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Recitation of Surah Yaa Siin and Tahliil Ceremony for Al-Marhum Prince Haji 'Abdul 'Azim



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam; His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Wakeel and His Royal Highness Prince Haji Jefri Bolkiah during the Recitation of Surah Yaa Siin and 40 Days Tahliil Ceremony for Al-Marhum His Royal Highness Prince Haji 'Abdul 'Azim.

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, December 2 - His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam attended the Recitation of Surah Yaa Siin and 40 Days Tahliil Ceremony for Al-Marhum His Royal Highness Prince Haji 'Abdul 'Azim at Jame' 'Asr Hassanil Bolkiah in Kampung Kiarong.

Also in attendance were His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Wakeel and His Royal Highness Prince Haji Jefri Bolkiah.

Continue on page 4

Knowledge Convention 2020: Health is a precious gift from Allah

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, December 15 – Health is such a precious gift from Allah the Almighty. In conformity with the demands of our faith, this is the time for all parties to be committed on health issues, as it is considered as one of the ways of preventing an outbreak.

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam highlighted the matter in a special *titah* (royal speech) broadcasted virtually from Istana Nurul Iman in coincide with the Knowledge Convention 2020 in conjunction with His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam's 74th birthday celebration.

His Majesty stressed that we should not forget to thank Allah the Almighty for His grace in saving us and the country from the outbreak, and this is appropriate with the theme of this year's Knowledge Convention, '*Mensyukuri Ni'mat Kesihatan Sebagai Anugerah Allah*' (Thankful for the Blessing of Health as Allah's Gift).

Continue on page 4

Brunei establishes diplomatic relations with Rwanda

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, December 10 - The Government of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and the Government of the Republic of Rwanda have decided to establish diplomatic relations with effect from December 9.

The signing of the Joint Communiqué took place at the Permanent Mission of Brunei Darussalam to the United Nations in New York.

The Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was represented by Her Excellency Hajah Noor Qamar binti Haji Sulaiman, Permanent Representative of Brunei Darussalam to the United Nations in New York whilst the Government of the Republic of Rwanda was represented by Her Excellency Valentine Rugwabiza, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Rwanda to the United Nations in New York.



1. Recitation of Surah Yaa Siin and Tahliil Ceremony for Al-Marhum Prince Haji 'Abdul 'Azim



3. His Majesty receives audiences



5. Unscheduled visit to MoFE: consistently monitor price hikes



7. BIBD Yes!: Create different set of opportunities



9. "Brunei Darussalam from the Eyes of Foreign Diplomats and Families" Photography Exhibition



10. Boosting fisheries industry



11. China day - Carnival full of culture



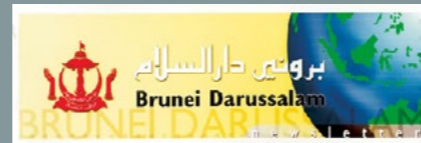
12. Commitment towards tree planting continues



14. Second Minister of Defence attends 14th ADMM



16. COVID-19: Seven new cases recorded in December



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BRUNEI DARUSSALAM NEWSLETTER

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His Majesty receives audiences

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam received in audiences at Istana Nurul Iman:



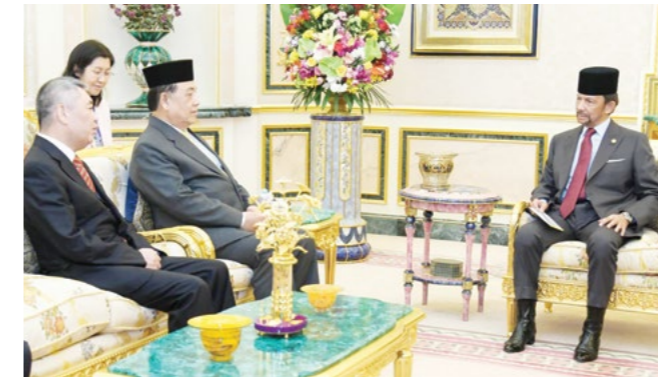
His Excellency Marcal Avelino Ximenes, outgoing Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to Brunei Darussalam on December 9.

Her Majesty receives audience

Her Majesty Duli Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha binti Al-Marhum Pengiran Pemancha Pengiran Anak Haji Mohamed Alam received in audience at Istana Nurul Iman:



Madam Jesuina Romana Doutel Sarmento, spouse of His Excellency Marcal Avelino Ximenes, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Democratic Republic Timor-Leste to Brunei Darussalam on December 1.



Mr. Qiu Jianlin, Chairman of the Zhejiang Hengyi Group and Hengyi Industries Sdn. Bhd on December 14.

His Royal Highness The Crown Prince receives audiences

His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office received in audiences at Qashr Al-Meezan:



His Excellency Marcal Avelino Ximenes, the outgoing Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to Brunei Darussalam on December 8.



Mr. Qiu Jianlin, Chairman of the Zhejiang Hengyi Group and Hengyi Industries Sdn. Bhd. on December 14.

His Majesty sends congratulatory messages

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam consented to send congratulatory messages to:

- His Excellency Bounnhang Vorachith, President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and His Excellency Dr. Thongloun Sisoulith, Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the government as well as the people of the Lao People's Democratic Republic on the occasion of its 45th National Day on December 1.

National Day of the United Arab Emirates on December 1.

- His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister, Ruler of Dubai and Minister of Defence, United Arab Emirates, members of the royal family as well as to the government and people of the United Arab Emirates on the auspicious occasion of the

- His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn Phra Vajiraklaochaoyuhua, King of Thailand, all members of the royal family, His Excellency General (Rtd) Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand, the government as well as the people of the Kingdom of Thailand on the occasion of its National Day on December 4.

- His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar; His Excellency Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdul Aziz Al Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, State of Qatar, the government as well as the people of the State of Qatar on the occasion of its National Day on December 18.

Knowledge Convention 2020: Health is a precious gift from Allah (continued)

From page 1

According to His Majesty, the theme is quite relevant for discussion among academics, health experts, physicians, and scholars.

His Majesty is grateful to Allah the Almighty because with His permission, this year's Knowledge Convention can still be carried out, even though the country is still wary of the spread of the COVID-19.

"It is very important to study and solve the Coronavirus pandemic, this includes finding out why it can be effectively controlled in the country, could it be because the country continues to comply with international standards aside from consistently using 'divide vaccines' in the form of Al-Quran verses and *doa* or supplications?" said His Majesty.

His Majesty also noted that it would be significant if the study and evaluation were able to identify some benefits (*hikmah*) from the incident, indeed, the benefits are capable of giving an impact to the soul as a lesson.

"We are all convinced; all that comes from Allah the Almighty has its benefits. Accordingly, they need to be understood and studied. Even a little knowledge about the benefits is capable of providing us with enlightenment and awareness. This is the price of benefits," added His Majesty.

His Majesty has always hoped that the Knowledge Convention would be able to drive religious and social awareness and understands it as capable of playing a specific role in the field of knowledge and propagation, especially when forums or seminars and talks are conducted as part of the events.

This is, without question, a platform for the spread of knowledge and propagation. His Majesty is optimistic that the Knowledge Convention is capable of creating a vision and mission that is advantageous for the country. Thus, it is befitting that it should be



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

held every year, so that we may reap the benefits. The convention which was held at Masjid Omar 'Ali Saifuddien began with the reading of Surah Al-Hud of the Al-Quran by Awang Mohammad bin Ali, Education Officer at the Rimba Arabic School.

