



بروني دارالسلام

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

newsletter

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HM: Domestic and international environment impact Brunei

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah singled out three issues that reflected national concern during his New Year announcement on January 1.

First, he touched on the state of public service. The government had been pressing for a customer-orientated public service for the past few years. "From my observation, the quality of service in several government agencies needs upgrading," he said.

His frequent unannounced random visits to places throughout Brunei exposed the unsatisfactory performance of several state organisations. He called for immediate improvement because service excellence is central to organisational success.

According to the sovereign, public service personnel should enforce dedication and discipline in carrying out their duties if they are to fulfil customer expectation.

Secondly, the sovereign urged Bruneians not to take peace and prosperity for granted. "I am confident that many are as committed as the government in upholding peace and security, especially in curbing

social threats of all kinds," he said. Events outside Brunei, which are marred by violence and acts of cruelty, serve as reminders on the fragility of peace.

People should mind instances of



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam delivers a speech on the eve of New Year 2004

crime such as drug abuse, and actions that contravene the law and religion, which had surfaced at home. "These are causes of social ills that could eventually jeopardise peace and security," he said.

Finally, His Majesty recalled how events throughout 2003 had shaped the

international socio-political and economic landscape. They also raise questions on the role of international organisations such as the United Nations (UN).

"But Brunei Darussalam continues to entrust hopes and confidence to the UN as an international forum whose existence is much needed to protect the rights and interests of member states, especially the developing states," he said.

He also touched on Brunei's participation in APEC, ASEAN, the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM), and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). In each event, he said, Brunei is in support 'to strengthen the global Multilateral Trade System'.

His Majesty said that Brunei continues to participate in the new round of trade deliberations at WTO-level. He also welcomed international and regional efforts to sustain peace and combat terrorism.

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM NEWSLETTER

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YOUR TURN

The next issue of the Brunei Darussalam newsletter will appear on 31 JANUARY 2004. If there are events relating to our country you would like featured in this newsletter please call us on Tel: 2383400/ ext.BDN Division or better still, send us a report with a picture, if possible. All editorial rights reserved.

PALACE NEWSROUND... PALACE NEWSROUND



Royal family meets Haj pilgrims

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and Her Majesty Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha; and the other members of royal family received audiences from intending haj pilgrims on January 10.

The audiences took place at the Istana Nurul Iman.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah received His Excellency Allaster Edward Cox, the outgoing Australian high commissioner on January 13 at the Istana Nurul Iman.

His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah received audiences at the Balai Penghadapan of Bukit Kayangan on January 14 from:

- ① His Excellency Ha Hong Hai, the newly accredited Viet Nam ambassador to Brunei.
- ② His Excellency Allaster Edward Cox, the outgoing Australian high commissioner.



HRH: congratulatory message to Myanmar

His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Minister of Foreign Affairs issued congratulatory message to His Excellency U Win Aung, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar on the occasion of Myanmar's independence day on January 4.

Her Majesty: Strengthen global dedication to help women



Her Majesty Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha at the opening ceremony for the 7th ACWW Area Conference for South East Asia and the Far East

Her Majesty Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha urged states and non-state actors to exercise multifaceted approach to improve women's socio-economic conditions worldwide.

Four issues shape the concern of today's women: technological advancement, environmental pollution, lifestyle, and violence.

Her Majesty made the remark on January 11 during the 7th Area Conference for Asia and the Far East of the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW).

In the internet-driven ICT sector, she said, advances in telecommunication technologies should enable women to access education 'at all levels at an affordable cost'.

"It is therefore incumbent upon governments and NGOs around the world to work together to ensure that the fruits of technology can be shared by everyone, particularly the populations of the developing and least developed countries," she said.

According to Her Majesty,

technology should help sharpen women's awareness of the environment 'since in many households, women are responsible for sourcing food for the family and the healthcare of their young.' She touched on the prevalence of pollution that threatens the quality of air, food and water.

Asthma and other respiratory diseases induced by air pollution, she said, are now common illness among children. Her Majesty also recalled how soil degradation caused by chemicals used in agriculture, and water contamination resulted from industrial discharge all contribute to jeopardising human health.

"I urge both the public and private sectors to seriously look into this issue for the sake of our current generation and those to come," she said.

