



# بروني دارالسلام

## BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

newsletter

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## Sultan's visits boost relations and economic prospects

His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in discussion with the French President, His Excellency Mr. Jacques Chirac at Elysee Palace in Paris, above, shortly after the Brunei monarch's arrival in the French capital to begin a four-day state visit.

The Republic of France and the Kingdom of Belgium rolled out the red carpets this month for His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam.

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the visits on  
pages 15 and 17.

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pages 10, 11, 12,  
13, 14, 15 and 16.



His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and His Royal Highness Prince Jefri Bolkiah posing to photographers at Laeken Palace in Brussels with His Majesty King Albert II of Belgium and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Philippe during the Brunei monarch's courtesy call on the the Belgian ruler.

## **BRUNEI DARUSSALAM NEWSLETTER**

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### **YOUR TURN**

The next issue of the Brunei Darussalam newsletter will appear on 15 January 1997. If there are events relating to our country you would like featured in this newsletter please call us on Tel: 02-383941 or better still, send us a report with a picture, if possible. All editorial rights reserved.



*The Minister of Religious Affairs, Yang Berhormat Pehin Jawatan Luar Pekerma Raja Dato Seri Utama Dr. Ustaz Awang Haji Mohd Zain and the Minister of Justice, Wakaf and Islamic Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman, His Excellency Hamoud bin Abdullah Al-Harith signing the memorandum of understanding on behalf of the respective government. The MOU will step up cooperation in various fields between the two sultanates.*

## **Brunei Darussalam and the Sultanate of Oman sign MOU on cooperation**

**B**runei Darussalam and the Sultanate of Oman have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in various areas of cooperation. The ceremony took place at the Islamic Dakwah Centre on 28 October.

The Government of His Majesty was represented by the Minister of Religious Affairs, Yang Berhormat Pehin Jawatan Luar Pekerma Raja Dato Seri Utama Dr. Ustaz Haji Awang Md. Zain, while signing on behalf of the Sultanate of Oman was its Minister of Justice, Wakaf and Islamic Affairs, His Excellency Hamoud bin Abdullah Al-Harith.

The memorandum involves cooperation in the exchange of students in Islamic studies and theologies in academic fields as well as training programmes, exchange of visits, conferences, seminars and exchange of views on current issues, particularly on the problems of values and Islamic

teachings.

The memorandum also involves the exchange of information on upgrading the role of mosques and the development of religious education for youths, aimed at keeping them from anti-Islamic elements.

The signing ceremony was also witnessed by the Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs, Yang Dimuliakan Pehin Siraja Khatib Dato Paduka Seri Setia Ustaz Haji Awang Yahya, Permanent Secretary of the ministry, Dato Paduka Awang Haji Ahmad and the Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman, His Excellency Ahmed Mohd. Masoud Al-Riyami.

In a speech after the signing ceremony, the Minister of Religious Affairs hoped that more goodwill visits will be made in the future for the purpose of discussions and approaches on religious matters.

# Efforts to elevate the position of Mosque urged

**H**is Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Bendahara Seri Maharaja Permaisua Pengiran Muda Haji Sufri Bolkiah has called for efforts to elevate the position of mosques in the country as these places play major roles in the development of Islam and the Muslim ummahs.

His Royal Highness said that efforts should also be enhanced to upgrade the knowledge and competency of mosque officials on matters pertaining to their duties, and the affairs and management of mosques.

His Royal Highness Prince Haji Sufri Bolkiah made the remarks in his speech on 8 December at the nationwide celebration marking the Israk Mikraj: anniversary of Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) journey to heaven.

The celebration was organised by the Ministry of Religious Affairs at the International Convention Centre. The highlight of the celebration was the presentation of awards to most active and best kept mosques.

Speaking about the awards, the prince said that they were not mere honours, but an encouragement and incentive to all mosques and mosques' officials towards meeting the objectives to further upgrade the management, activities, as well as the maintenance of mosques more effectively.

He urged mosques in the country to take the initiatives in organising various activities in line with the needs of the community, and those which are appropriate with the true functions and roles of mosques in accordance with Islam.

On the significance of 'Israk Mikraj', His Royal Highness pointed that it was an event closely related with prayers, because it was on this occasion that the five times daily prayers were made obligatory, and these prayers are related to the mosque.

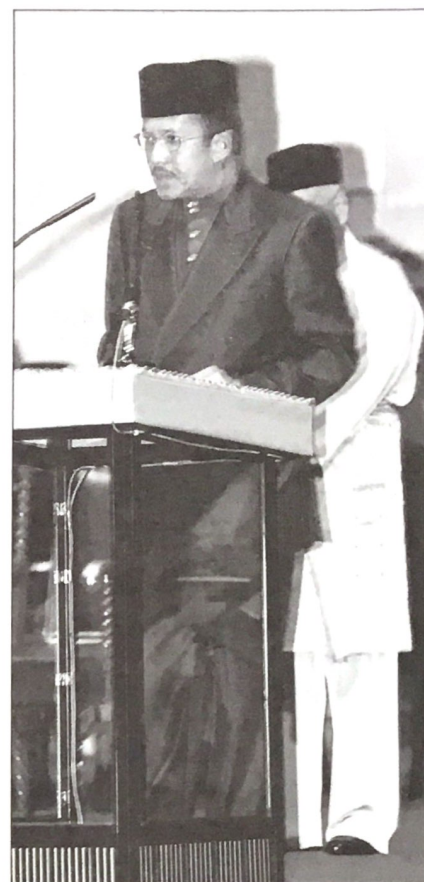
The performing of prayers and the institution of mosque are aimed at creating unity and fraternity and instilling values for good discipline,

because the mosque is a place for Muslims to get together, perform acts of worship and conduct religious-related activities; and it is a place for meeting the needs of worshippers continuously, particularly on religious and spiritual aspects, he said.

His Royal Highness added that when Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) arrived in Medina after his flight from Mecca, the first immediate step he took was to build a mosque. Known as the Nabawi mosque, it was from here that the lights of Islam, its faith and the high moral values of mankind began to spread throughout the world, he added.

The significance of Islam was successfully illustrated by the role and functions of the Nabawi mosque. The mosque symbolises piety, the eminence and strength of Islam, His Royal Highness stressed.

The prince later presented the awards to the winners. The award for the Major Mosque category was won by the Hassanal Bolkiah Mosque in the Tutong district. In the Mukim (group of villages) category, the award went to the Zainab Mosque in Kampong (village) Sungai Taring Lumut in the



*His Royal Highness Prince Haji Sufri Bolkiah calling on mosque officials to organise activities that will not only exalt the position of mosques as places of worship, but will also develop the Muslim ummahs*

Belait district. The Kampong Pulaie Mosque won in the village category, while Kampong Sengkarai won in the Prayer Hall (Surau) category.



*Officials of one of the winning mosques receiving their awards from the prince. Among the criteria for winning the awards include maintenance quality and activities conducted by the mosques.*

## Give our children guidance through a religion-oriented educational system

**H**er Royal Highness Princess Hajjah Masna, Ambassador-at-Large, recently stressed the need to give children a proper guidance through a religion-oriented educational system.