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Abdul Mokti bin Haji Mohd Daud, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office as the Co-Chairman of the Knowledge Convention Steering Committee 2020 in a welcoming speech, among other matters touched on the theme of this year's Knowledge Convention which was chosen by taking into account the current situation of the COVID-19 pandemic which has a significant impact especially on the health and socio-economic development faced by the world

Continue on page 5

Recitation of Surah Yaa Siin and Tahliil Ceremony for Al-Marhum Prince Haji 'Abdul 'Azim (continued)

From page 1

The mass Maghrib prayer and Sunnat Hajat prayer were led by Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Seri Utama Dato Paduka Seri Setia Haji Awang Salim bin Haji Besar, who also led the reading of Surah Yaa Siin and *Tahlil*.

The *Doa Tahlil* was read by Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Seri Maharaja Dato Paduka Seri Setia (Dr.) Ustaz Haji Awang Abdul Aziz bin Juned, the State Mufti.

The mass Isyak prayer was led by Yang Dimuliakan Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Setia Raja Dato Paduka Seri Setia Haji Awang Suhaili bin Haji Mohiddin.

The recitation of Surah Yaa Siin and 40 Days Tahliil Ceremony was also held at mosques across the nation.

Al-Marhum His Royal Highness Prince Haji 'Abdul 'Azim was born on Thursday, 8 Syawal 1402 Hijrah corresponding with July 29, 1982 and passed away on Saturday morning, 7 Rabiulawal 1442

Hijrah corresponding with October 24 at 10.08am at the age of 38. In his lifetime, Al-Marhum His Royal Highness was awarded with the Royal Family Order of the Crown of Brunei (DKMB); the Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Medal (PHBS); and the Golden Jubilee Medal (Gold Medal).

Al-Marhum His Royal Highness received his early education at International School

Brunei and went for further studies at the Raffles Institution, Republic of Singapore, and subsequently studied at Oxford Brookes University, United Kingdom.

Al-Marhum His Royal Highness was known as a virtuous person who was actively involved in various charities such as the arts, youth and welfare, especially in assisting the differently abled.



Congregants at the Recitation of Surah Yaa Siin and Tahliil Ceremony.

Unscheduled visit to MoFE: Consistently monitor price hikes

BERAKAS, December 28 - Complaints about the price increase for daily essentials such as meat, fish, onions, eggs and vegetables, particularly those in the lower income bracket were some of the issues raised by His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in a *titah* (royal speech) delivered during an unscheduled visit to the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE).

"The issue of price increase is not just happening in Brunei but it should not be ignored. It is usually carried out in an unwarranted or unlawful manner by certain parties, who are taking advantage of the situation," said His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam.

Therefore, His Majesty said, the authoritative and relevant parties should not keep silent or overlook this matter and must do something to rectify the situation.

"They need to monitor and take the ongoing situation into account and at the same time need to address the situation by preventing one side from earning profits at the expense of another. If there are sufficient supplies that are easy to procure, then let everyone have access to them. If they are limited or scarce, then sell them in limited amounts, without any adverse effects on anyone. This means that no goods should be sold or purchased, except at normal prices – not by raising prices to the detriment of consumers," said His Majesty.



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

His Majesty added that when certain parties are not observing the principles of consideration and cooperation, there needs to be constraints. At this point, the Department of Economic Planning and Statistics (JPES), through the Department of Competition and Consumer Affairs (JPHEP), needs to address the issue immediately by consistently monitoring price hikes and taking appropriate measures, if required, to protect consumers.

Continue on page 6

Knowledge Convention 2020: Health is a precious gift from Allah (continued)



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in the pre-recorded *titah* during the Knowledge Convention 2020 at the Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Mosque.

From page 4

including Brunei Darussalam.

Yang Berhormat Pehin Udana Khatib Dato Paduka Seri Setia Ustaz Haji Awang Badaruddin bin Pengarah Dato Paduka Haji Awang Othman, Minister of Religious Affairs in a special talk stressed on health as the greatest and most important blessing from Allah the Almighty after faith and the blessings of Islam.

The Knowledge Convention was jointly organised by the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Health with the aim of providing knowledge that explains the role and impact of His Majesty's leadership in applying main values related to the importance of health and cleanliness including its impact on spiritual strengthening and faith in the national development agenda.



Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office as the Co-Chairman of the Knowledge Convention Steering Committee 2020 delivering welcoming speech.



Yang Berhormat Minister of Religious Affairs delivering a special talk.

Unscheduled visit to MoFE: consistently monitor price hikes (continued)

From page 5

The increase in the price of goods was already attended to by the Department of Economic Planning and Statistics (DEPS), through the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is issued every three months. Despite the explanation, business entrepreneurs are continuing to increase the price of goods. Therefore, effective action should be carried out by the enforcement agencies.

His Majesty also highlighted that apart from the JPHEP's responsibility in monitoring and protecting the public from destructive price hikes, it is vital for the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT) to carry out efforts in overcoming goods' shortages or at least to assure the public that the country is still able to meet the food requirements, while ensuring that food security is guaranteed and sufficient, without the need for certain parties to use the opportunity to increase prices arbitrarily.

"The increase in the prices of goods by certain entrepreneurs, without regard for the rules and regulations, should not be tolerated," stressed His Majesty.

Earlier in the *titah*, His Majesty noted that with the allocated budget of \$853 million, this enables MoFE to collaborate with other ministries and related agencies in enhancing its productivity and providing quality services to members of the public as well as to ensure the effectiveness of the government's revenue collection, including encouraging economic development through foreign direct investment (FDI), industrial development, and foreign and local trade.

"All of this requires officers and members of staff with skills in management and administration. Apart from skills, honesty and integrity are required to ensure effective management and administration, without any irregularities," said His Majesty.

His Majesty added that it is well known that those occupying high positions within the ministry are faced with challenges, apart from executing their main responsibilities. These position holders are also chairmen of several boards of directors, with the responsibility of fulfilling the boards' meeting schedules.

Therefore, His Majesty reminds that no conflicts of interest should ever occur, rather, the officers involved should carry out their duties fairly and equitably, not be inclined towards preferential treatment, where one side is given warm and prompt service, while the other is treated brusquely and in a diffident manner.

"Teamwork ethic is crucial. The senior officers may be progressive in thought, but they should not act arrogantly by refusing to listen to the views or ideas of their subordinates, particularly if the latter have skills and expertise in their respective fields. This attitude is most counterproductive, and capable of creating a deep divide between a leader and his subordinates.

"Some senior officers do not have any inspiring ideas, but insist that their ideas be accepted by others, thus leading weak decisions which invite more complaints and disappointments," said His Majesty.

Senior officers, stressed His Majesty, should not formulate policies based on their positions, which are vastly different from that of their subordinates. For the latter, any form of allowance is meaningful, compared to their superiors.

Therefore any decisions or regulations on allowance will need to take these differences into account, rather than merely changing or abolishing the regulations.

"I am aware that the absorption of a number of departments



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam during the visit to the Ministry of Finance and Economy.



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam touring the Ministry of Finance and Economy (above & below).



and statutory bodies into MoFE has increased its portfolio and responsibilities, especially those in the fields of economy. This is an indirect test of the competency of the ministry staff, which also requires a strong sense of patriotism.