Modern day lifestyle, she said, had brought about unhealthy dietary changes among people. According to Her Majesty, dietary changes are now seen as major contributory factors leading to coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and various cancers. She urged women to stem the

risk by practising healthy diet at home.

Her Majesty The Raja Isteri also called for recognition of the 'many forms of violence and abuse' inflicted on women worldwide. She recalled how violence and abuse are not only confined to homes but also at the workplace and other areas where women should feel safe.

The abuse continues, she said, because of the victim's ignorance of the law or her rights. "These instances of violence and abuse must be combated through a combination of education and heavy penalties for the perpetrators," said Her Majesty.

International organisations such as the ACWW, she said, play a pivotal role in helping women overcome violence and abuse.

The London-based ACWW is the largest international organisation for rural women. ACWW attempts to raise the living standard of rural women and their families by giving practical support, introducing community development programmes, and setting up income generating schemes.



Her Majesty attends a dinner in conjunction with the 7th ACWW's conference

Her Majesty at ACWW'S dinner

A dinner was held in conjunction with the Seventh Area Conference for Asia and Far East of the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW).

Attending the ceremony was Her Majesty Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha.

The ceremony took place at the Empire Hotel and Country Club on January 11.

Major oil company practises green policy

Brunei Shell Petroleum (BSP) had restored a six-hectare wasteland to its pristine condition in response to domestic and international concern for the environment.

Formerly a man-made depression divided into several large ponds filled with oil sludge, the area, Sungai Bera Holding Basin (SBHB), had functioned as waste handling facility since 1929. It processed and stored oily wastes generated from the oil industry.

BSP upgraded SBHB as a fully designated treatment and storage facility in 1982. Restoration work called the SBHB Remediation Project began in November 1999.

BSP's managing director, Mark Carne, made the remark on January 6 to commemorate the project completion.

The restoration work entailed removing 80,000 cubic metres of oil based mud and soil for a ten-stage treatment process called the Low Temperature Thermal Desorption (LTTD).

The treated waste and soil were mixed with clean soil and sand prior to being returned to SBHB. Today, SBHB features green grass and saplings.

Minister: Islamic banks are not charity organisations

Islamic banks are profit maximising companies and run on commercial logic. This contrasts with charity bodies, which are non-profit motivated and organised at individual, community, and government levels.

But, as part of the Islamic economic system that emphasises the religious dimension, Islamic banks are compelled to champion distributive justice.

The Islamic financial system, which structures the Islamic banks and sharia-compliant financial intermediaries, is still at its infancy and scope for innovation abounds.

If practised strictly according to its theory, Islamic financial system offers stability to the host economy. Its religious obligation to distributive justice nurtures a system where banks, depositors, and fund users share the burden of profit and loss together.

Pehin Dato Haji Abu Bakar bin Haji Apong, the Minister of Health announced on January 7 at the closing ceremony of the international conference on Islamic banking and finance.

According to Pehin Dato Haji Abu Bakar, who is also chairman of the Islamic Bank of Brunei (IBB), cost-effectiveness and better services are contributing factors to Bru-

nei's thriving sharia-compliant financial sector.

Its Islamic financial institutions had witnessed growing customer deposits. And Brunei's *takaful* (Islamic insurance) companies capture 'significant proportion of its domestic insurance market in a short time period'.

Brunei also plans to raise the profit- and loss-sharing assets in the portfolios of its Islamic financial institutions, he said. Financial, political, religious, and social commitments are not the only essentials needed to drive a fully developed Islamic financial system.

So do qualified human resources. And Brunei attempts to overcome such constraint is by investing in education. It is establishing the Centre for Islamic Banking, Finance and Management at the University of Brunei Darussalam (UBD) with the financial cooperation from the Islamic Development Bank of Jeddah.

The three-day conference addressed issues that challenged Islamic banking and finance worldwide. Those issues include risk management, the formulation and issuance of Islamic bonds, management of Islamic equity funds, and project finance.



Members of royal family with the London-based personnel of the Brunei High Commission



The sovereign meets Brunei students

HM: Next generation underpins Brunei's future



His Majesty The Sultan delivers a royal speech to Brunei students studying in United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland

Brunei expects its students at foreign educational institutions bring great visions and ideas when they return home. As a dynamic-minded generation, capable of viewing development with a discerning eye, they are the foundation of Brunei's continuous prosperity.