This is important as it is the most effective way to overcome and fight against the ruin of moral, the international problem, she said.

Her Royal Highness pointed out that the ruin of moral is one of the challenges every generation has to

face, affecting not only the non-Muslims but also the Muslims themselves.

"Educational theory designed by man alone, or that which is wholly adopted from the West, will not give any solution to these social problems," she stressed.

Speaking at the certificate presentation for kindergarten pupils of Al-Fallah School at the International Convention Centre (ICC) on 17 November, Her Royal Highness



*Her Royal Highness Princess Hajjah Masna, Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, seen here presenting certificate to a pupil, says guidance given to children through religion-oriented education will help prevent the decay of morals.*

expressed the view that the school has chosen the right and relevant way for a long-term survival of the Islamic ummah in the country, contributing to the government's efforts towards producing a 21st century generation who can read the Al-Quran and having the proper religious knowledge.

Children with guidance based on religion will grow and develop on a strong foundation, which will help them become a strong and determined generation, capable of facing any form of challenge, said Her Royal Highness.

## A Comprehensive survey needed to ascertain effectiveness of vocational and technical courses

**A** comprehensive survey should be conducted as to assess how far the skills acquired by vocational and technical graduates in the country can be fully utilised by prospective employers. The survey is also important to increase the effectiveness of the courses offered.

The Special Adviser to His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at the Prime Minister's Office and Minister of Home Affairs, Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Setia Bakti Diraja Dato Laila Utama Haji Awang Isa, said that this is worth considering especially in today's world where technology invariably undergoes rapid changes thereby forcing employers to be more careful and very selective in recruiting local labour force.

"As such employers, especially those in the private sector will judge and assess how far recruitments from local technical and vocational institutions have really met their industrial and business requirements," he said.

Speaking at the First Convocation ceremony for technical and vocational institutions held at the International Convention Centre on 12 November, the minister pointed out that as a developing nation, Brunei Darussalam needs to have educated and skilled people.

He said that in this age of fast-paced development and rapid economic growth, countries throughout the world have one common goal, namely to enhance the quality of life and well-being of their people, which they try

to achieve notably through developmental efforts.

One of the ways towards realising their development target, he added, is by ensuring that the people acquire a certain level of education and skill to enable such countries to carry out commercial and industrial activities and be able to compete adequately with other countries.

"To that end, one of the most commonly applied development strategies is by giving due attention to science and technology, and due emphasis on human resources development (HRD)," he said.

Brunei Darussalam should draw valuable lessons from the experience

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• from page 4 (A comprehensive survey needed to ascertain effectiveness of vocational and technical courses)

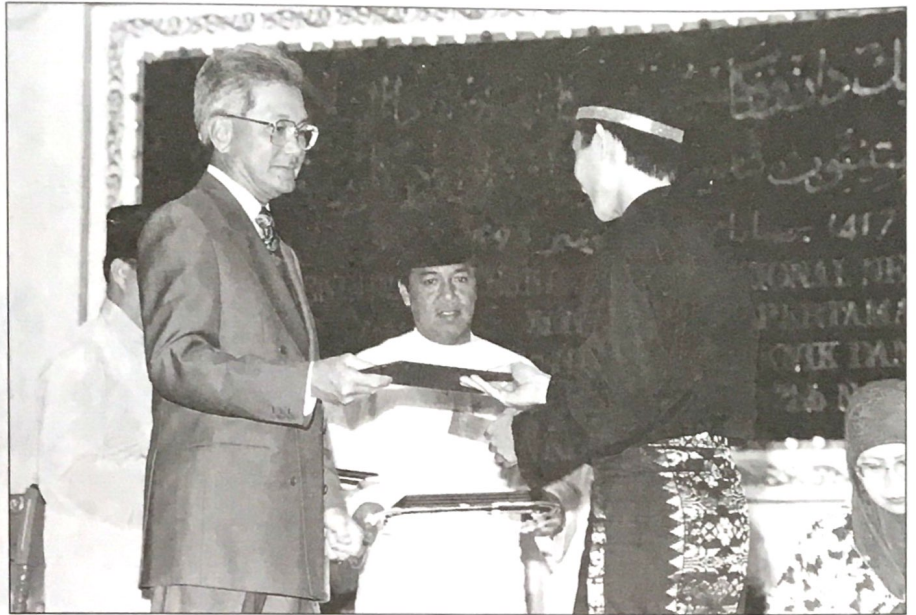
of such countries, whose success apparently lies on the proper management of human resources and their ability to take full advantage of science and technology, he further stressed.

He said that we need to realise that sustainable economic growth and development based on industrialisation, have certain pre-requisites such as increasing efficiency, productivity, innovation, initiative and creativity.

"This is where the relevant authorities need to play their roles since the pursuit of knowledge and the acquisition of skills do not end with the completion of a course and the presentation of diplomas or degrees, but is actually an on-going process when one enters the employment world."

This is aimed at searching for excellence in whatever work or project we undertake, which in turn will help in enhancing the performance and contributing towards achieving a level of excellence for the organisation or company we are working for.

The convocation ceremony was the first being held for those who have passed their Diploma courses from the



*The Special Adviser to His Majesty in the Prime Minister's Office and Minister of Home Affairs, Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Setia Bakti Diraja Dato Laila Utama Haji Awang Isa presents the diploma to one of the graduates.*

technical and vocational institutions since the formation of the Brunei Darussalam Technical and Vocational Education Council in May 1991.

The Council approved the first technical course in 1992 which carries the National Diploma in financial and commerce, while 12 courses were offered the following year at Nakhoda Ragam Vocational School, Sultan Saiful Rijal Technical College and Jefri Bolkliah College of Engineering, with the first intake of 285 students.

To date, the Council has approved 19 national courses, 11 courses at pre-national diploma and 14 courses on industrial arts.

At the first convocation, graduates received their national diploma and certificates in various fields, including financial and commerce, survey, automotive engineering, computer studies, electronic and electrical engineering, air-conditioning engineering and mechanical and manufacturing.

## WTO urged to pave way towards multilateral trading systems

**T**he Minister of Industry and Primary Resources has underscored the importance of the first World Trade Organisation's (WTO) Ministerial Conference in providing the organisation's future direction for multilateral trading systems.

In this regard, the minister stressed that the review of the implementation of the Uruguay Round should be the top priority, and that the outcome of the meeting would be a fair and balanced one, taking into account the interests of member countries.

Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Setia Pahlawan Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdul Rahman, the Minister of Industry and Primary Resources made these remarks in his statement at the

five-day meeting held at the Suntec Convention Centre in Singapore from 9 to 13 December.

The conference, the biggest ever to be held in Southeast Asia, was attended by 160 member countries, observers as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs). It was officially opened by Singapore's Prime Minister, His Excellency Mr. Goh Chok Tong.