"For instance, in the management and handling of investment affairs, do not simply trust and prioritise foreign consultants or companies from abroad to manage companies under Darussalam Assets Sdn. Bhd., without any assessment or consideration for locals. If this continues to be practised, then it is a violation of the government's requirements.

"The indicator for competency and efficiency is also characterised by being able to carry out the roles and responsibilities in

Continue on page 7



His Majesty in a group photo with Ministry of Finance and Economy's staff.

From page 6

reviewing, considering and approving tenders from ministries or departments for each of their planned projects. However, there are situations where the State Tender Board constantly delays the tender application, until it needs to be amended or re-tendered. This is capable of having an adverse effect on development," said His Majesty.

Also heard was the issue of business tax collection on registered companies that have not been implemented fully and fairly because of favouritism towards companies owned by important or high ranking persons.

With regards to the Tabung Amanah Pekerja Scheme (TAP), His Majesty reiterated that the objective of setting up TAP is to ensure that its members will have ample savings for their retirement, including providing for their family members, even with low dividend rates, such as in 2017/2018, where it was 2.5 per cent. Meanwhile, for two consecutive years – 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 – the rate dropped to 2.2 per cent.

Even though it was established in January 1993, there are matters that need to be addressed. Among these is the issue of contributions (*caruman*) and dividend rates.

His Majesty questioned to what degree has TAP been ensuring that all employers are paying towards their employees' contributions.

The employees need to contribute 5 per cent from their total salary, while employers are obligated to contribute 5 per cent. These are all recognised as contributions.

"This is causing uncertainty among TAP members about their impending retirement. I would suggest that reasonable action be taken by TAP, by carrying out a study on how to convince the community on the effectiveness of making investments, using the savings of TAP members," said His Majesty.

His Majesty further reminded that what is important for TAP Members is that this scheme can guarantee the need for living expenses for the entire retirement period. This is a challenge for TAP to come up with formulae and solutions.

During the unscheduled visit, His Majesty toured several departments and sections under MoFE as well as Autoriti Monetari Brunei Darussalam (AMBD).

BIBD Yes!: Create different set of opportunities

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, December 12 - His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah in a *sabda* (royal speech) calls on the youth to become leaders and create immediate positive impact for the development of the nation.

His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen stressed the importance of realising that challenges faced by the country's youth are different now. Hence, youths should also adapt to the changes and be resilient.

His Royal Highness stated the matter in his *sabda* at the opening ceremony of the BIBD Youth Empowerment Summit (YES!) at Jerudong International School (JIS) Arts Centre.

His Royal Highness shared his experience when he was 18 years old, he was sent to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in the United Kingdom, where he was pushed to his limits time and time again.

Often, His Royal Highness thought he could not take it anymore, but he learned not to give up in trying times.

His Royal Highness recalls one very formative experience when he had to complete a 73-kilometre group race in the



His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah delivering a *sabda* (royal speech) at the BIBD Youth Empowerment Summit.

black mountains of Wales, all while carrying a 20-kilogramme backpack.

Continue on page 8

BIBD Yes!/: Create different set of opportunities (continued)



His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah officiating the 'Passing of the Baton' to a BIBD ALAF student.

From page 7

"Generally, this takes between 24 and 35 hours to complete, with hardly any rest. The terrain was so unforgiving that I developed a cramp within the first hour, and I did not know how much longer I could go on," said His Royal Highness.

However despite the intense pain, His Royal Highness just focussed on putting one foot in front of the other and in the end, after a gruelling 23 hours and 11 minutes, he and his group finished in first place.

This showed how powerful the mind is, even when the body feels like giving up.

His Royal Highness said that this experience and being in the military has taught His Royal Highness that we need to constantly push ourselves and not be afraid of challenges because pressing on and fighting through hardships will only build our resilience and character.

His Royal Highness also applauds the government for implementing programmes to re-train and up-skill the youth, such as the i-Ready apprenticeships and SkillsPlus programme.

Thus, His Royal Highness encourages the youth to explore these initiatives, to expose themselves to new industries and to build new skill sets, constantly improving.

His Royal Highness challenged the youth to create a different set of opportunities for themselves and their peers, beyond what is currently available, rather than just waiting for a comfortable job, or a corporate ladder to climb.

"I strongly believe that our youths can build new corporations which will be future engines of our society. The youth, with their vibrant energy and fresh perspectives can contribute vitality and creativity to emerging social and economic challenges that Brunei face," said His Royal Highness.

His Royal Highness also pointed out that we are already seeing youth-led organisations have come up with ideas and solutions to tackle issues such as public transport, food security, sustainable energy, and more.

These young people should be recognised for the work they are doing to create real change in our society – change that will make an impact not just today, but also to help us deal with the challenges of the future.

"We want to develop new industries that will future-proof our economy. One example is investing in our creative industries. This was an issue close to my late brother's heart," said His Royal Highness.



His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen viewing the BIBD ALAF students' showcase.

Globally, the creative industries employ more people aged 15 to 29 than any other sector.

His Royal Highness added there are a lot of young people in Brunei Darussalam who are passionate about the arts, who have started their own creative agencies, production companies and more. They have moved beyond the usual path and out of their comfort zone to make a change.

Continue on page 9



His Royal Highness with students.

From page 8

His Royal Highness encourages the youth to approach stakeholders with their ideas, in the creative industries or beyond. And together, create an ecosystem that is sustainable; one that creates quality job opportunities – and achieves social and economic progress.

With that, His Royal Highness wished the youth to have a productive and successful summit, and that there will be outcomes that pave the way for the youth to become pioneers in the continued development of Brunei Darussalam.

The event saw His Royal Highness officiate the 'Passing of the Baton' to a selected representative of the youth, a BIBD ALAF student symbolising and echoing the event's theme, 'It's Your Turn!'.

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin

"Brunei Darussalam from the Eyes of Foreign Diplomats and Families" Photography Exhibition



Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Masna binti Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; His Excellency Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Brunei Darussalam, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Brunei Darussalam and launching the exhibition.

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, December 16 - In appreciation of the development in bilateral relations between the Sultanate and the diplomatic missions in the country as well as gratitude to the government and people of Brunei Darussalam for the hospitality, the Diplomatic Corps in Brunei Darussalam organised a photography exhibition: 'Brunei Darussalam from the Eyes of Foreign Diplomats and their Families'.

Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Masna binti Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, launched



His Royal Highness viewing showcases by students.

Liew bin Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy in his welcoming remarks expressed gratitude for His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen's support and active interest in the youth's role and aspirations to steer them as future leaders.

His Royal Highness then toured the BIBD YES 2020 Exhibition, titled "Youth Making An Impact" which covers several themes including Smart City, Sports, Education and Food Security. Eight schools showcased their work in the exhibition.

The two-day summit consisted of plenary sessions with 50 different speakers, ranging from Brunei-based speakers and international speakers, who spoke about topics highlighting the power that the youth holds, further strengthening the need to empower the youth's mindset.



Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Masna touring the exhibition.

the exhibition at the Royal Regalia Museum in the Capital.

Her Royal Highness was accompanied by Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Lela Cheteria Sahibun Najabah Pengiran Anak Haji Abdul Aziz bin Pengiran Jaya Negara Pengiran Haji Abu Bakar.