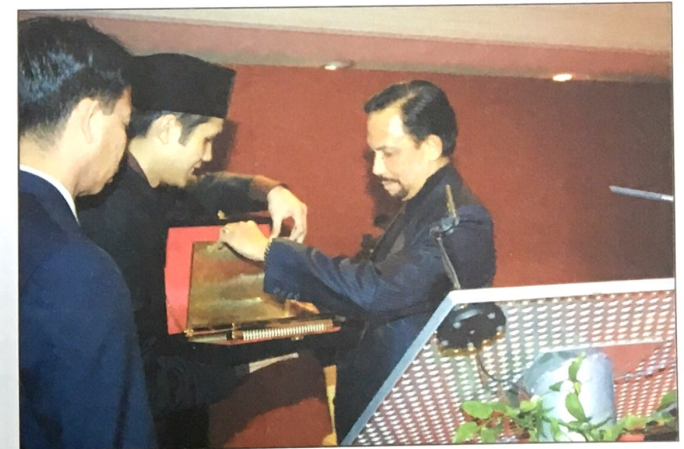
Brunei also expects its foreign-trained graduates to succeed the helms of management and administration so as to sustain national development.

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah made the remark on January 4 during a gathering in London with Brunei students based in Britain and Eire.

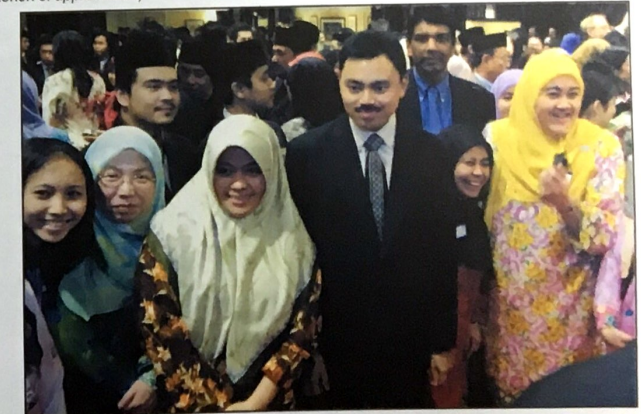
As Brunei's beacon of hope, His Majesty urged prospective graduates to mind the negative consequences of globalisation. To forge a tradition of excellence, students should have an eye for what is best by being observant of world surroundings.

The sovereign touched on how 2003 was marred by tragic events. Students should regard them as an educational process. According to His Majesty, there are secrets behind each event, the meanings of which are known only to Allah. And each event that lands either at home or abroad is a development that requires evaluation.

Such instances distinguished students who could exercise reasoning, a trait needed by a nation-state mindful of globalisation, from ones who couldn't. "Because not everything brought by globalisation are suitable for our aspirations," said His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam.



His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam receives a 'pesambah' (token of appreciation)



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee takes a group photo with Brunei students

Acting director: Take interest in children's schooling

Successful nurturing of an educated workforce begins at the early stages of children's lives. It involves interplay among several parties.

Parents should report to schools in case their children have learning problems, while schools expect parents to take keen interest in their children's studies. And the state

provides the necessary educational infrastructure such as schools, the teaching staff, and institutions of higher learning.

Haji Mohd Daud bin Haji Mahmud, acting director of technical education, made the remark on January 7 during the 17th opening session for the 2004-2005 student intake of the Nakhoda Ragam

Vocational School.

Today's prospective employers put a high premium on a job applicant's qualification, skill, and experience. Students acquire these three value-added attributes when they enrol at vocational and technical institutions, he said.

Brunei's seven technical and vocational institutions currently offer 95 courses.

Military cadets celebrate silver jubilee

The Boys' Company of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) had celebrated its 25th anniversary on January 2.

RBAF chief of staff, Major General Pehin Dato Haji Halbi bin Haji Mohd Yusof attended the celebration that featured thanks giving prayers.

Established on January 1, 1978 the Boys' Company offers engineering and technical careers in RBAF for promising secondary school students. Its fully sponsored training programmes extend to undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Brunei LNG pioneers in plant rejuvenation

Brunei LNG (BLNG) is implementing the first project of its kind in the LNG industry: replacement of its four Main Cryogenic Heat Exchangers (MCHE) while the plants are fully operational.