The meeting among others discussed new issues concerning labour standards, investment, competition policy and government procurement.

In his statement, the Brunei Darussalam Industry and Primary Resources Minister also stressed the Sultanate's support of WTO

membership. To that end, he said, WTO should expedite its work to bring the current applicants into the system.

On the new issues, said the minister, there are still a number of areas which pose some problems. In approaching this question we always maintain that the level of ambitions must coincide with the political and economic reality.

"We agree with the general assertion that the WTO must be dynamic and relevant to today's world. But the danger of overloading its agenda and overstressing its resources at this early stage cannot be ignored," he stressed.

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Above: His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and the six other leaders of ASEAN member countries as well as those of the observer countries comprising Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar which will gradually join the association to compose the ASEAN 10, waving to photographers during their recent first informal meeting in Jakarta. Below: The ASEAN leaders holding a meeting among themselves before including their counterparts from the observer countries in their discussions.



Below: His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and His Excellency President Soeharto in discussion during bilateral talks between the two sides. Joining in the discussions were His Royal Highness Prince Haji Jefri Bolkiah and the Special Adviser to His Majesty in the Prime Minister's Office and Home Affairs Minister, Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Setia Bakti Diraja Dato Laila Utama Haji Awang Isa and senior Indonesian officials.

## First ASEAN Informal Meeting

His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam along with the other six ASEAN Heads of Government as well as those of Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar met

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Right : His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam holding bilateral talks with His Excellency General Than Shwe, Prime Minister cum Minister of Defence of Myanmar.



• from page 6 (First Asean Informal Meeting)

at the First ASEAN Informal Meeting in the Indonesian capital, Jakarta, on 30 November.

In his statement prior to the day-long summit, the Brunei ruler stated that the summit indicates "ASEAN's spirit of solidarity and strong relations."

His Majesty added that he was pleased to meet his counterparts at the meeting, where they could discuss and exchange views on the grouping's latest progress since they last met in Bangkok.

The monarch said that since they last met, they have participated in various international processes involving ASEAN.

The informal meeting was a follow-up of the decision adopted by the ASEAN leaders at the Fifth ASEAN Summit last year in Bangkok, Thailand. It was aimed at exchanging views on matters of importance to ASEAN member countries in the international levels, particularly in facing the rapid development in the world and the free-market era in Southeast Asia.

The meeting was chaired by His Excellency President Soeharto of Indonesia. It was divided into two sessions. The first was the meeting among the ASEAN Heads of Government. The other was between the ASEAN leaders with the observer countries namely Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar.



Above: The do'a selamat (prayer seeking blessings) is read by the Brunei State Mufti prior to the Brunei ruler's departure from Jakarta, where at the city's Halim Perdana Kusuma international airport he is seen off by the Indonesian Cabinet Secretary, His Excellency Bapak Haji Saadilah Mursjid, below.



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• from page 7 (First ASEAN Informal Meeting)

At the end of the meeting, His Majesty expressed great satisfaction with the outcome of their discussions.

He said that he had a fruitful exchange of views and general discussions on latest developments in ASEAN, especially in political, security and economic cooperation areas.

In the area of functional cooperation, His Majesty said that he was determined to see the ASEAN solidarity last and regional identity grow even stronger, so that the next generation's commitment will be just as strong as it is now.

On AFTA (ASEAN Free Trade Area), His Majesty was pleased with the overall progress on the Common Effective Preferential Tariff (CEPT).

On the session with leaders of the observer countries, His Majesty said he was satisfied with the assistance given by all concerned in helping the preparations for Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar towards joining as full members of ASEAN.

A 16-point joint statement issued at the end of the meeting among others stated that the ASEAN leaders

expressed their satisfaction on the implementation of the various decisions they had undertaken at the Fifth Summit.

The leaders were of the view that these encouraging achievements have contributed to a greater commitment of countries in Southeast Asia to strengthen their cooperation in various fields towards the enhancement of peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

However, they agreed that efforts should be continued and strengthened to complete the remaining tasks which have been undertaken in pursuit of ASEAN objectives.

They agreed to celebrate the 30th anniversary of ASEAN in Malaysia during the Second Informal Meeting next year.

In this regard, they agreed to develop ideas on the establishment of an ASEAN Foundation to promote ASEAN awareness, people-to-people contacts through scholarships, fellowships and other exchanges. They believed that the establishment of such a foundation would further improve the quality of life of the ASEAN peoples through human resources development.

The leaders also reaffirmed their strong commitment to the speedy realisation of an ASEAN that is made

up of all the ten Southeast Asian countries. In the meantime, as in the case of Cambodia and Laos, Myanmar will be participating in ASEAN activities, the statement added.

On the ASEAN-EU (European Union) relations, the leaders noted with increasing concern the efforts of an EU member country to introduce extraneous issues such as the question of East Timor in the economic cooperation and interaction between ASEAN and the EU. They believed that such a move would only lead to unwarranted aggravation in the ASEAN-EU relations, while at the same time jeopardizing the tripartite process on East Timor presently taking place under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General.

The leaders also exchanged views on the proposed ASEAN Vision beyond 2003. Considering by that year AFTA would have come into being, the leaders will request their ministers to develop an ASEAN Vision towards 2020 and to submit report at the Second Informal Meeting.

During their meeting, the statement said, the ASEAN Heads of Government also discussed regional matters such as the ASEAN Mekong Basin Development Cooperation, the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) and the South China Sea.

• from page 5 (WTO urged to pave way towards multilateral trading systems)

Speaking on labour standards, he pointed that it is best dealt with in other fora such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

In his Statement, Pehin Dato Awang Haji Abdul Rahman also spoke on issues pertaining to environment, trade and competition as well as a multilateral agreement on government procurement.

On Information Technology Agreement (ITA), the minister called for flexibility which should incorporate the principle of gradual and progressive liberalization, especially for the developing countries, and this needs to be further worked out before finalizing the agreement.

On trade and investment, he said, foreign direct investment brings more than just capital, and it also provides opportunities for transfer of

technological and managerial skills.

But, the complexity of the relationship and the implications of any new disciplines to the developing countries, particularly in their promotion of developmental objectives, compel us to be cautious.

"We are ready nonetheless to explore this issue, along with UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), to ensure that the interests of developing countries, such as technology transfer, will not be subordinated," stressed the minister.

### **Declaration issued end of the meeting**

The ministers ended their meeting by issuing a declaration, which among others stated that in pursuit of the goal of sustainable growth and development for the common good, the ministers envisaged a world where trade flows

freely.

To this end, the ministers renewed their commitment to a fair, equitable and more open rule-based system; progressive liberalization and elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade in goods and in services; rejection of all forms of protectionism; and elimination of discriminatory treatment in international trade relations.

They also renewed their commitment towards integration of developing and least-developed countries and economies in transition into the multilateral system and the maximum possible level of transparency.