The ceremony began with the recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah and *Doa Selamat* led by Yang Dimuliakan Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Setia Raja Dato Paduka Seri Setia Haji Awang Suhaili bin Haji Mohiddin.

Continue on page 10

“Brunei Darussalam from the Eyes of Foreign Diplomats and Families” Photography Exhibition (continued)

From page 9

His Excellency Sheikh Ahmed bin Hashil Al-Maskari, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Sultanate of Oman to Brunei Darussalam in his welcoming remarks said the exhibition was organised in partnership by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports and Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam (BIBD), showcasing 109 photographs of various themes selected from over 210 photos contributed by 19 foreign diplomatic missions in Brunei Darussalam.

The exhibition, said His Excellency, features photos of beautiful sceneries and special moments that foreign diplomats enjoy in Brunei Darussalam.

Although, some of the photos on display may not meet high standards in terms of resolution and other photography related technicalities, the meanings these photos carry certainly speak volumes.

“Therefore the exhibition will serve as an opportunity for our Bruneian friends to view familiar aspects of their beautiful country through foreign diplomats’ lenses,” said His Excellency.

At the event, Her Royal Highness consented to watch a short video on the selected photos and toured the exhibition.



Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Masna binti Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar ‘Ali Saifuddin Sa’adul Khairi Waddien, Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs touring the photo exhibition by the Diplomatic Corps at the Royal Regalia Museum.

The exhibition is open for the public at the Royal Regalia Museum until December 26. The exhibition will tour the four districts, spending 10 days at each district beginning with the Brunei-Muara District.



Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Masna, Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Lela Cheteria Sahibun Najabah Pengiran Anak Haji Abdul Aziz bin Pengiran Jaya Negara Pengiran Haji Abu Bakar; Yang Berhormat Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism; Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister’s Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy; Yang Berhormat Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, and His Excellency Sheikh Ahmed bin Hashil Al-Maskari, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Brunei Darussalam in a group photo.

Boosting fisheries industry

JERUDONG, December 22 – Brunei Darussalam’s fisheries industry is set to increase production by 2035 includes boosting the contribution of fisheries exports to the national economy.

Therefore, towards ensuring the services of fish landing complex are of high quality, environmentally friendly, and equipped with modern and high-tech facilities, an agreement was signed between the Department of fisheries under the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT) and Muara Port Company Sdn. Bhd. (MPC).

An agreement signing ceremony for Designing, Developing, Operating and Preserving, Muara Fish Landing Complex Project, Brunei Darussalam took place at The Empire Brunei.

MPC is a government-linked company owned by Beibu Gulf Holding (Hong Kong) Co. Limited, from the People’s Republic of China and Darussalam



Yang Berhormat Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism; Yang Berhormat Minister at Prime Minister’s Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy; Yang Berhormat Minister of Development and Yang Berhormat Minister of Transport and Infocommunications during the agreement signing ceremony for Designing, Developing, Operating and Preserving, Muara Fish Landing Complex Project.

Continue on page 11

Boosting fisheries industry



Yang Berhormat Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism; Yang Berhormat Minister at Prime Minister’s Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy witnessing the signing of agreement between the Department of fisheries under the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT) and Muara Port Company Sdn. Bhd. (MPC)

From page 10

Assets Sdn. Bhd. MPC was selected through an open tendering process held earlier this year by Ministry of Finance and Economy (MOFE).

MPC will develop modern and high-tech facilities at the Muara Fish Landing Complex to ensure high-quality and environmentally-friendly services. The modernisation of the complex will introduce modern terminal of catch from fishing vessels and inshore and offshore fish cage farms.

In addition, this selected company will also provide a service of efficiency to load and unloaded basic supplies on fishing vessels departing from the jetty.

Signing on behalf of the Department of Fisheries was Dayang Noraini binti Haji Anggas, Acting Director of Fisheries and witnessing the signing was Abdul Halidi bin Mohd. Salleh, Deputy Permanent Secretary at MPRT.

Meanwhile, MPC was represented by its Chief Financial Officer, Lyu Guoli and witnessing the signing was Zeng Caili, MPC Chief Executive Officer.

The signing was also witnessed by the Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism and Minister at the Prime Minister’s Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy as Chairman of MPC.

Meanwhile, for the signing between MPC and the Bank of China (BOC), MPC was represented by Awang Mohd. Fazilah bin Haji Mohd. Yassin, Chief Operating Officer and witnessed by

Zeng Caili, Chief Executive Officer while Zheng Gang, Deputy General Manager signed on behalf of BOC, and witnessed by Qu Pengcheng, Head of Banking Division Corporate.

Through this public-private partnership, it is hoped to boost the efficiency and safety of vessel navigation to depart, land and berth at the fish landing jetty and also accommodate the increasing numbers of vessel landings and berthing at the jetty.

It also to improve product flow efficiency and cleanliness from landing to the processing plant to ensure that products from commercial fishing vessels and inshore and offshore fish farming cages are in compliance with national quality control and food safety requirements and the requirements of the importing countries, including the European Union (EU), the United States (US), Australia, the People’s Republic of China and Japan.

At the same time, it is hoped to make the Muara Fish Landing Complex a safe working environment for all employees, staff members and users.

The project will generate over 200 job opportunities for locals to fill the positions of manager, factory worker, complex jetty supervisor, maintenance officer, technical assistant, salesman, assistant worker, driver, cleaner, premises controller, storekeeper and so on.

In the first phase, MPC will inject over \$14 million worth of investment for the said project and assist in increasing the country’s fisheries industry output by 2035. In fact, it will certainly increase the contribution of fisheries exports to the national economy.

China day - carnival full of culture

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, December 26 – China and Brunei have a long history of friendship and the Silk Road recorded the history of exchanges and mutual learning between our two countries.

China-Brunei cooperation has played a positive role in Brunei’s economic and social development.

This was said by Her Excellency Yu Hong, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China to Brunei Darussalam at the opening ceremony of the China Day event at the Indoor Stadium.

According to Her Excellency, the China-Brunei friendship calls for the support of the people of the two countries. Culture is a bridge that connects hearts and emotions between people, a bond that deepens understanding and trust between countries.

Her Excellency said, next year will also mark the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Brunei as well as the 30th anniversary of China-ASEAN dialogue partnership.

China stands ready to work together with Brunei to strengthen cooperation and join hands on the road to achieve the Long-Range Objectives through the Year 2035 and Brunei Vision 2035.



Yang Berhormat Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism and Yang Berhormat Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports touring the exhibit, accompanied by Her Excellency Yu Hong, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China to Brunei Darussalam.

Continue on page 12

China day - carnival full of culture (continued)

From page 11

Present as guest of honour was Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Ali bin Apong, Minister of Prime Resources and Tourism; and Yang Berhormat Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Aminuddin Ihsan bin Pehin Orang Kaya Saiful Mulok Dato Seri Paduka Haji Abidin, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports.

China Day was held in conjunction with Brunei-China Year of Tourism 2020 and Brunei December Festival 2020. The event was hosted by the Embassy of the People's Republic

of China in Brunei Darussalam and was organised by the Brunei-China Friendship Association, supported by the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism and Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports.

The event included various cultural events such as martial arts, traditional Chinese dances and songs, as well as interactions and experiences of Chinese culture - Tea, Chinese chess, traditional Chinese calligraphy and ping pong.

