



# بروني دارالسلام

## BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

### newsletter

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## HM: Fulfil peoples' expectation with available resources

Nation-states of south and south east Asia are pressed to overcome economic, political and social challenges that foreground the 21<sup>st</sup> century. ASEAN and SAARC have vast resources, dynamic peoples, and resilient cultures.

The intention now is to use these attributes to match the tasks. This calls for regional organisations to play a pivotal role in addressing the collective needs of member states.

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam remarked on January 25. His Majesty was hosting a banquet for Her Excellency Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia of Bangladesh who was in Brunei for a two-day state visit.



*His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah welcomes Her Excellency Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia of Bangladesh to a banquet to commemorate her two-day state visit to Brunei*

According to the sovereign, ASEAN had embraced globalisation in terms of 'working together, sharing experiences, and learning from each other'. It does so to fit with the world scenario that is characterised by interdependence.

ASEAN peoples, he said, have talents, innovative skills, and imagination to master today's demands. Its leaders, for their part, are tasked to nurture an environment that allows these qualities to flourish.

"This calls for practicable economic programmes linking ASEAN and even the adjoining regions," said His Majesty.

He also said that it calls for interplay between state and society: national leaders exercise political sophistication and citizens cultivate commitment. Its matching security is not limited to the physical and material aspects, but covers social and cultural dimensions too.

Such environment promises cohesion, common purpose, complexity, flexibility, and tolerance. "Not simplicity of thought, violence, and fragmentation of states and societies," he said.

His Majesty had commended south Asian states for holding similar aspiration for their region. He had touched on the January 2004



## **BRUNEI DARUSSALAM NEWSLETTER**

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### **YOUR TURN**

The next issue of the Brunei Darussalam newsletter will appear on 15 FEBRUARY 2004. If there are events relating to our country you would like featured in this newsletter please call us on Tel: 02-383400/ext.BDN Division or better still, send us a report with a picture, if possible. All editorial rights reserved.

## **PALACE NEWSROUND... PALACE NEWSROUND...**

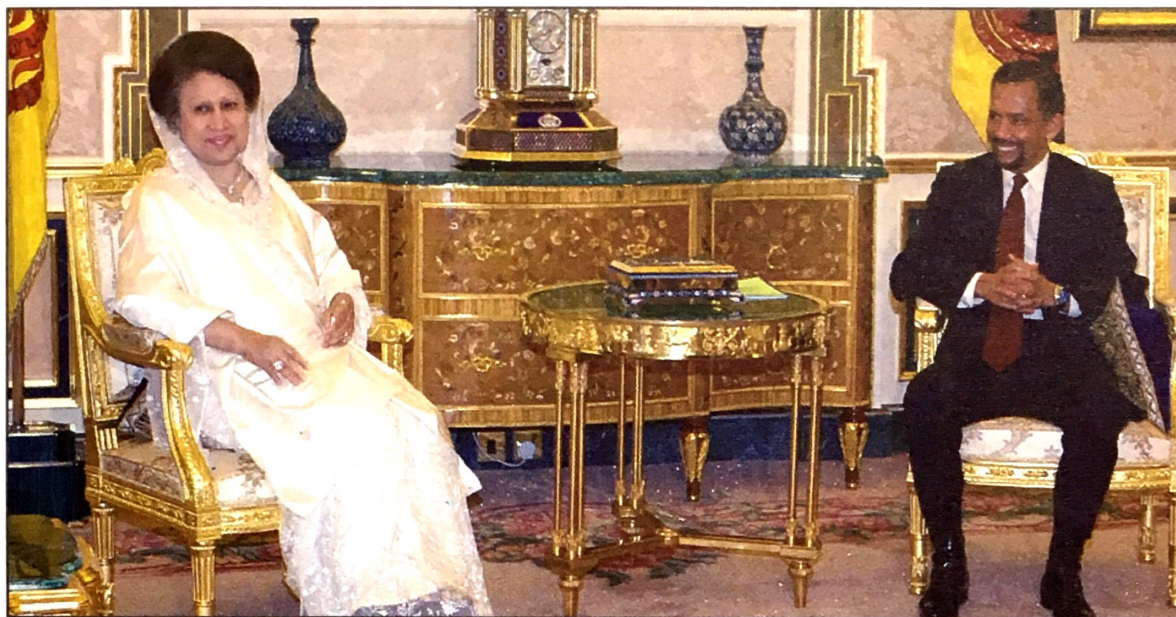


**H**is Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam received in audience, His Excellency Professor S. Jayakumar, Singapore's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Law on January 20 at the Istana Nurul Iman.