Scheduled for completion in 2005 and costing B\$150 million, the replacement project enables BLNG to extend its plant capacity for another 30 years. The project also enables BLNG to secure the supply of LNG to international buyers beyond 2013.

According to BLNG's managing director, Dato Haji Hamdillah bin Haji Abdul Wahab, the first two MCHE are due to arrive at the end of this January. The other two are scheduled in January 2005.

Dato Haji Hamdillah made the announcement on January 8 at the briefing session on MCHE Replacement.

He also said that transporting the MCHE from ship-to-shore-to-Lumut requires logistical coordination among several state agencies and private companies. Each MCHE weighs 100 tonnes and contains a 100-kilometre tube winding.

Lumut-based BLNG had been awarded several international certifications throughout its 30-year operations. It received the ISO 9001 on July 31, 1996; and the ISO 14001 on July 4, 2000, the first LNG plant ever to win such recognition.

BLNG also received two more certifications on April 24, 2002: the ISO 9001:2000, while its laboratory service received the ISO/IEC 17025:1999 – the first in Brunei.

The Brunei government owns 50 per cent of BLNG; the remaining shares are divided equally between Shell and Mitsubishi.

Local hospitality industry fights drug menace

As frontline personnel, hotel managers are in a position to spot tell-tale signs of potential trouble brought by their guests. As such, the government expects hotel managers to help combat drug abuse in a bid to keep Brunei free from drug-related crimes.

Haji Ahmad bin Metassan, assistant director of enforcement and intelligence of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) made the remark on January 8 at a briefing session for the Tutong- and Belait-based hotel managers.

The NCB briefing gave hotel managers access to important guidelines that enable them to forge a two-way cooperation with law enforcement agencies. Managers were introduced to the general profile of a drug addict and drug dealers.

NCB personnel also briefed the managers on the types and effects caused by drugs, plus penalties and powers enforced by the drug legislations.

Permanent secretary:

Locality needs effective grass root leadership

Headmen of villages and *mukim* are in a position to introduce community development activities for the benefit of their localities.

They do so by engaging support from the locals, and deliberating proposals through their respective Village and *Mukim* Consultative Council (MPMK), a body that institutionalises the headman's grass root leadership. A well-functioning MPMK promises a thriving locality.

Dato Haji Md Yusof bin Haji Md Hassan, permanent secretary at the Ministry of Home Affairs made the remark on January 9 during the inauguration of the new village

headman of Kampong (village) Rimba.

But the success of an MPMK, its grass root leadership and its locality is underpinned by the cooperation from all of its inhabitants. And it takes an approachable, responsive and vigilant headman to persuade people to cooperate.

Youths, he said, should be involved in the MPMK discussions to enable them to propose activities that befit their needs. This keeps them from engaging in dubious activities.

And the educated members of

localities should also get involved because their knowledge and skills add value to the workings of the MPMKs, he said.

Dato Haji Md Yusof also called on grass root leaderships and their localities to work together with the government in upholding law and order.

Brunei has four constituent parts called districts. Several *mukim* compose a district, and several villages compose a *mukim*. Headman of a single village is called *ketua kampong*, and headman of a *mukim* is called *penghulu*.

Police commissioner: Community cooperation vital to fight crime

Citizens, as members of a community, need a peaceful and secure socio-economic environment to enable them to prosper. The police should engage the cooperation of the community if it is to succeed in exercising its function as an agency designed to maintain law and order.

The village consultative councils and the village-based neighbourhood

crime watch serve to supplement law enforcers' attempts in combating crime. Favourable public perception of the police is underpinned not only by strong commitment to quality job performance, but also by working together with these two subgroups.

Dato Haji Abdul Rahman bin Haji Johan, the police commissioner, made the remark on January 12 at the 83rd anniversary of Brunei's

Police Day.

He recalled how the types of crime had changed in ten years. Police work of today is challenged by terrorism and transnational crimes. "Public hopes and expectations are equally challenging for the police, and here lies its responsibility in ensuring that such challenges are overcome through sheer commitment," he said.

Brunei would soon establish a national sports committee for the paraplegic (OKU).