Commitment towards tree planting continues

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, December 31 - The Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT), through the Forestry Department, organised a Tree Planting Event, as one of their efforts towards achieving their target of planting 500,000 new trees by 2035 and as a main strategy of the Brunei Darussalam National Climate Change Policy (BNCCP), which was launched on July 25 this year.

Among those present at the Taman Riadah, Jalan Pusat Persidangan were Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Ali bin Apong, Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism as a Member of the Brunei Darussalam National Council on Climate Change (BNCCC); Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Ir. Awang Haji Suhaimi bin Haji Gafar, Minister of Development, and Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mat Suny bin Haji Md. Hussien, Minister of Energy, as Co-Chairmen of the BNCCC, as well as other members of BNCCC: Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Abdul Mutalib bin Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Setia

Dato Paduka Haji Mohammad Yusof, Minister of Transport and Infocommunications; and Yang Mulia Dato Seri Paduka Awang Haji Matsatejo bin Sokiauw, Deputy Minister of Energy.

Also present were Yang Mulia Dato Seri Paduka Ar. Awang Haji Marzuke bin Haji Mohsin, Deputy Minister of Development; Yang Berhormat Dayang Khairunnisa binti Haji Ash'ari, Member of the State Legislative Council (LegCo) as Co-Founder of Green Brunei; and Awang Haji Azhar bin Haji Yahya, Permanent Secretary (Energy) at the Ministry of Energy as Chairman of the Executive Committee on Climate Change.

At the event, the Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism presented his welcoming remarks, where the Minister emphasised, among other matters, the importance of forests and trees in human lives, as well as the country's commitment towards tree planting in support of the BNCCP, particularly for the policy's Strategy 2: Forest Coverage.

The Minister also stated the essentiality of the Forestry Department in monitoring all development projects involving the cutting down of trees to uphold the Green Protocol, which will be launched by the Ministry of Development (MoD) as a guideline in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the government sector. Afterwards, a warm-up session took place, followed by a Tree Planting Activity conducted by the Minister of Primary Resources; the Minister of Development; the Minister of Transport and Infocommunications; and the Minister of Energy at their designated planting areas. The event then proceeded with a large-scale tree planting session involving other invitees; a brisk-walking activity; and a touring session at the previous tree planting zones around the park.

A total of 200 saplings were planted at the event: consisting of the Yellow Tabebuia (*Tabebuia Aurea*), Ubah (*Syzygium Myrtifolium*) and Ru Runang (*Gymnostoma Nobile*).

Continue on page 13



Yang Berhormat Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism as a Member of the Brunei Darussalam National Climate Change on Climate Change (BNCCC) presenting his welcoming remarks at the Tree Planting Event.



Yang Berhormat Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism planting a tree at the event.



The Tree Planting Activity was also carried out by the special guests who were present at the event.

From page 12

This was the last Tree Planting Event conducted by MPRT in 2020, marking the year's end.

The event was also attended by Tuttiaty binti Haji Abdul Wahab, Permanent Secretary at MPRT; Pengiran Datin Shazainah

binti Pengiran Dato Paduka Shariffuddin, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ambassadors and High Commissioners to Brunei Darussalam; as well as Heads of Departments, Senior Officers and staff from MPRT, MoD, banks and sawmilling companies.

Remain vigilant against any prospects of terrorism



Yang Berhormat Second Minister of Defence leading Brunei Darussalam's delegation at the 3rd Sub-Regional Meeting on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Security which was held virtually via video conferencing.

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, December 1 - The 3rd Sub-Regional Meeting on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Security was held virtually via video conferencing. The meeting was co-hosted by His Excellency Mohammad Mahfud MD, Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs, Republic of Indonesia and the Honourable Peter Dutton MP, Minister for Home Affairs, Australia.

Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd. Yusof, Second Minister of Defence led Brunei Darussalam's delegation and attended the meeting in his capacity as Chairman of the National Security Committee (NSC).

Ministers and head of delegations from Malaysia, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, New Zealand, Republic of the Philippines, Singapore and Kingdom of Thailand also attended the meeting.

The two main issues deliberated during the meeting were 'The Impact of COVID-19 on the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Security Environment' and 'Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) Regional Preparedness.'

Yang Berhormat Pehin Dato Haji Awang Halbi stressed that Brunei Darussalam continues to remain vigilant against any prospects of terrorism even in the midst of focusing its efforts in eliminating the persistent threat of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reports of recent attacks in some parts of the world indicate that terrorist individuals or groups are taking advantage of the current global crisis to spread propaganda, to recruit more

followers and to mount violent attacks. Law enforcement agencies especially in countries most affected by the double threat of terrorism and the COVID-19 pandemic must continue to remain vigilant and focused.

Brunei Darussalam will continue to maintain close cooperation and networking with its regional and international partners and remains committed in fighting terrorism and highly values strong cooperation with other countries that has contributed to the success in maintaining any terrorist threat to its minimal level.

Brunei Darussalam as the Chairman of ASEAN for 2021, is fully committed in strengthening efforts in preserving regional as well as global peace, security and stability.

Meanwhile, in a joint statement, the leaders acknowledged the crisis facing the international community and the severe disruptions that COVID-19 has inflicted on our region's health systems, economies and communities.

They also noted that each country across the region experiences terrorism and violent extremism differently but there were similar patterns in how extremist groups across the world sought to exploit divisions and grievances, including by incorporating COVID-19 into their narratives and propaganda.

The leaders also acknowledged that in this rapidly evolving world, domestic and cross-border terrorism will remain key

Continue on page 14

Remain vigilant against any prospects of terrorism (continued)

From page 13

strategic issues for this region and with that, steps to sustain the momentum in combating terrorism should be taken, including a collective effort to embrace moderation and expand inclusivism to sustain peace regionally.

They agreed to continue to collaborate through the Sub-Regional Meeting on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Security to build a common understanding of the threat environment; to set priority issues for resolution and to enhance cooperation to combat threats to the region's security.

They also agreed to establish a Senior Officials Counter-Terrorism Policy Forum, under the auspices of the Sub-Regional Meeting on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Security, to identify and share best practices on managing counter terrorism policy issues, including those associated with the movement of FTF.

Noting the importance of ongoing discussion on regional security challenges, it was agreed that a further Ministerial-level Sub-Regional Meeting would be held in 2021.

Second Minister of Defence attends 14th ADMM



Yang Berhormat Second Minister of Defence during the 14th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) held virtually.

BOLKIAH GARRISON, December 9 – The 14th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) convened virtually concluded on a high note today. The 14th ADMM was chaired by His Excellency Ngo Xuan Lich, Minister of National Defence, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, in his capacity as Vietnam ADMM Leader.

Representing Brunei Darussalam to the 14th ADMM was Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd. Yussof, Second Minister of Defence.

In the meeting, the ASEAN Defence Ministers adopted and signed the "Joint Declaration of the ADMM on Defence Cooperation

for a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN." At the sidelines of the 14th ADMM, the ASEAN-United States Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting was convened before the 14th ADMM, and the ASEAN-China Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting convened following the conclusion of the 14th ADMM. A special session with guests of the Chair was also held to conclude the agenda.

As the Chair of ASEAN in 2021, the Ministry of Defence Brunei Darussalam will be chairing ADMM and its related meetings, while the Royal Brunei Armed Forces will be chairing ASEAN Chiefs of Defence Forces Meeting (ACDFM) and its related meetings. All meetings will take place virtually.