**H**is Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah received His Excellency Professor S. Jayakumar, Singapore's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Law on January 20 at the Istana Nurul Iman.





*His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at the bilateral meeting with Her Excellency the Bangladesh prime minister prior to the state banquet*

**H**is Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam held a bilateral meeting with Her Excellency Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia of Bangladesh at the Istana Nurul Iman on January 25.

The meeting preceded an audience with members of the royal family. The prime minister was on a two-day state visit to Brunei.

The bilateral discussion touched

on areas covering defence, the economy, and human resources. Both governments had agreed to establish a Joint Committee. It functions as forerunner to the foreign minister-level Joint Commission.

*\* From page one  
(state visit)*

Islamabad Declaration and its social charter that outlined SAARC's social development programme.

He also touched on SAARC's Regional Convention on the

Suppression of Terrorism and commended its tension-reducing implication. "SAARC's cooperation on security matters indicates its member states' confidence in addressing ancient conflicts and disputes without resorting to violence," he said.

Brunei and Bangladesh are linked in areas of human resources: 3,465 (February 2004 figures) Bangladesh citizens contribute to Brunei's national development. SAARC is the acronym for South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

## Minister: Disciplinary action awaits wayward staff

**P**ublic grievances had sparked government concern. Even His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam had touched on the state of the public service in his 2004 New Year address.

Absenteeism jeopardises the functioning of a government agency and tarnishes its image among the public. The government is urging top

management of each agency to enforce employment rules to stem the problem. Staff who flout them face penalty, including those involved in financial irregularities.

But absenteeism is not the only factor that hampers the writ of government. So does employee negligence. Lax enforcement of rules, for example, threatens departmental integrity. And poor

maintenance of public facilities is detrimental to the citizens' well being and safety.

Pehin Dato Haji Isa bin Pehin Dato Haji Ibrahim, the Special Adviser to His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at the Prime Minister's Office remarked on January 29. Pehin Dato Haji Isa is also the

*\* continued on page 6*



# District officer: A village needs functional headman

People expect their village headman to perform as a contact person that listens to their grievances and feedbacks. The headman is also expected to mediate between members of his locality and government agencies. An approachable headman is one who is accessible to his community at any time.

A village headman who associates with the lives of his community influences its rate of progress. A functional headman is not confined to being attentive. He volunteers to do tasks beyond his job description, such as delivering the old-age pension to senior members

of his community.

Besides earning community trust and esteem, doing so enables a headman to learn first hand the state of his locality's social condition.

Dato Haji Harun bin Haji Ismail, the Brunei-Muara district officer remarked on January 21. He was addressing the monthly session comprising village headmen and *penghulu* at the Brunei-Muara District Office.

He urged village headmen and *penghulu* to reflect on their 2003 performance. According to Dato Haji Harun, their efforts should match with the stipulated responsibilities

outlined in the 1998 Service Scheme for Village Headmen and *Penghulu*.

Those who are negligent, he said, risk a disservice to their localities. It results in a crop of criticisms that focused on their attitudes.

The post, village headman, is an elected office voted by people living in a locality. The same concept is applicable for the post, *penghulu*. Both posts are open to contests for male candidates aged between 30 and 60. Office holders serve until they age 65. A *penghulu* is a headman of an area called *mukim* that comprises several villages.

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## Police: Mind the telltale signs of crime

The government had established the Village Crime Watch nationwide to help law enforcement agencies to keep Brunei free from social ills. The work of crime watch members is not limited to doing night patrol. They are also expected to remain vigilant of their immediate social surroundings.

Deputy Director of Crime Investigation (1), Senior Police Commander Haji Abd Rahim bin Haji Md. Noor remarked on January 21.

He urged all crime watch members to report to relevant law enforcement agencies on people's

activities that contravene the law.

Each village crime watch functions at local community level. All of its members are entitled to arrest people who perpetrate crime. They are next required to surrender the culprit to law enforcement agencies or the police.