In the 23-point declaration, the ministers renewed their commitment to the observance of internationally recognized core labour standards, of which the International Labour

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# More than 1,300 people honoured with medals

**H**is Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has bestowed meritorious medals to 1,333 government employees. The ceremonies to present the medals were held at the Banquet Hall of the Lapau in Bandar Seri Begawan.

Presenting the medals as a personal representative of His Majesty was His Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Bendahara Seri Maharaja Permaisua Pengiran Muda Haji Sufri Bolkiah.

Of the 1,333 recipients, 125 were bestowed the 'Pingat Jasa Kebaktian' (P.J.K), and 817 received 'Pingat Indah Kerja Baik (P.I.K.B), while the remainders received 'Pingat Kerja Lama' (P.K.L). The medals were awarded for meritorious deeds, good conduct and long service to civil servants, police personnel and members of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces.

The ceremonies were attended by Pengiran Cheterias, Cabinet Ministers and their Deputies, members of the Privy Councils, Foreign Diplomats, Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Government Departments.



*His Royal Highness Prince Haji Sufri Bolkiah presenting the PIKB, PJK and PKL medals to two recipients, above and below, who were among the more than 1,300 people honoured for their deeds and contribution to the country.*



• from page 8 (WTO urged to pave way towards multilateral trading systems)

Organisation (ILO) is the competent body to set and deal with these standards, and that they affirmed their support for its work in promoting them.

"We believe that economic growth and development fostered by increased trade and further trade liberalization contribute to the promotion of these standards," declared the ministers.

The ministers noted that trade relations of WTO members are being increasingly influenced by regional

trade agreements, which have expanded vastly in number, scope and coverage.

They attach high priority to full and effective implementation of the WTO Agreement in a manner consistent with the goal of trade liberalization.

They also recall that the WTO Agreement embodies provisions conferring differential and more favourable treatment for developing countries, including special attention to the particular situation of least-developed countries.

On investment and competition, the ministers agreed to establish a working group to examine the relationship

between trade and investment. They also agreed to establish a working group to study issues raised by members relating to the interaction between trade and competition policy, including anti-competitive practices, in order to identify any areas that may merit further consideration in the WTO framework.

The Ministers also agreed to establish a working group to conduct a study on transparency in government procurement practices, taking into account national policies, and, based on this study, to develop elements for inclusion in an appropriate agreement.

His Majesty The Sultan and Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam arriving to a red carpet welcome together with a guard of honour at Elysee Palace, right.



The Brunei monarch speaks of great potential for closer cooperation between Brunei Darussalam and France during a lunch given by the Mayor of Paris, above, and left below, His Majesty admiring Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting the Mona Lisa while being briefed by the curator during a visit to the Louvre Museum in the French capital. Right below: His Majesty showing keen interest on the exhibits at the Islamic Arts Gallery of the Louvre Museum.



• from page 1 (Sultan's visits boost relations and economic prospects)

The Brunei monarch went on a state visit to France from 16 to 19 December, followed by an official visit to Belgium on 19-20 December. He was accompanied by His Royal Highness Prince Haji Jefri Bolkiah, the Minister of Finance.

One of the focuses of the ruler's visit to France was the country's aircraft manufacturing industry in the city of Toulouse.

There, His Majesty visited the headquarters of the firm Aerospatiale where he was met by its President, Mr. Yves Michot and by the President of Airbus Industrie, Mr. Jean Pierson.

His Majesty then toured the Clement Ader Plant, where among others, the assembly line of the Airbus A330/340 aircraft is located. He also

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Above: The President of Airbus Industrie, Mr Jean Pierson briefing His Majesty and His Royal Highness Prince Haji Jefri Bolkiah on various aspects of the firm.



Top left: His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam being introduced to dignitaries on his arrival at Toulouse — the seat of the French aircraft manufacturing industry, which the monarch took a close look at. Above: While inside the model cockpit of an Airbus airliner, the ruler is briefed on the sophisticated equipment, and at right: the monarch getting a briefing about another product of Airbus Industrie - the helicopter.



Right: An Exocet guided missile catches His Majesty's attention during his tour of Aerospace Installations and the ruler is briefed about the weapon.





Left : The French President, His Excellency Mr. Jacques Chirac and his wife hosting a state dinner in His Majesty's honour at the Foreign Affairs Palace. His Royal Highness Prince Haji Jefri Bolkiah, far right and other members of His Majesty's entourage also attended the function, as did French dignitaries.

• from page 10 (Sultan's visits boost relations and economic prospects)

visited the Airbus Industry Installations for a look at the training centre and the flight simulator for the Airbus A319.

The monarch also had a meeting with the Mayor of the City of Toulouse, Mr. Dominique Baudis.

Meanwhile, back in the French capital, apart from meeting with the French President, His Excellency Mr. Jacques Chirac, His Majesty also met with the Mayor of Paris, Mr. Jean Tiberi.

Speaking at the meeting, His Majesty reiterated the good relations between Brunei Darussalam and France and he said that potential exists for closer cooperation in all areas between them.

Paris, His Majesty added, has a special significance for us in Southeast Asia. In 1991, the Paris Conference on Cambodia was concluded, bringing stability at long last to the region, and allowing its people the peace and stability necessary for rapid economic growth.

For his part, the Mayor of Paris lauded His Majesty for making Brunei Darussalam a respected country right from the beginning of his reign.

"I wish to pay tribute to the work you have accomplished within the Sultanate, safeguarding the ethnic and spiritual values of Islam while embarking on the road to development, modernity and prosperity, ever respectful of the country's age-old identity", Mr. Tiberi said.

He added that through His

*Speaking at the dinner, right, His Majesty said relations between Brunei Darussalam and France go a long way back and there is room for even closer cooperation between the two nations. The French President, for his part, said the two countries can be a catalyst for the new Asia Europe relationships.*



His Majesty is introduced to French dignitaries by President Jacques Chirac prior to the state dinner. Picture above shows the Brunei monarch exchanging greetings with a Member of Parliament.

• Continued on page 13

• from page 12 (Sultan's visits boost relations and economic prospects)

Majesty's action and wisdom, Bandar Seri Begawan has become a capital whose architecture and infrastructure link tradition and modernism, favouring the well-being of its inhabitants while preserving the natural beauty of the environment.

He went on to say that His Majesty has also shown "wisdom in promoting values of peace and progress and combatting violence and fanaticism in this unstable, dangerous, frequently selfish and indifferent world".

"It is important that we combine our efforts to further peace to which all peoples aspire, a peace taking into account everyone's interests and their desire for security".

At the end of the French visit, His Majesty began a two-day visit to Belgium.

In that visit, His Majesty met with the Belgian Prime Minister, His Excellency Mr. Jean-Luc Dehaene. His Majesty also called on His Majesty King Albert II of Belgium and held separate meetings with the President of the European Union Commission and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

His Majesty first had a meeting with the Belgian Prime Minister at Egmont Palace, at which both leaders exchanged views on wide ranging regional and international matters of mutual concern. Among the topics discussed were the developments in the Asia-Pacific region, ASEAN, and Asia-

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The Special Adviser to His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in the Prime Minister's Office and Home Affairs Minister, Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Setia Bakti Diraja Dato Laila Utama Haji Awang Isa, above, and the Minister of Industry and Primary Resources, Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Setia Pahlawan Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdul Rahman, below, are introduced to the French President and First Lady on their arrival with His Majesty at the Foreign Affairs Palace for the state dinner.