Tangible benefits of OKU membership include access to proper training by the ASEAN Parasports Federation (ASPF) and the International Paralympic Federation (IPF).

Hajah Mordiah binti Haji Jakia, the acting director of community development announced on January 8 during a thanksgiving ceremony for the Brunei contingent who had returned from the 2nd ASEAN Para Games.

Viet Nam hosted the 2nd ASEAN Para Games on December 23-28, 2003. Brunei's athletes returned home with four gold, ten silver, and five bronze medals.

Brunei commends sports for the disabled



Brunei's athletes for the ASEAN Para Games return home with gold, silver and bronze medals

Brunei curbs SARS threat

The Ministry of Health had implemented preventative measures on January 13 in a bid to keep Brunei SARS-free.

Passengers arriving at Brunei International Airport and Serasa ferry terminal complete the mandatory health declaration forms and are subject to body temperature checks.

Brunei had introduced the Communicable Diseases Order on March 2003 in response to SARS. The government also secured technical assistance from the World Health Organisation (WHO) in the event of SARS outbreak in Brunei.

Health Ministry: Serve quality food to consumers

Restaurateurs that practice calorie reduction in their food preparation help Brunei stem the major causes of death among citizens: cardiovascular diseases, cancers, diabetes mellitus, kidney diseases, and brain haemorrhage.

Irham bin Haji Ali, a dietician at the Ministry of Health made the remark on January 13 during the health

promotion seminar.

Food consumption that does not comply with health guidelines contributes to the rise in lifestyle-related diseases afflicting Bruneians of today.

The health ministry attempts to fulfil its 1998 Public Health Rules and Standards by championing balanced diet as one of the building blocks of a healthy lifestyle.

HRH: Feedback helps identify problems

Brunei sends athletes to international sports events and expects them to return home with medals as proof of victory.

Infrequent championship deserves review; the reports submitted by team managers would show which aspects need remedy.

His Royal Highness Prince Sufri Bolkiah, chairman of Brunei Darussalam National Olympics Committee (BDNOC) made the remark on January 14.

He called on team managers of the Brunei contingent for last year's 22nd South East Asian Games (SEA Games), held in Viet Nam, to submit their reports to the BDNOC.

According to His Royal Highness, next to a commitment to win, BDNOC should also identify factors that had caused dismal performance. "I would like copies of the reports for reference so I may study the problems experienced by our athletes," said His Royal Highness.

Brunei sent 118 athletes to compete in ten events during the 22nd SEA Games. The athletes had returned home with one gold, one silver, and eight bronze medals.

Vice chancellor: Review the teaching methods

University students today are no longer passive recipients of knowledge. They are more demanding and expect better standards from the academia during lectures and tutorials.

Advances in information-communication technologies (ICT) had enabled students to access vast areas of information at a click of a button.

The University of Brunei Darussalam (UBD) is obliged to keep abreast with the latest development that befits its function as Brunei's premier institution of higher learning.

Dr Haji Ismail bin Haji Duraman, UBD vice chancellor made the remark on January 14 during a book launching ceremony.

"With regards to teaching, we should study and review whether our teaching methods are adequate and in line with rapid progress in ICT," he said.

He touched on the relevance of books in areas of learning and teaching, and urged UBD to continue publishing academic materials.

The ICT, he said, does not substitute but complements the function of books in channelling knowledge to society.

Appointments

The Public Services Department had announced that:

- Effective from January 8, Tutong District Officer, Hepnie bin OKSPD Abang Haji Abu Hanifah is the Commissioner of Land at the Land Department.
- Haji Abdul Karim bin Haji Abdul Wahab, who held the post as Acting Deputy Director of Administration at Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been confirmed to the post on January 3.

Royal Brunei Airlines (RBA) received its second Airbus A320 aircraft, bearing the call sign V8 RBT, on January 15. The first A320 arrived in Brunei on December 21, 2003.

The A320 aircraft has a four-hour flight range and carries a two-class configuration: 12 business and 132 economy.

RBA now has two types of Airbus aircraft: the A320 and the A319. RBA's two A319 aircraft arrived last year, on August 28 and September 10 respectively.

Fleet augmentation is part of RBA's strategic plan that had been announced by its chief executive officer, Peter Foster, on April 25, 2003.