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## Foreign Minister meets his Singapore counterpart

His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, the Foreign Minister had received His Excellency Professor S. Jayakumar, Singapore's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Law on January 19.

Professor S. Jayakumar was leading the Singapore delegation for a two-day official visit to Brunei.

His Royal Highness hosted a dinner for the Singapore entourage the same day. Both events were held at the Balai Penghadapan of Bukit Kayangan.



His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah welcomes His Excellency Professor S. Jayakumar, Singapore's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Law



## Foreign Minister at East Asia-Latin America gathering

His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, the Foreign Minister had attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ministerial Meeting of the Forum for East Asia Latin America Cooperation (FEALAC) on January 29 in Manila, the Philippines.

Foreign Ministers' Meeting functions as FEALAC's highest deliberation mechanism. FEALAC's first ministerial session was held in Santiago, Chile in March 2001.

FEALAC attempts to strengthen the linkage between East Asia and Latin America (see box). Member states engage in activities based on the ground rules stipulated in FEALAC's Framework Document. They implement cooperative projects through FEALAC's three working groups: education/science and technology, political and cultural, and economy and social.

FEALAC's East Asian members

comprised the ASEAN 10, Australia, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and New Zealand. The rest comprised 12 Latin American states: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

Guatemala and Nicaragua joined FEALAC this year.



*His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, the Minister of Foreign Affairs at FEALAC's 2<sup>nd</sup> Ministerial Meeting*



*His Royal Highness meets Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo of the Philippines*



*His Royal Highness with his East Asian and Latin American counterparts at a banquet hosted by Her Excellency the President of the Philippines*

## Brunei-Philippine bilateral relationship enters next phase

Brunei is expanding its bilateral relations with the Philippines through the Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation (JCBC).

His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, the Foreign Minister, had represented Brunei at the first Brunei-Philippine JCBC on

January 31 in Manila.

The JCBC was established after the state visit of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam to the Philippines on January 27 last year.

Brunei's current bilateral cooperation with the Philippines covers areas such

as air services, defence, fisheries, maritime transposition and trade.

Brunei's modern diplomatic history with the Philippines began on November 1, 1983 after the setting up of a Brunei Government Agency in Manila. The office was upgraded to embassy-level in January 1, 1984.



# HM visits Brunei's maritime gateway

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam had made an unscheduled visit to Muara on January 31.

Muara houses Brunei's sole deepwater port and container shipping terminal, and the sites for

light industry export zones. Its ferry terminal in nearby Serasa connects day-trip passengers to destinations in the north Borneo region. Muara also functions as a base for a string of law enforcement agencies that specialise

in maritime affairs.

The sovereign's itinerary comprised spot checks on government agencies stationed in the area. His Majesty also toured the Serasa ferry terminal.

## Minister: Fulfil public expectation

Government agencies need to focus on designated purposes to keep pace with public demands. This entails streamlining working procedures.

Clients' Charter (TPOR), for example, promises service excellence to customers. Constant reviewing enables the TPOR to remain functional, not become reduced to a litany.

Organisational structure requires assessment to minimise waste and duplication. And rationalisation proposals should not produce overlapping remit among agencies.

Pehin Dato Isa bin Pehin Dato Haji Ibrahim, the Home Affairs

Minister remarked on January 29.

New employees who had seen better ways of completing tasks were urged to voice their opinions while senior personnel were told not to disparage fresh inputs.

According to Pehin Dato Haji Isa, action teams led by departmental heads and Quality Control Circles (KKC) enable ideas to converge. These mechanisms promise synergy and should be reactivated at both ministerial- and departmental-levels.

All personnel are expected to practice the ethical standards as required by the Public Service Ethical Standard guidelines.



*Pehin Dato Haji Isa, the Minister of Home Affairs reminds top management of each agency of his ministry to be responsive to customer demands*

## FEALAC moots inter-regional cooperative projects

FEALAC's Manila Action Plan, launched on January 31, engaged its member states to cooperate in three areas. The first touched on poverty eradication by emphasising grass root orientated projects. The second promised on securing support from the industrialised member states for each project that entails investment in technology. And the third called on member states to combat transnational crimes.

Politics and economics had dominated this year's agenda. Member states had exchanged views on how to enable FEALAC to produce tangibles that contribute to global peace. FEALAC also attempts to cultivate understanding by exposing member states to the disparate cultures of East Asia and Latin America.