ADMM-Plus adopts Joint Declaration

BOLKIAH GARRISON, December 10 – The 7th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) concluded successfully today, marking the end of Viet Nam's Chairmanship of the ADMM under the theme of "Defence Cooperation for a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN."

The Meeting was held virtually and was chaired by His Excellency General Ngo Xuan Lich, Minister of National Defence, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, in his capacity as Viet Nam ADMM-Plus

Leader.

Representing Brunei Darussalam to the 7th ADMM-Plus was Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd. Yussof, Second Minister of Defence.

The 7th ADMM-Plus began with a commemoration of the 10th



His Excellency General Ngo Xuan Lich, Minister of National Defence, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, in his capacity as Viet Nam ADMM-Plus Leader chairing the 7th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) which was held virtually.

From page 14

Anniversary of the ADMM-Plus, which saw a video presentation showcasing the achievements of ADMM-Plus, followed by speeches from the Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam; General Ngo Xuan Lich, Minister of National Defence, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam; and Dato Lim Jock Hoi, ASEAN Secretary-General.

During the meeting, the ASEAN and Plus Defence Ministers adopted the 'Joint Declaration by the ADMM-Plus Defence Ministers on Strategic Security Vision of the ADMM-Plus'. The ASEAN-Japan Informal Meeting was also held following the 7th ADMM-Plus Meeting.

Continue on page 16



The 7th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) held virtually which oversaw the official handover to Brunei Darussalam as Chairman of the ADMM in 2021.

ADMM-Plus adopts Joint Declaration (continued)

From page 15

Following the conclusion of the 7th ADMM-Plus, a handover ceremony was held virtually which oversaw the official handover to Brunei Darussalam as Chairman of the ADMM in 2021.

The ceremony began with remarks from His Excellency General Ngo Xuan Lich, Minister of National Defence of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, followed by the handing over of the ADMM Chairmanship to His Excellency Pengiran Haji Sahari bin Pengiran Haji Salleh, Ambassador of Brunei Darussalam to the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam on behalf of Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd. Yussof, Second Minister of Defence, Brunei Darussalam.

In his remarks, the Second Minister of Defence congratulated Socialist Republic of Viet Nam for their successful chairmanship under the theme of "Defence Cooperation for a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN." The theme and key priorities of Brunei Darussalam as Chair of the ADMM in 2021 was also revealed in the ceremony, which is "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper." As the ADMM will commemorate its 15th anniversary next year, Brunei Darussalam aims to strengthen the platform in the spirit of ASEAN centrality under its Chairmanship.

As the Chair of ASEAN in 2021, the Ministry of Defence Brunei Darussalam will be chairing ADMM and its related meetings, while



The handing over of the ADMM Chairmanship to His Excellency Pengiran Haji Sahari bin Pengiran Haji Salleh, Ambassador of Brunei Darussalam to Socialist Republic of Viet Nam on behalf of Yang Berhormat Second Minister of Defence, Brunei Darussalam.

the Royal Brunei Armed Forces will be chairing ASEAN Chiefs of Defence Forces Meeting (ACDFM) and its related meetings which will be conducted virtually.

COVID-19: 7 new cases recorded in December

BERAKAS, December 31 – In December, Brunei Darussalam recorded seven new COVID-19 cases, bringing the total number of confirmed cases to 157.

Case 151, was a 26-year old woman who arrived in Brunei Darussalam on Royal Brunei BI874 flight on November 20 via Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from Nepal. The patient showed no signs of infection.

Case 152, was a 39-year old man who arrived in Brunei Darussalam on Royal Brunei BI874 flight on November 27 from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The patient also showed no signs of infection.

Case 153, was a 29-year old man who arrived in Brunei Darussalam on Royal Brunei BI874 flight on December 18 via Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from India. The patient experienced diarrhoea for two days starting from December 21, and showed no signs of infection.

Case 154, was a 27-year old woman who arrived in Brunei Darussalam on Royal Brunei BI4112 flight on December 18 from India. The patient showed no signs of infection.

Case 155, was a 61-year old woman who arrived in Brunei Darussalam on Royal Brunei BI4112 flight on December 18 from India. The patient started to show symptoms of fever on December 29.

Case 156 is the husband of case 155, a 63 year-old man who also arrived in Brunei Darussalam on the same flight from India on December 18. The patient started to show symptoms of fever and cough on December 28.

Case 157, a woman aged 33 who also arrived in Brunei Darussalam on Royal Brunei BI4112 flight on December 18 from India. The patient showed no signs of infection.



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

The cases were announced by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Haji Mohd Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health during a press conference on the latest COVID-19 situation in Brunei Darussalam on December 1, December 8 and December 30. The patients are all being treated and monitored at the National Isolation Centre.

At present, a total of 16 import cases have been confirmed since the last local infection case was reported on May 6, 2020 where, Brunei Darussalam has recorded 239 days without COVID-19 local infection case.

643 individuals are currently undergoing mandatory self-isolation. Meanwhile, since March 2020, 10,355 individuals have completed their mandatory self-isolation.

In the meantime, 68 samples have been tested for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, bringing the total number of lab tests since January 2020 to 83,176.

Ongoing efforts to protect environment



Yang Berhormat Minister of Development in a group photo during the 14th Brunei-Singapore Annual Exchange of Visits (14th BSAEV) on Environment.

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, December 14 – The 14th Brunei-Singapore Annual Exchange of Visits (14th BSAEV) on Environment is an activity under a memorandum of understanding in 2015, on the cooperation in the field of environment was held virtually.

The Brunei Darussalam delegation was led by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Ir. Awang Haji Suhaimi bin Haji Gafar, Minister of Development. Meanwhile, Her Excellency Grace Fu, Minister for Sustainability and the Environment, led the Singapore delegation.

During the meeting, the ministers reaffirmed the strong bilateral relations between both countries and reiterated their commitment to foster continual progress and deepen cooperation on environmental protection.

The ministers noted the steady progress of existing projects and programmes of the two countries in the areas of solid waste management, air quality management, water resources management, environmental youth exchange programmes and climate change.

In this regard, the ministers endorsed the continued efforts in solid waste management in both countries, notably, Brunei Darussalam's plastic waste management, development of waste management regulations and waste-to-energy feasibility study.

On air quality management, Brunei Darussalam and Singapore exchanged information on monitoring and enforcement strategies to enhance air quality in the areas of industrial and vehicular emissions.

The ministers noted the exchange of youth environmental programmes, and congratulated the successful implementation of the 1st ASEAN Youth Eco-Champions Award held in October 2019 as part of the ASEAN Environment Day hosted by Cambodia.

Both ministers also agreed for Brunei Darussalam and Singapore to enhance collaboration in water resource management such as rainfall prediction system, smart catchment and smart sewer system, knowledge sharing on water and wastewater services, and best practices and activities.

This also includes a smart pre-paid metering system and water efficiency labelling scheme governance, to further enhance the water conservation awareness, control and policy of used cooking oils in commercial premises, and maintenance of pumps for sustainable wastewater management.

The ministers agreed to step up cooperation on climate change, particularly by sharing best practices on mitigation and adaptation measures, as well as identifying areas for joint collaboration.

Both countries reiterated their commitment to cooperate with other ASEAN Member States to advance regional environmental interests in achieving sustainable development and provide a healthy and clean-living environment for the people, despite the unprecedented situation of COVID-19.