The Brunei State Mufti reads the do'a selamat (prayer seeking blessings) on His Majesty's departure from Paris for Brussels to begin a two-day official visit to Belgium.



Right : Speaking at a dinner at Egmont Palace in Brussels given in his honour by the Belgian Prime Minister, His Excellency Mr. Jean Luc Dehaene, His Majesty announced the setting up of the Brunei Investment Office in the Belgian capital.



His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam deep in discussion with the Belgian Prime Minister during the dinner at Egmont Palace, below. His Majesty thanked Belgium for its assistance in the setting up of the Brunei Investment Office in Brussels and he expressed the confidence that it will strengthen the growing economic links between the two countries.

- from page 13 (Sultan's visits boost relations and economic prospects)

#### Europe Meeting (ASEM).

At the meeting the monarch also stated his satisfaction with the existing warm and friendly relations between the two countries, and will encourage more exchanges of visits between ministers and senior officials from both governments in order to promote even greater cooperation.

Prior to the meeting, a welcoming ceremony was held at the Egmont Palace. The Belgian Prime Minister invited the Brunei ruler to a dais where both countries' national anthems were played, followed by an inspection of a guard of honour.

From Egmont Palace, His Majesty proceeded to Laekan Palace to pay a courtesy call on His Majesty King Albert II of Belgium. Both heads of state discussed a wide-range of topics.

The monarch later had separate meetings with His Excellency Mr. Jacques Santer, the President of the European Union Commission at the Breydel building and with His Excellency Mr. Javier Solana Madariaga, Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) at its headquarters.



The Belgian Prime Minister, His Excellency Mr. Jean Luc Dehaene introduces His Majesty and His Royal Highness Prince Haji Jefri Bolkiah to Belgian dignitaries shortly before the dinner he hosted in honour of the Brunei monarch.





Above: Accompanied by His Royal Highness Prince Haji Jefri Bolkiah, His Majesty arriving at the European Union Commission's headquarters, where they were met by the commission's President, His Excellency Mr. Jacques Santer. Above right: At the headquarters of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, NATO, His Majesty had an exchange of views on various matters with the NATO Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Javier Solana Madariaga, and at right, His Majesty being presented a souvenir by the City Mayor of Brussels

## Sultanate sets up investment office in Brussels

Brunei Darussalam is setting up the Brunei Investment Office for Europe in the Belgian capital, Brussels, which will strengthen the growing Brunei Darussalam — Belgium economic links, stated His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam during his two-day official visit to Belgium beginning 19 December.

His Majesty said that as Belgium gained its status as the diplomatic capital of Europe by becoming one

of Europe's key business centres, many multinational corporations have based their headquarters for Europe in Belgium, and besides business incentives, its linguistic talents and industriousness are also powerful attractions.

"For these reasons Brunei Darussalam has chosen Brussels as the location for its investment office for Europe," said His Majesty in his address during a dinner at Egmont Palace given by the Prime Minister of Belgium, His Excellency Mr. Jean-Luc Dehaene.

His Majesty thanked the Belgian Government for its assistance in the setting up of the Brunei Investment Office.

"I am confident that this office will strengthen the growing economic links between our two countries," he stressed.

His Majesty also stated that Brunei Darussalam and Belgium enjoy excellent bilateral relations, in which economic cooperation is given particular emphasis.

• Continued on page 16

A firm handshake between His Majesty and the President of the European Union Commission during their meeting at the commission's headquarters in Brussels.



• from page 15 (Sultanate sets up investment office in Brussels)

He pointed that both countries are greatly dependent on trade with the external world, and both are compelled by the forces of global interdependence to look outwards.

The Asia-Pacific region offers great opportunities for Belgian exports and expertise, the ruler said.

In this regard, he expressed hope that his visit "will spark greater interest among Belgian businessmen to go out East."

Speaking on the importance of regional associations, His Majesty said that both countries' fortunes are closely tied to developments in the two countries' immediate regions.

"The successful Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) held in Bangkok in March 1996 marked the beginning of a partnership," the ruler said.

"ASEM has laid the foundations for a dialogue between two economically dynamic regions of the world. As partners in ASEM, we can work together to foster closer cooperation in science, technology and human resource development," His Majesty pointed.

The monarch also urged that action should be followed up to implement the decisions taken at the

On arrival at the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) headquarters, His Majesty and NATO's Secretary General shake hand warmly before getting down to discussions during their meeting at the NATO headquarters.



Bangkok ASEM. He said, the first Asia-Europe Business Forum held last month in Paris and the second one to be held in Thailand next year are important steps in this direction.

He added that the proposed Asia-Europe Foundation will deepen understanding between Asians and

• Continued on page 23

*They are one of the driving forces of the new Asia-Europe partnership*

## **Brunei Darussalam and France - close, long standing friends**

**T**he close relations between Brunei Darussalam and France were underscored by His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanah Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and the President of the Republic of France, His Excellency Mr. Jacques Chirac.

"You have been a long standing friend of Brunei Darussalam", said the Brunei monarch during a state dinner on 16 December held in his honour in conjunction with his state visit to France.

The visit, from 16 December to 19 December, had further reaffirmed the good relations between the two countries, which forged formal diplomatic ties in 1984, soon after the Sultanate resumed full independence and sovereignty.

Brunei Darussalam values the support given by the French government in promoting the learning of the French language in Brunei schools, as well as the efforts by the French embassy in the Brunei capital, Bandar Seri Begawan, to bring world class artists and performers to Brunei Darussalam and to enrich the cultural life in the Sultanate, His Majesty further said.

"France has also brought outstanding overseas scholars in Malay Islamic culture to Brunei Darussalam", added the ruler.

His Majesty stressed such mutual respect and understanding should be the spur to drive "our own bilateral economic cooperation into new areas of partnership, where we can build on the cooperation and often quite considerable levels of investment which have taken place so far".

"At the same time it should provide a foundation on which we can perhaps look at other aspects of our relationship in greater depth".

His Majesty said the new era of Asia-Europe relations inaugurated at

the Asia-Europe meeting, ASEM in Bangkok in March this year gave the leaders of Europe and Asia the opportunity to explore ways to increase cooperation between two economically-dynamic regions.

Both regions, stressed His Majesty, are moving towards cooperation. While the European Union, EU, has deepened cooperation among its members and is also preparing for an eventual expansion to include former East European members, so is ASEAN, which is moving towards closer economic cooperation through the ASEAN Free Trade Area - AFTA, and preparing to become an enlarged community with the inclusion of Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar into its membership by the year 2000.