Member states had selected Brazil and the Republic of Korea to coordinate the next FEALAC ministerial meeting in two year's time.

*\* From page 3  
(disciplinary action)*

Minister of Home Affairs.

The home affairs ministry, he said, is committed to improving the service standards of all the agencies under its administration. He had instructed them to remedy the prevailing weaknesses found in each one (see separate story above).

Departmental heads and senior officers should exercise vigilance by ensuring that staff performance complies with the stipulated employment rules, regulations and procedures.

The minister said that agencies such as the district office, immigration, labour, and municipality should be proactive and firm in upholding the rule of law. Each agency is expected to run surveillance on areas under its jurisdiction.



# ASEAN presses ahead with industrial integration

**A**SEAN is drafting legally binding commitments to integrate the 11 industrial sectors that had been singled out during its 9<sup>th</sup> leaders' summit in October 2003.

The 11 sectors cover agro-based products, air travel, automotives, e-ASEAN, electronics, fisheries, healthcare, rubber-based products, textiles and apparels, tourism, and wood-based products.

Six member states had been selected based on their comparative advantage to coordinate the 11-industrial sector integration: Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

ASEAN made the announcement

on January 20 during the two-day informal economic ministers' meeting in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

The meeting also touched on several measures that help to move the 11-industrial sector integration closer to reality. The first referred to the ASEAN Single Window that quickens import clearance because of its streamlined paperwork.

The second was the ministerial endorsement of the term of reference for the ASEAN Consultations to Solve Trade and Investment Issues (ACT). Member states lodge complaints via ACT, an Internet based problem-solving network, during instances of operational problems regarding the implementation

of any ASEAN commitment. ACT promises to resolve complaints in 30 days and is based on the European Union's SOLVIT system.

The third was an instruction for the senior economic officials' meeting (SEOM) to finalise the terms of reference for the ASEAN Compliance Body (ACB), due for endorsement in April. The ACB, modelled after the WTO Textile Monitoring Board, enables member states to exercise peer pressure in solving disputes.

Pehin Dato Haji Abdul Rahman Taib, the Minister of Industry and Primary Resources, represented Brunei during the two-day session.

## ASEAN and EU improve trade strategy

**A**SEAN and EU officials had presented action plans for trade relations' new framework to strengthen economic cooperation between the two regions.

The action plans enable the two regions to fulfill requirements of the Trans-regional EU-ASEAN Trade Initiative (TREATI) that had been introduced in April 2003.

TREATI helps to expand ASEAN-EU trade and investment flow. It does so through closer cooperation in trade and trade facilitation. TREATI also promises 'greater understanding of issues of mutual interest', and deals with

investment and regulatory issues.

The new action plans were mooted on January 20 during the 4<sup>th</sup> Consultation between ASEAN Economic Ministers and EU Trade Commissioner (AEM-EU) in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

ASEAN had instructed its Senior Economic Officials' Meeting (SEOM) delegates to work together with their EU counterparts in using the SEOM-EU Consultation sessions to coordinate TREATI's implementation.

ASEAN had also instructed its senior officials to present status report on TREATI's implementation at the next AEM-EU Consultation.

Pehin Dato Haji Abdul Rahman

Taib, the Minister of Industry and Primary Resources represented Brunei during the 4<sup>th</sup> AEM-EU Consultation.

ASEAN-EU cooperation includes the ASEAN Programme for Regional Integration Support (APRIS), the ASEAN-EC Cooperation Programme on Standards, Quality and Conformity Assessment, and the ASEAN-EC Intellectual Property Rights Cooperation Programme.

In future, the ministers expect TREATI to coordinate the functions of these cooperation programmes when addressing trade and investment issues.

## Flag carrier sells budget fares online

**R**oyal Brunei Airlines (RBA) is offering the low priced *Bluesky Fares* online to Brunei-based passengers who are planning to fly to seven regional destinations effective January 24.

Passengers book and pay the one-way economy class tickets online for destinations to Darwin,

Denpasar, Jakarta, Kota Kinabalu, Kuala Lumpur, Kuching, and Surabaya.

Hajah Masrini binti Abdullah of RBA's e-commerce section said: "*Bluesky Fares* are the first step in what will be a major initiative by RBA to take advantage of its new online retail capability, and to

develop other elements of the low cost airline model in order to compete in this fast growing segment of the air travel business."