Singapore noted Brunei Darussalam's theme of "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper" for its Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2021, and pledged to support and contribute to Brunei Darussalam's vision for the region.

State Mufti receives books from Sultanate of Oman



Yang Berhormat State Mufti receiving books from His Excellency Sheikh Ahmed bin Hashil bin Rashid Al-Maskari, Ambassador of Sultanate of Oman to Brunei Darussalam and Her Excellency Homeira Rigi Zirouki, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Brunei Darussalam.

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, December 24 – Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Seri Maharaja Dato Paduka Seri Setia (Dr.) Ustaz Haji Awang Abdul Aziz bin Juned, the State Mufti received a courtesy call from His Excellency Sheikh Ahmed bin Hashil bin Rashid Al-Maskari, Ambassador of Sultanate of Oman to Brunei Darussalam at the State Mufti's Office.

Yang Berhormat received religious books from Sahibus Samahah Sheikh Ahmed bin Hamad al-Khalili, State Mufti of the Sultanate of Oman.

Earlier, the State Mufti also received a courtesy call and books from Her Excellency Homeira Rigi Zirouki, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Brunei Darussalam.

Surveillance system project contract signing

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, December 31—As a way of showing the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam's continuous commitment in maintaining the well-being and interests of the people of the country, the signing ceremony for the National Coastal Surveillance System (NCSS) Project Contract took place this morning, at the Conference Room East Wing 1, Prime Minister's Office headquarters.



The Signing Ceremony for the National Coastal Surveillance System (NCSS) Project Contract between the National Maritime Coordination Center (NMCC), Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the General Dynamics Mission Systems-Canada.

The contract between the National Maritime Coordination Center (NMCC), Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the General Dynamics Mission Systems-Canada was signed by Lieutenant Colonel (Rtd) Pengiran Haji Muhamad Sazali bin Pengiran Haji Yakob, Permanent Secretary (Security, Enforcement and Law) at the Prime Minister's Office, on behalf the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam.

The signing was witnessed by Her Excellency Jeannete Stovel, High Commissioner of Canada to Brunei Darussalam.

Also present at the event were Ms. Emily Fleckner, Charge d'Affaires of the United States (US) Embassy to Brunei Darussalam; as well as Members of the NCSS Project Steering Committee and Project Team.

Previously, the contract was signed in Ottawa, Canada, on December 15 by David Ibbetson as Vice President of the General Dynamics Mission Systems-Canada.

The project, which is expected to take 24 months to build, involves the construction of a national maritime network of surveillance that covers the country's coasts, Brunei Bay, as well as the Brunei River via the installation of several tracking systems.

Once fully operational, the system will allow continuous detection and real time surveillance along the maritime areas. This will help government agencies in dealing with activities that are against the national law, as well as local and

cross-border crime threats.

In addition, the system is also intended to assist efforts in dealing with maritime incidents, such as rescue missions or water accidents.

The entire system will be under the NCSS command and control centre, as one of the strategic information assets for Government enforcement agencies.

The project will also involve initiatives for the transferring of technical and management knowledge to Brunei Darussalam. It also aspires to involve the maximum participation of people in the country during the implementation and operational phases.

BIBD receives Bank of the Year award

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, December 4 – Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam (BIBD) received the coveted Bank of the Year award from The Banker magazine during a virtual award ceremony.

This achievement marks the 6th international banking award this year for BIBD. This also marks the 3rd time that BIBD has received this particular award.

Widely regarded as the industry standard for banking excellence, The Banker's Bank of the Year awards judge banks on their ability to deliver returns, gain strategic advantage and serve their markets.

According to The Banker, "BIBD took the difficulties of 2020 in its stride, pushing forward with innovations and creating new systems that assisted its customers, while keeping in line with its Islamic banking principles."

Commenting on this award win, Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew bin Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy, in his capacity as Chairman of BIBD, commented, "Alhamdulillah, we are humbled by this achievement and sincerely grateful to the people of Brunei Darussalam for their trust and support. This achievement showcases BIBD's capabilities to stand on par with regional and global financial institutions, in line with His Majesty's Vision 2035



Mubashar Khokhar, Managing Director and CEO of Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam (BIBD) with the award.

to be a nation widely recognised for the accomplishments of its well-educated and highly-skilled people as measured by international standards."

"In Shaa Allah, we will continue to build upon this success and further strengthen our standing as the Bank seeks to position itself as the Best Islamic Bank in Asia-Pacific. This is a direct reflection of Brunei's growing position as a viable destination for investment and FDI."

Mubashar Khokhar, BIBD's Managing Director and CEO also commented,

"Alhamdulillah, we are extremely thankful to The Banker for this award, which we have long considered the gold standard in the financial world. We are humbled that our involvement in the nation's development, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, has been recognised.

This award would not have been possible without the guidance of our esteemed Board, the support of our national regulators, the commitment and dedication of our staff as well as the trust and loyalty of our customers, who remain at the heart of everything we do".

The Banker is an English-language monthly international financial affairs publication, read in over 180 countries and owned by The Financial Times Ltd.

Its unique database of more than 5,000 banks maps their financial strength and soundness via Tier 1 capital, their profitability and their performance versus their peers. Each year, The Banker's Bank of the Year Awards recognises the best performing banks across the world.

On top of The Banker award, BIBD was also named Global Finance's "Best Islamic Bank in Brunei" and "Safest Bank in Brunei", Global Finance and Banking Review's "Best CSR Bank" and "Best SME Bank" as well as "Best Retail Bank in Brunei" by The Asian Banker for the 8th consecutive year.

UBD receives book donation

TUNGKU LINK, December 7 - In an effort to promote understanding between Brunei Darussalam and the People's Republic of China, especially among the younger generation, a total of 307 books covering various topics were donated to the University of Brunei Darussalam (UBD).

The presentation of books was held at UBD's Business Library and was presented by Her Excellency Yu Hong, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to Brunei Darussalam and received by Datin Dr. Dayang Hajah Anita Binurul Zahrina binti Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Wijaya Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Abdul Aziz, Vice Chancellor of UBD.

In her speech, Her Excellency hoped that the books and videos donated would be able to help students and educators to gain a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of China, which also contains some of the latest scientific and technological achievements in China.

Her Excellency further shared some progress in bilateral relations and close cooperation between UBD and China over the past few years as some UBD graduates received scholarships to study in China and Hengyi Industries Sdn. Bhd. partnered with UBD and Zhejiang University for programmes needed by the development of downstream industries in Brunei Darussalam.

In her speech, Her Excellency also touched on the visit of His Excellency Wen Jiabao, the former Premier of State Council,



Datin Dr. Dayang Hajah Anita Binurul Zahrina binti Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Wijaya Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Abdul Aziz, Vice Chancellor of UBD receiving books from Her Excellency Yu Hong, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to Brunei Darussalam.

People's Republic of China to UBD during his visit to Brunei in conjunction with the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Brunei and China in 2011.

"Next year, we will celebrate the 30th Anniversary and China will begin its 14th Five-Year Plan and implement Long Range

Continue on page 20

UBD receives books donation (continued)

From page 19

Objectives Through the Year 2035. I believe that with the efforts and cooperation between the two countries, the objective goal of The goal of China's 2035 Objective and Brunei Vision 2035 will be realised," said Her Excellency.