"If progress we made in Bangkok can be consolidated, there are now outstanding opportunities for economic and technical cooperation, especially in the transfer of technology and the education and training of our people", His Majesty pointed.

He urged all countries both in Europe and Asia to ensure that the many decisions agreed upon at ASEM are followed up and implemented.

In his speech at the dinner which took place at the Foreign Affairs Palace, His Majesty also lauded France's active role in the planning of ASEM, which was done while France held the presidency of the EU. France also hosted the first Asia-Europe Business Forum in October this year, which brought business leaders from both regions into active cooperation in considering how to expand trade and investment.

"Your active role in ASEM reflects your commitment to forging closer ties with Asia", said His Majesty.

In his own address at the dinner, the French leader paid tribute to His Majesty for his leadership during which Brunei Darussalam has transformed itself and opened itself to

the outside world while preserving its traditions and identity.

"Our two countries have forged ties of excellent quality between them, and your visit, the first State Visit ever by a Sovereign of Brunei to France, should strengthen them further", His Excellency President Chirac said.

He emphasised that a closer and more substantial relationship between the two nations will be one of the driving forces of the new Asia Europe relations initiated at the Bangkok Summit.

On that occasion, he said, France expressed its intention to be more present in Asia, and particularly in south East Asia.

President Chirac expressed his appreciation for Brunei Darussalam's support of France's application to be associated, in a national capacity, with ASEAN activities.

France pays great attention to the economic initiatives taken in the region, in particular AFTA and the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area, BIMP-EAGA in which Brunei Darussalam plays an essential role especially towards becoming a regional hub for trade and tourism services.

"And so, precisely at a time when France is strengthening its ties with Asia, Brunei is seeking to diversify its economy and increase exchanges with new partners. That is why our two countries must turn more towards each other".

The French President further said that already French companies, large and medium sized, are present in Brunei Darussalam in a wide variety of sectors, such as oil and gas, the aircraft industry and banking.

Brunei Darussalam and the Republic of France, on a multilateral basis, have been working closely

• *Continued on page 23*

*A recipient being presented the key to his new house by His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at the recent key and land grants presentation ceremony. As with other visits, the ruler is warmly greeted by the young and old alike.*



## Land grants, house keys for citizens in Brunei Muara district

**H**is Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has presented more house keys and land grants to his subjects. In the latest ceremony held at a primary school in Kampong Mata-Mata Gadong in the Brunei-Muara district on 28 November, the monarch presented land grants to 120 families who have lived on lands under TOL (Temporary Occupation Licence) at three villages namely Junjungan,

Kapok Kanan and Lugu, all in the Brunei-Muara district, for between 10 and 30 years.

Some 317 families received keys to houses under the Housing Scheme for Landless Citizens in Kampong Rimba, while 227 others received the keys for houses under the National Housing Scheme, also at Kampong Rimba, Stage one.

After presenting the land grants and keys, His Majesty toured the school and visited two others nearby, the Arabic Preparatory School and a religious school, both

in Beribi.

His Majesty also visited the Beribi Light Industrial Complex. The area which consists of four blocks, among others, accommodate textile, food, electrical and other industries.

The monarch then went to the house of the village headman of Kampong Mata-Mata, before proceeding to visit the Narcotic Control Bureau building in Kampong Tungku.

His Majesty ended his visit at the housing areas in Kampong Rimba.



The monarch stopping to chat and watch children at work as he toured two junior schools, top and above, following the key and land grants presentation ceremony which took place at another nearby school.

Below: The ruler being briefed by an entrepreneur as he toured the Beribi Light Industrial Complex.



## Production of food is top priority - says minister at Food Summit



The Minister of Industry and Primary Resources, Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Setia Pahlawan Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdul Rahman spoke of the need for increased world food supply at the recent World Food Summit in Rome.

**T**he Minister of Industry and Primary Resources has stressed that the Government of Brunei Darussalam places top priority on food production.

Speaking in Rome, Italy at the World Food Summit held on 13-17 November, Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Setia Pahlawan Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Abdul Rahman, the Minister of Industry and Primary Resources said that the provision of food for all, calls for the development of long-term national policies and establishment of

• Continued on page 21

# Collective efforts and solidarity vital for OIC success

**T**he Minister of Religious Affairs has been speaking on the importance of collective efforts and solidarity among member countries of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) to ensure that the organisation succeeded in achieving its goals and objectives.

Yang Berhormat Pehin Jawatan Luar Pekerma Raja Dato Seri Utama Dr. Ustaz Haji Awang Mohd Zain, the minister of Religious Affairs made the remark in his statement at the Twenty-Fourth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia on 9 - 13 December.

In his statement, Pehin Dato Haji Awang Mohd Zain also spoke on issues involving the solidarity of Muslims in the region, Bosnia Herzegovina and the Middle East.

On regional issue, the minister noted the signing of the peace accords between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), saying the peace accord "will bring lasting peace and stability and will speed up the economic development in the southern part of the country."

The minister also greeted OIC's new members, Uzbekistan and the Republic of Suriname, and welcomed the Republic of Togo and Central African Republic as observers.

On Bosnia-Herzegovina, he commended the commitment and vital role of the international community in the process of the country's national reconciliation, redevelopment and reconstruction of economy and infrastructure, which was destroyed by four years of war.

He said many OIC member countries are contributing positively and that such a trend should continue.

However, the minister pointed that although the fighting has ceased, hostility still remains. Therefore, the presence of the international force is still much needed to ensure peace and

stability in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

On the Arab-Israeli relations, the minister urged the OIC to continue urging the Israeli leadership to commit itself to carrying on with the peace process begun in Oslo and Madrid.

He said that the new Israeli leadership has failed to fulfill its international commitments and the obligations bequeathed it by its predecessor.

"The policy of the new leadership in reversing the progress made has given rise to tension between the Palestinians and the Israelis."

"This should not be allowed to hinder the progress of the peace process," he stressed.

The minister also lamented on the continuing conflict in Afghanistan which has already caused immense loss of life and brought great destruction to the country.

"In this regard," he stressed; "this situation has to be reversed and we urge all parties to negotiate and resolve their differences peacefully."

On the OIC itself, the minister reiterated on the two matters of concern which impeded the organisation's progress, namely on the OIC's resources and on how to manage these resources effectively.

However, the minister was pleased to note that the eminent persons group has made several recommendations to streamline and to make the work of the organisation more effective.

"We need to look at how best we can implement these with respect to the organisation and its subsidiary organs," he said, while adding, "we support the idea of merging some of the organs."

He urged the OIC to provide effective mechanism to ensure that the member states concerned meet their outstanding obligations.

He also mentioned the EPG's (Eminent Person Group) proposal to increase the budget of the organisation by 15 percent annually until the target of US\$50 million is reached.



*The Religious Affairs Minister of Brunei Darussalam, Yang Berhormat Pehin Jawatan Luar Pekerma Raja Dato Seri Utama Dr. Ustaz Haji Awang Mohd. Zain touched on many issues in his speech at the Fourth Islamic Conference in Jakarta.*

"We believe that this proposal, if implemented, would only serve to increase the already heavy burden borne by member countries," stresses the minister.