State-owned RBA introduced an online booking facility since August 2001. It installed a new Internet booking engine in December 2003.



# Expand handicrafts sales beyond Brunei

**B**runei expects its citizens who are in the handicraft business to make inroads into the global market.

It takes marketing skills and the use of information communications technology (ICT) to popularise local handicrafts overseas. ICT enables Brunei entrepreneurs to access knowledge on changes in production methods, and spot consumer preferences.

The quality of Brunei handicrafts is comparable with ones produced by their regional competitors. Design and style that retain Brunei's identity help local handicrafts to stay saleable.

Pengiran Metali bin Pengiran Haji Damit, head of promotion and entrepreneurial development of the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources (MIPR) remarked on

January 19.

MIPR hosted the two-day marketing workshop for locals engaged in small-and-medium enterprises with the cooperation from the ASEAN Japan Centre. The workshop taught participants about the skill of drafting action plans and strategies to enable them promote their handicrafts overseas.

**B**runei's 20-year diplomatic relations with India is characterised by progress. Brunei cooperates with India in venues such as the United Nations, the Commonwealth, the Non-Aligned Movement, and ASEAN. The two governments hold meetings that touched on defence, oil exports, and trade.

Brunei's bilateral cooperation with India had expanded after the state visit of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam to India in 1992. It now covers defence, development assistance, education and training, law, science and technology, and trade and investment.

Brunei offers ten scholarships annually to Commonwealth citizens, which include India, to study here. India, for its part, offers places at its institutions of higher learning to Brunei students.

Pehin Dato Haji Abdul Aziz bin

## Minister: Brunei benefits from the Brunei-India relations

*Pehin Dato Haji Abdul Aziz, the Minister of Education says Brunei admires India's advancement in the information communications technology sector*



Pehin Dato Haji Umar, the Minister of Education remarked on January 26 at the 54<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Republic Day of India.

According to the minister, Brunei welcomes India's cooperation in information and communications technology. The government looks forward for India to train Brunei's

young computer scientists.

"Brunei officials have already been working hard to finalise a Memorandum of Understanding to tap the vast IT potential of India and cooperation between our governments," said Pehin Dato Haji Abdul Aziz.

## Director-general: Analysing data important for disease control

**T**he outbreak of SARS outside Brunei had sparked the urgency to have a systematic management of epidemics. Health service professionals who are skilful in data analyses of statistics enable Brunei to exercise its disease control function.

Datin Dr Hajah Intan binti Haji

Salleh, director-general of health services remarked on January 31.

According to Dr Hajah Intan, employees working at the data management level are pressed to analyse information prior to issuing conclusion. The research exercise enables subsequent planning, evaluation, and

preventative measures to curb disease outbreak.

Dr Hajah Intan was addressing a group of health service professionals who had attended the EPI INFO workshop. The Epi Info is the software that helps health authorities to run epidemiological research.





Sa Bali bin Abas, the immigration and national registration director (centre right) finalises plans with his Malaysian counterpart to enable citizens of both countries to use smart cards to pass through national checkpoints when travelling to Brunei and Malaysia

## Brunei and Malaysia automate immigration clearance

Smart cards soon enable Brunei and Malaysian citizens to pass through border checkpoints quicker after the two governments streamline rules on travelling.

Brunei and Malaysia agreed to hold a test run for the Frequent Traveller's Card (FTC) starting April, prior to its overall introduction. The exercise engages 1,000 participants from each country.

Sa Bali bin Abas, immigration and national registration director remarked on January 20 at the

biannual Brunei-Malaysia Joint Commission Meeting on the Harmonisation of Immigration Matters.

"We are not only considering the aspects of easy travel; we also stress on enforcement so that the facility does not produce negative consequences," he said.

Brunei expects to announce the FTC registration soon. For successful applicants the FTC features, which record their movements through immigration control, are programmed into their

national identification cards.

Malaysia's FTC is in the form of smart card called *MyKad*.

The Sungai Tujoh checkpoint is Brunei's sole gateway that accommodates the FTC for now. This is matched by Malaysia's Miri checkpoint on the other side of the same border.

The Brunei-Malaysia Joint Commission Meeting is a biannual exercise alternately hosted between the two countries, this was the third. The previous one was held in Miri, Malaysia.