Second Airbus A320 joins RBA fleet



RBA's chairman, Dato Haji Hazair bin Haji Abdullah graces the blessing ceremony for the newly-arrived aircraft

Permanent secretary: Explore economic potential in traditional medicine



Permanent secretary Dato Haji Idris urges entrepreneurs to exploit local herbs for business opportunity

Local entrepreneurs should expand Brunei's agribusiness by venturing into herbal plants.

The government's 8th National Development Plan allocates resources to induce the cultivation of certain species of indigenous plants that have medicinal properties.

The process of identifying medicinal properties among herbs found in Brunei's flora is ongoing. Opportunities for discovery are still open to anyone interested in the herbal business.

Dato Haji Idris bin Haji Belaman, permanent secretary at the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources announced on January 15 at the officiating ceremony of the Herbal Botanical Garden.

The Herbal Botanical Garden, owned by Saudy Marketing, is a locally run company. Its core business is producing herb-based traditional medicines intended for health and beauty care.

Snippets...

Brunei issues commemorative stamps

Brunei had celebrated the 30-year ASEAN-Japan relationship with the launch of commemorative first day cover stamps on December 31, 2003.

As a joint project of the postal services department and the ASEAN department of the Foreign Ministry, the stamps depicted the socio-cultural aspects found in Brunei and Japan. It included traditional games that thrive in Brunei and Japan, which had been showcased during the ASEAN-Japan Exchange Year in 2003.

Minister: Systematise the *zakat* collection

Islamic financial system should narrow the disparity caused by competing economic and financial claims that afflict all levels of society. The prevailing economic activities that stress quick money gains encourage speculative investment.

Islamic tithe, *zakat*, which is underpinned by religious obligations, could minimise waste and inefficiency if its collection method employs proper system.

Islamic financial institutions should not function solely for profit. They should also foster habits and responsibilities that generate a thriving socio-economic environment underpinned by economic and financial equity.

Pehin Dato Haji Abdul Aziz bin Pehin Dato Haji Umar, the Minister of Education and acting Minister of Finance made the remark on January 5. Brunei hosted the three-day international conference on Islamic banking and finance at Empire Hotel and Country Club.

Brunei continues oil export to India

Brunei Shell Petroleum's (BSP) contract renewal to sell crude oil to India on January 5 secured Brunei's attempt to expand its oil export market.

Brunei signed the first term sale contract with the Indian Oil Corporation on July 17, 2003. The agreement stipulated Brunei's daily export of 10,000 barrels of crude, known as Brunei's Seria Light Export Blend (SLEB), to India from July 1 to December 31, 2003.

The renewed contract also stipulated daily export of 10,000 barrels of SLEB to India, but it now covers the period January 1 until December 31, 2004.

Overwhelming response to fund-raising walkathon

Over 6,000 people participated in the fund-raising walkathon for the Iraq Humanitarian fund. Participants were from public and private sectors.

Pehin Dato (Dr) Haji Hussain bin Pehin Dato Haji Mohd Yusof, the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports officiated the walkathon on January 11 at the Hassanal Bolkiah Stadium in Berakas.

The fund had managed to collect more than B\$100,000 since its establishment in April 2003.

At this walkathon, men walked for 4.8 kilometers while women walked for three kilometers.

National Day celebration

Brunei Darussalam will be celebrating her 20th National Day at the Hassanal Bolkiah National Stadium at night time.

This year's national day theme is '**Patriotism Core For National Strength**' (*'Patriotisme Teras Keteguhan Negara'*).

A series of meetings were conducted to discuss the preparation, and road shows were also held to promote and create awareness for the upcoming celebration.

Brunei Darussalam celebrates her national day on February 23.

Brunei In Brief	
Official name: <i>Negara Brunei Darussalam</i>	Official Language: <i>Malay</i>
Capital: <i>Bandar Seri Begawan</i>	Official Religion: <i>Islam</i>
Land size: <i>5765 sq. km</i>	Official Website: <i>www.brunei.gov.bn</i>
Geographical Position: <i>North-west of Borneo Island in Southeast Asia</i>	
National Carrier: <i>Royal Brunei Airlines</i>	

PUBLIC WARNING. The trafficking of **controlled drugs** carries the **death penalty** in Brunei Darussalam.