 requiring priority action in ASEAN; introducing policy measures and promoting institutional development that encourage the integration of environmental factors in all developmental processes both at national and regional levels; establishing long-term goals on environmental quality standards for ASEAN; harmonising policy directions and enhance operational and technical cooperation on environmental matters and undertaking joint actions to address common environmental problems and studying the implications of AFTA on environment and taking steps to integrate sound trade policies with sound environmental policies.

The ASEAN Strategic Plan of Action on the Environment also calls for several strategies including the promotion of environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals and hazardous wastes, and control of transboundary movement of hazardous wastes and their disposal.

The Bandar Seri Begawan resolution on Environment and Development also spells out ASEAN's com-

mitment to adopt the Harmonised Quality Standards for ambient air quality and river water quality to be achieved by all ASEAN member countries by the year 2010. In the implementation of these standards, priority will be given to urban and industrial areas where the problems are more severe.

According to the joint press statement, the Ministers reiterated that ASEAN as a vibrant and viable region could play a meaningful role in implementing Agenda 21, which is a plan of action at international level to protect the environment. The Ministers pointed out that ASEAN has made every effort to achieve greater self-reliance in environmental management. However, this has been set back by lack of specialised skills, inadequate capacity and limited financial resources.

The Ministers therefore called for immediate and meaningful implementation of the commitments by developed countries as contained in Agenda 21. In this regard, the Ministers discussed and agreed on a common position on ASEAN's priorities and responses to post-UNCED developments. The Ministers further agreed to voice these concerns in international fora such as the forthcoming meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development to be held in New York from 16 to 27 May, 1994.

Brunei in Brief

Capital : Bandar Seri Begawan
Land size : 5765 sq. km
Population : 267,800 (Mid-1992)
Official Language : Malay
Official Religion : Islam
March rainfall : 121.5mm
(annual 2,818mm)

PRIME LENDING RATE

April 5.75%

(quoted by Bankers' Association)

Brunei Malay in a minute

Each fortnight we introduce our readers to a new Brunei Malay word that is peculiar to Brunei Darussalam only.

We have chosen the word **pilal** for this edition.

Pilal is droop, frail or weak.

In standard Malay **Pilal** is *terkulai* or *lemah*.

In a sentence.....*Lelaki itu nampak pilal kerana bekerja sepanjang malam.*

The man looked weak after working all night.

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