The meeting was chaired by the Indonesian Foreign Affairs Minister, His Excellency Mr. Ali Alates.

At the end of the meeting, the ministers agreed to approve item agenda as was discussed at Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) in Jeddah.

The meeting also agreed on the setting up of a working group committee in evaluating the criteria of new OIC members.

The meeting has appointed the former Prime Minister of Morocco, His Excellency Dr. Azeddine Laraki as the new OIC Secretary-General for a four-year term, beginning 1 January 1997.

The next Islamic conference of foreign ministers will be held in Qatar in 1998.

• from page 19 (*Production of food is top priority — says minister at food summit*)

effective regional and international mechanisms of cooperation that ensure sustainable food production and food supply.

The minister said: "National policies should place strong emphasis on balanced approach in industrialisation and primary production with the objective to achieve economic growth and food security."

Pehin Dato Haji Awang Abdul Rahman pointed that the Sultanate's series of five-year National Development Plans have given emphasis to the utilisation of the country's resources towards increasing domestic food production, revitalising rural economy and stimulating sustainable industrial development.

The country's strategy is to mitigate over-dependence on external sources of food supply and for the last several years, the farmers have been able to produce more and achieved a meaningful supply of food for the population.

In the fishery sector, Brunei Darussalam realises the importance of marine catches to supply food and is also one of the highest per capita fish consumers. Therefore, the government through the Department of Fisheries has taken steps to ensure a continuing supply both from marine and from imports, said the minister.

Concurrently, he added, the Fisheries Department has promoted modern methods such as 'aquaculture' to increase supply of fish to meet domestic requirements.

Other activities carried out include protection and conservation of aquatic environment, protection and enhancement of natural nursery and breeding grounds as lucrative industries should not be pursued at the expense of environment degradation.

The other strategy is the distribution policies to ensure the supplies reach even the most remote

parts of the country.

Essential commodities such as rice and sugar are under price-control regulation to ensure all population have access to them for the same quality and acceptable prices, he added.

Rice is one of the most important staple food crops in the world, which much of Asia depend on.

Brunei Darussalam places emphasis to ensure the continuing of supply through bilateral arrangements and make special efforts to grow the crop. More importantly through ASEAN, our country has entered into a regional arrangement to ensure the supply of rice in the event of a shortfall.

### **Role of regional organisations**

Speaking on the role of regional organisations, the minister said: "Within ASEAN, our governments have established the ASEAN Food Security Reserve Board, AFSRB, which bears the responsibility to monitor and review rice commodity in the world market and at the same time administer the ASEAN Seven Emergency Rice Reserve.

Every ASEAN member country has the responsibility to put aside emergency rice reserve as a contingency. Collectively this emergency rice reserve now stands at 67,000 metric tons, and can meet unforeseen shortage of rice in any ASEAN member country.

The common issues of food and population is also being actively addressed within the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, APEC, forum, he stressed.

In his statement at the summit, the minister also urged that the issue of food reserves and problems related to food security be addressed at the global level.

He said the elements of price stabilisation, research and development, technology transfer and technical cooperation should form the main basis for international coop-

eration and global efforts.

He pointed that developed nations can offer and should put more efforts to extend food production technology to the needy nations.

The summit, he added, will inspire and encourage all nations in the world to foster closer cooperation to allocate more generous resources to expand and sustain food production.

The minister noted that the Food and Agriculture Organisation, FAO, which has provided more than two decades of leadership in addressing world problems of food security is well suited to continue and coordinate programmes to bring an end to global hunger and malnutrition.

The five-day summit was organised by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations and the Government of the Republic of Italy. It ended with the Rome Declaration on World Food Security.

The declaration, among other things, stated that the Heads of State and Government or their representatives have pledged their political will and their common and national commitment to achieving food security for all, and to an on-going effort to eradicate hunger in all countries, with an immediate view to reducing the number of undernourished people to half their present level by no later than the year 2015.

They also make commitment to implement policies aimed at eradicating poverty and inequality and improving physical and economic access by all, at all times, to sufficient, nutritionally adequate and safe food and its effective utilization.

They will pursue participatory and sustainable food, agriculture, fisheries, forestry and rural development policies and practices in high and low potential areas, which are essential to adequate and reliable

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# Financial services and banking industry progress

**B**runei Darussalam is experiencing a rapid pace of development in the financial services and banking industry as a result of stiff competition among the existing banks in the country, said the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports.

Speaking at the official opening of a new branch of the Baiduri Bank in the Kiarong business complex in the capital on 16 December, Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya

Digadong Seri Lela Dato Seri Paduka Haji Awang Hussain said that this indicates that the economy and the development of the country as a whole, continue to be strong and stable and able to compete with other developing countries.

The minister said that the rapid development of the financial institution in the country also marks the increasing standard of living of the people. All these progress are evident

of the government's rational 'fiscal policy'.

Pehin Dato Haji Awang Hussain also urged the Baiduri Bank management to expand its shareholders to other firms or local holding or even to individuals, an effort that will be most welcomed by the community.

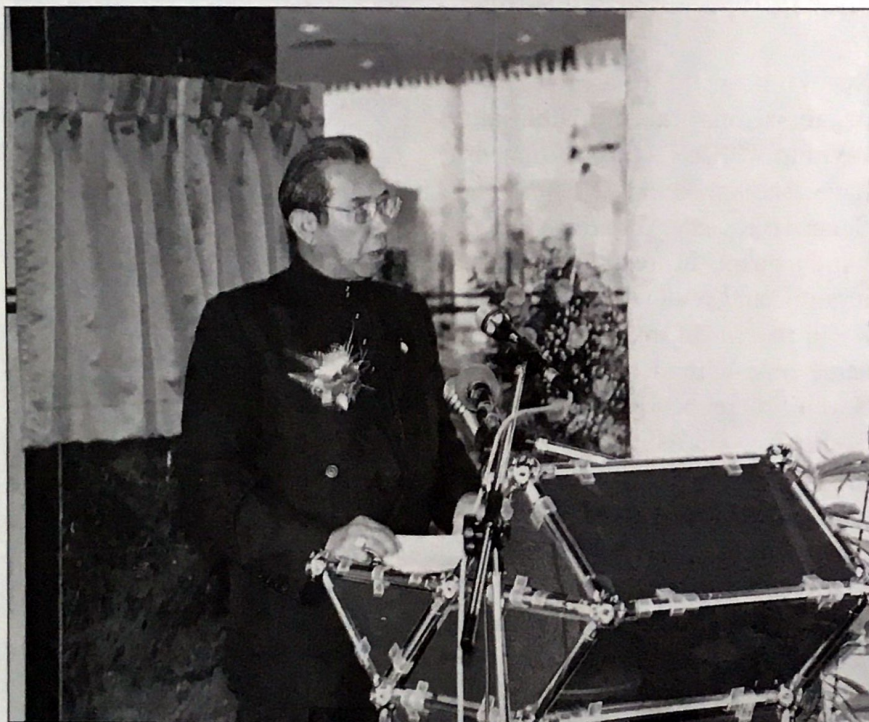
This is in line with the policy and objective of the Baiduri Bank which emphasises local commitment, the minister pointed.