Radio Television Brunei (RTB) Newsroom is the region's first to use the Electronic Networking Production System (ENPS) effective January.

ENPS enables quick online preparation and editing of stories retrieved from news agencies worldwide. Its simultaneous dial in facility connects RTB journalists to 16 news services.

RTB director, Pengiran Dato Haji Ismail bin Pengiran Haji Mohamed, announced on January 20. RTB commissioned Techtel Southeast Asia Sendirian Berhad to install the equipment that cost B\$685,000.

RTB's ongoing project includes introducing high-capacity transmission system that eventually replaces the analogue broadcasting to digital version.

RTB is one of the agencies of the Prime Minister's Office.

## Brunei expands its news network capability



Pengiran Dato Haji Ismail, director of RTB says that the new system, ENPS, promises to streamline news writing process





*Haji Khamis, director-general of economic planning and development says domestic economy generates job vacancies for locals who are interested to work for the private sector*

## Director-general: National economy offers job opportunities

**B**runei's private sector had absorbed 3,000-4,000 jobs annually for the past ten consecutive years.

In 2000, the proportion of locals working for the private sector was 26 per cent; in 2002 it had risen to 28 per cent.

Haji Kamis bin Haji Tamin, director-general of economic planning and development, remarked on January 20 at the launch of the Advanced Training Scheme on Industrial and Info-Communication Technology Skills.

## Brunei curbs bird flu threat

**T**hree government agencies are put on alert and pressing actions to keep Brunei free from avian influenza (bird flu).

The agriculture department is enforcing the mandatory animal quarantine and ban on poultry imports. Personnel of the Royal Customs and Excise are monitoring all checkpoints and gateways to secure regulation compliance. And the health ministry gives inoculations for owners and staff of local poultry farms.

Agricultural officials run spot checks at all local abattoirs, poultry farms, and processing plants to secure owner compliance with the standard procedure in premises and personnel hygiene. They do serology testing on livestock to supplement their disease control exercise.

Agricultural and health officials also run briefing sessions nationwide to raise public awareness on the clinical symptoms of bird flu.

Poultry import ban is applicable to countries that register cases of bird flu.

## Brunei on alert on red tide

**B**runei is banning imports of certain fish and shellfish effective January 17 after red tide toxins contaminated the coastal waters of Sabah, Malaysia.

The Brunei fisheries department was responding to information given by its

Sabah counterpart. Members of the public are advised to remove the internal organs of fish prior to cooking.

The fisheries officials also told the public not to consume fish and shellfish of unspecified import origin.

## Congratulatory messages

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam issued congratulatory messages to:

- His Excellency Major-General Michael Jeffrey, Governor of Australia and its Prime Minister, The Honourable John Howard in conjunction with Australia Day on January 26.
- His Excellency President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam of the Republic of India and its Prime Minister, His Excellency Atal Bihari Vajpayee in conjunction with the anniversary of the proclamation of the republic on January 26.



## Permanent secretary:

### Staff commitment essential in managing challenges

The Royal Customs and Excise is pressed to balance its responsibility between security and promising uninterrupted clearance of goods.

The security aspect of its work requires it to help law



Permanent secretary Dato Haji Abdul Rahman of the finance ministry says customs operations help other law enforcement agencies to keep Brunei free from various external threats

enforcement agencies in combating terrorism and transnational crime. It is now expected to stem threats from the trafficking of chemical waste and controlled drugs, and smuggling of foodstuffs.

Customs personnel of today are challenged to run a customer-friendly service (see box). The Royal Customs and Excise is also compelled to strengthen its infrastructure in response to the consequence of international trade.

Dato Haji Abdul Rahman bin Haji Ibrahim, permanent secretary of the Ministry of Finance remarked on January 26.

According to Dato Haji Abdul Rahman, customs work is now characterised by security imperative. He urged all customs personnel to uphold their legally binding responsibility to keep Brunei free from illegal imports. Staff negligence, he said, jeopardises 'national peace, prosperity, and socio-economic stability'.

### Apprenticeship scheme stems unemployment

The government continues to invest in Brunei's human resources in a bid to slash the national unemployment rate.

The investment features two aspects. First, the apprenticeship scheme that dates back since March 14, 2001. This entails training sessions for prospective job applicants, which are open to school leavers, and holders of vocational and university qualifications. And secondly, securing better pay scale and benefits for every post from private sector employers.