Speaking on the importance of customers' service in the banking business, the minister said that a bank's progress is not only dependent on its ability to participate in the business enterprise alone, such as foreign investment, but also its ability to attract large number of customers. The more customers there are, the stronger the bank will be, he said.

One of the bank's objectives is to increase the number of its customers and there are various gimmicks and professional ways.

In this regard, he called for effective measure towards meeting this objective by providing the customers an excellent service, one that is competent and courteous.

Baiduri Bank is the country's newest financial institution. Since its formation in 1994, it has provided additional services in finance and securities.



*Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Digadong Seri Lela Dato Seri Paduka Haji Awang Hussain, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports says financial services and banking industry in Brunei Darussalam are making good progress.*

• from page 21 (Production of food is top priority — says minister at food summit)

food supplies at the household, national, regional and global levels.

They will strive to ensure that food, agricultural trade and overall trade policies are conducive to fostering food security for all through a fair and market-oriented world trade system.

The leaders will also endeavour to prevent and be prepared for natural disasters and man-made emergencies and to meet transitory and emergency food requirements in ways that encourage recovery, rehabilitation, development and a capacity to satisfy future needs.

They will promote optimal allocation and use of public and private

investments to foster human resources, sustainable food, agriculture, fisheries and forestry systems, and rural development, in high and low potential areas.

The declaration added that they will implement, monitor, and follow-up this Plan of Action at all levels in cooperation with the international community.

• from page 16 (*Sultanate sets up investment office in Brussels*)

Europeans through exchanges in the academic, social, cultural and other fields.

"Brunei Darussalam has agreed to make a financial contribution to the Asia-Europe Foundation," His Majesty assured.

He also hoped that the Sultanate and Belgium will continue to work together, bilaterally and through regional organisations in order to increase both countries' economic and social development.

"I am confident that our efforts to bring our two regions closer will also strengthen the good ties between our two countries," said His Majesty.

Earlier in his address, His Majesty pointed that like Belgium, the Sultanate, too, feels that it must be outward-looking and play as significant a role as possible in affairs beyond its national borders.

The fortunes of Brunei Darussalam, explained His Majesty, are closely tied to those of ASEAN and the Asia Pacific Region as a whole.

Many of our national policies have been directed towards the need to ensure that we play our part successfully in all regional affairs, he said.

"Hence, I feel it is true to say that, although proud and independent individual nations, we have both recognised the fact of

interdependence and, indeed, both welcome it as the means whereby smaller nations such as ours can play an essential role in world affairs," His Majesty stressed.

### **Brunei Investment Agency will boost investments in Belgium**

The Belgian Prime Minister, among others, stressed that the setting up of the Brunei Investment Office will boost investments in Belgium.

He said that he is encouraging Belgian businesses to participate in the Sultanate's new projects, and pointed that there is a large potential for cooperation between the two countries. The Belgian economic structure, he said, is largely based on small and medium-sized companies and they are all looking for an opportunity to prospect the Asian markets.

The Belgian Prime Minister also spoke about the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), and about both countries' participation in the worldwide movement towards trade liberalisation.

He commended His Majesty for leading the Sultanate towards peaceful independence and towards the dynamics of the modern industrial world, and for his ability in balancing economic progress with traditions, religion and heritage.

He said: "While the temptations of fast development and economic wealth have brought other countries

to the brink of instability, you have managed to balance your traditions and your faith with the changes induced by economic fortune."

### **Belgium businessmen welcomed**

In another address, this time during a meeting with the Mayor of Brussels, Mr. Francois Xavier De Donnea, His Majesty among others, welcomed Belgian businessmen to Brunei Darussalam to tap into the rapid growth of the Asia-Pacific region where many opportunities await.

The monarch said: "I am sure that there is much in our country which attract you."

"We are undertaking a wide-ranging programme of economic diversification. We are rapidly promoting investment, bringing our tariffs down and setting up the infrastructure needed to make us an important future centre of business, finance and trade in the East ASEAN area," he added.

His Majesty also hoped that Brunei Darussalam and Belgium will work closely to maintain the momentum of the Asia-Europe Meeting.

"Both our regions are undergoing important changes. For the future, Asia and Europe should re-develop a wide network of ties and would lay the foundation for closer Asia-Europe relations," said His Majesty.

• from page 17 (*Brunei Darussalam and France - close, long standing friends*)

within the framework of the ASEAN-EU dialogue, which also brings in ASEAN's other dialogue partners including Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United States, Japan and the Republic of Korea. Both are also participants of the Asia Europe Meeting and the ASEAN Regional Forum, ARF.

Economic relations between the two countries is at present is quite minimal, and as Brunei Darussalam has a very small market compared to other

ASEAN member countries, trade balance has so far been in France's favour.

Brunei Darussalam imports food, beverages and tobacco, crude materials inedible, mineral fuels, chemicals, manufactured goods, machinery and transport equipment from France while its exports to the republic include chemicals, manufactured goods and articles.

Earlier in the day preceding the State Dinner, His Majesty and the French President met at the Elysee Palace during which they discussed

bilateral matters and exchanged views on regional and international affairs.

His Majesty expressed his strong desire for the existing good relations to be further enhanced and strengthened, in particular in the economic areas covering trade, investment and tourism.

The Brunei monarch urged French companies to take the opportunity to participate more actively in the economic development of Brunei Darussalam, using the country as a base for their expanding activities in South East Asia.



## Skyline ever changing as the nation moves ahead with modernisation

The skyline of the Brunei Darussalam capital, Bandar Seri Begawan is changing rapidly with many new tall buildings being built as the nation moves forward with its nation-building and modernisation process.

Picture shows just two of such new buildings, one of which houses the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources (in the foreground), and the other houses a number of departments under the Prime Minister's Department. They stand imposingly on the outskirts of the capital.

Amid these rapid developments, however, Brunei Darussalam is ever mindful about preserving the environment, and it places environmental considerations such as environmental beauty and protection uppermost when embarking on new construction projects.

### *Brunei in Brief*

Capital : Bandar Seri Begawan

Land size : 5765 sq. km.

Population : 267,800 (Mid-1992)

Official Language : Malay

Official Religion : Islam

December rainfall : 315.5 mm

(annual 2,818mm)

### *Brunei Malay in a minute*

In each edition we introduce readers to a Brunei Malay word, which is particularly peculiar to the country.

In this edition we have selected the word **arap**.

**Arap** is to cut vegetables, onion, meat and the likes. In

standard Malay **arap** is potong or hiris.

Let's use the word in a sentence.

Ibu **mengarap** bawang itu kecil-kecil.

My mother cuts the onions into small pieces.

**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.**