Haji Razali bin Mohd Yussof, deputy director-general of economic

planning and development remarked on January 20 at the launch of the Advanced Training Scheme on Industrial and Info-Communication Technology Skills.

According to Haji Razali, three government agencies are currently encouraging private companies to open more job vacancies. They comprised the Department of Economic Planning and Development (JPKE), Labour, and the Brunei Industrial Development Authority (BINA).

The government had approached companies that set up shops at BINA-owned premises, cooperatives

that have connections with BINA, and the shipping business.

The training schemes, opened to job seekers aged between 18 and 35, prepare prospective job applicants with skills expected by private companies. Successful applicants receive allowance from the government for joining the training schemes.

They sign employment contract after the training and are expected to work with their chosen employer for at least two years.

Haji Razali said that 3,300 came to register; but only 1,700 submitted their application forms.

### Acting Controller:

#### Customs remit extends beyond collecting tax

The Royal Customs and Excise had published its departmental vision detailing its planned strategy to streamline its functions. The strategy called for an update in three areas: the law, the administration of work procedure, and customs services techniques.

Its website sustains connections with customers by offering services and information

online. It even reviews its vision with customers through dialogue sessions to find out if it had met their expectation.

Pengiran Haji Naserudin bin Pengiran Haji Tejudin, the acting controller of Customs and Excise, remarked on January 26.

Pengiran Haji Naserudin said customs work is no longer confined to tax and duty collections. His department is also entrusted to keep

Brunei society free from threats such as disease outbreak, environmental pollution, social degradation, terrorism, and transnational crime. Its operations are expected to match with international standards.

According to Pengiran Haji Naserudin, it takes commitment, discipline, and mindset change to fulfil the additional remit and the entailed vigilance.



# Snippets...

## RBA upgrades facilities for premium passengers

Royal Brunei Airlines' (RBA) Sky Lounge is now opened to its first and business class passengers effective January 22.

The 120-seat room is housed at the airside departure section of the airport building and occupies the entire mezzanine area. Its workstations offer free Internet access for passengers. Wireless Internet connection promises mobility throughout the lounge area for those

with laptops.

Sky Lounge features a prayer hall for Muslim passengers, shower rooms, and large plasma screen televisions. It also serves complimentary food and beverages.

Individuals holding the gold and silver membership of RBA's frequent flier programme, Royal Skies, also qualify to use the Sky Lounge.

## Air Force uses new management techniques

Royal Brunei Air Force (ATUDB) expects to hold its top brass accountable for their actions after it introduces its new management plan effective April. The exercise is part of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) strategic plan's realignment process.

As a management technique, it calls for new working practise that fulfils six objectives, such as

optimum use of resources. It also promises to match ATUDB management standard with ones used internationally.

ATUDB plans to measure the technique's effectiveness by canvassing opinion of its civilian and military personnel.

## Brunei showcases its 20-year progress

Brunei is holding a 15-day exhibition called Sovereign Leadership to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> national day anniversary beginning February 18. The event comprises three segments: the Islamic artefacts exhibition, the national development display, and the

Islamic manuscript seminar. Some of the materials had been showcased at the Brunei pavilion during the 2003 expo for the Islamic Conference Organisation held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

## National Day website for Bruneians based overseas

Celebration itinerary for Brunei's 20<sup>th</sup> national day anniversary is now accessible by hitting the [www.nationalday.org.bn](http://www.nationalday.org.bn) website.

The website holds latest information on events pertaining to the national day.

## Princess: Education lessens burden of modern-day challenges

Women should develop interest in lifelong learning if they are to succeed in an environment dominated by intensive competition. They should upgrade their knowledge and skill to narrow the digital divide that prevails in today's demanding technology-driven globalised economy.

Women are also pressed to balance the dual responsibility of home and workplace.

Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Masna remarked on January 16 at the 7<sup>th</sup> Area Conference for Asia and the Far East of the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW).

## Brunei strengthens defence links with Britain

Brunei hosted the third Brunei-Britain Joint Defence Commission on January 28. Topics of discussion covered military training and courses, and exchanges of ideas on the security infrastructure of both countries.

The Brunei-Britain Joint Commission on Defence Cooperation was established after the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on December 31, 2002.

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

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