Earlier, Associate Professor Dr. Joyce Teo Siew Year in her welcoming remarks said that UBD currently is partnered with 13 universities in China, including Zhejiang University, Peking University and Tsinghua University. Under the Network of ASEAN-China Academic Institutes (NACAI), UBD is partnered with Fudan University for academic exchanges.

UBD also has tripartite university-industry collaboration with Zhejiang University in China and Hengyi Industries Sdn. Bhd. at Pulau Muara Besar in the Bachelor of Engineering programme (chemical and process engineering).

The books contributed covers a wide range of topics including Chinese history, cultural studies and heritage, to literature, traditional medicine and business, in line with the close academic collaboration between UBD and higher education institutions in China, beside enriching the literary resources of UBD Library on China.

Coordinate efforts to deal with illegal drugs



The 41st ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD) Meeting held virtually.

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, December 1 – The 41st ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD) Meeting was held virtually, chaired by His Excellency Puji Sarwono, Deputy Legal and Cooperation of National Narcotics Agency (BNN) Indonesia.

The meeting was attended by Mohd Zalani bin Haji Ismail, Director of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) as the Brunei Darussalam's head of delegation and senior officers at NCB.

His Excellency Heru Winarko, Head of BNN of Indonesia in his opening remarks said that the challenges caused by COVID-19 have not halted illegal drugs trafficking. This is shown by the increasing number of drug seizures in ASEAN Countries.

ASOD is the ASEAN's main body responsible for addressing issues related to drug trafficking. This meeting provides an opportunity for ASEAN countries to share best practices and experiences as well as coordinate efforts to deal with illegal

drugs in line with ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs 2016-2025 and ASEAN Cooperation Plan to Tackle illicit Drug Production and Trafficking in the Golden Triangle 2020-2025.

In addition, the meeting took note of the meeting reports and activities carried out under the ASOD mechanism - ASEAN Seaport Interdiction Task Force (ASITF), ASEAN Airport Interdiction Task Force (AAITF) and ASEAN Narcotics Cooperation Center (ASEAN-NARCO).

Another agenda of the meeting was also a discussion on preparatory for the voting session on the scheduling recommendations in the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 and Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 which has been proposed by World Health Organization (WHO) Expert Committee on Drug Dependence (ECDD) against cannabis and drugs related to marijuana.

Steadfast drug-free ASEAN

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, December 10 – The 63rd Reconvened Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) meeting was held virtually on December 2-4.

The meeting was chaired by His Excellency Ambassador Mansoor Ahmad Khan, the Permanent Representative of

Pakistan at the United Nation.

The CND meeting was established by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) through Resolution 9(1) on February 16, 1946 as the body that monitors and examines drug-related policies and the implementation of the three drug

conventions, namely Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs 1961, Convention on Psychotropic Substances 1971 and United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances 1988.

Continue on page 21

From page 20

The meeting session was held to witness a voting session on recommendations by the World Health Organization (WHO) regarding deleting and changing the scheduling of cannabis and cannabis-related substances in the Single Convention on Narcotics Drug 1961 and Convention on Psychotropic Substances 1971.

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) led by Mohd. Zalani bin Haji Ismail, NCB Director together with the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the Ministry of Health (MoH) followed in-depth discussions on the proposal through three topical meetings and the 2nd Intersessional Meeting which were held virtually since June.

During the meeting, Brunei Darussalam reaffirmed its position by objecting to the six proposed recommendations.

NCB stressed that Brunei remains steadfast under the stance of zero tolerance approach to protect the future of the citizens and residents of Brunei Darussalam from the effects and dangers

of drug abuse to realise the aspirations of Drug Free ASEAN.

On December 2, as a result of voting from 53 CND member countries, only one proposal for the elimination of cannabis and cannabis resin from Schedule IV of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drug 1961 was accepted by gaining support votes from 27 countries. However, cannabis and cannabis resin remains in Schedule I, Single Convention on Narcotics Drug 1961.

The acceptance of this proposal has allowed access to the use of cannabis drugs for medical and research purposes only, and still remains under international control and monitoring.

Brunei Darussalam is adopting a strategy to reduce the supply and demand of drugs through the enforcement of drug crime laws, while at the same time enhancing drug prevention education programmes to the public, as well as providing treatment and rehabilitation services for drug abuse.

Despite the proposal for the scheduling



His Excellency Ambassador Mansoor Ahmad Khan, the Permanent Representative of Pakistan at the United Nation chairing the 63rd Reconvened Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) meeting which was held virtually.

of cannabis drugs having already been accepted, cannabis type drugs still remain the strictest Class A controlled drugs under Missus of Drugs Act, Chapter 27 in Brunei Darussalam.

So far, NCB has detained 26 people suspected of involvement in cannabis abuse and seized 1,247 kilogramme of cannabis.

Brunei clinches 3rd place in Regional ASEAN Quiz Competition



Awang Haji Shahrul Jeffri bin Dato Paduka Haji Ibrahim, Acting Director of Information witnessing the virtual competition.

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, December 17 – Indonesia clinched first place at the 9th Regional ASEAN Quiz 2020 held virtually at the Department of Information.

Meanwhile, the second place was Singapore followed by Brunei Darussalam in the third place.

The competition was coordinated by the Department of Information, Prime Minister's Office through the International Affairs Unit in collaboration with the Department of Co-curriculum Education of the Ministry of Education and Singapore as the organising country.

Present to witness the virtual competition was Awang Haji Shahrul Jeffri bin Dato Paduka Haji Ibrahim, Acting Director of Information as the Chairman of the ASEAN-COCI Sub-Committee on Information of Brunei Darussalam.

Three students representing the country were the top three winners

of the 9th National Level ASEAN Quiz organised last month: Year 9 student from Chung Hwa Middle School, Phoebe Lim Tong Xin who won first place, Year 10 student from Sayyidina Hasan Secondary School, Mohamad Azeem Fahmi bin Haji Mohamad Asmayuddin who came in second place and Year 10 student from Chung Ching Middle School, Chong Rui Em who came in third.

The online competition began with welcoming remarks by Foo Chi Hsia, Assistant Chief Executive of International Group at Infocomm Media Development Authority of Singapore (IMDA).

The competition brought together students from 9 ASEAN Member States to compete this year.

The event aimed to instil a spirit of competition among ASEAN youths at the secondary school level. It is also to expose various information on ASEAN culture, politics, economy and social to the youth.

The quiz is held once every two years and is one of the projects of the ASEAN Committee on ASEAN Culture and Information (ASEAN-COCI) launched in 2002 and ASEAN member states organise the quiz on a rotational basis.



Representatives for Brunei Darussalam during the 9th Regional ASEAN Quiz 2020.

FOS, UBD archive AUN-QA certification

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, December 9 - Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) has reached another milestone on its path to becoming a world-leading institution. The Geosciences programme of the Faculty of Science (FOS) has become the first in Brunei Darussalam to achieve ASEAN University Network Quality Assurance (AUN-QA) programme-level certification.

The AUN-QA network is the established quality assurance network for higher education institutions in ASEAN, with the responsibility to promote quality assurance in higher education institutions, raise the quality of higher education, and to collaborate with both regional and international bodies for the benefit of the ASEAN community. The remarkable achievement of the Geosciences programme demonstrates UBD's commitment to implementing quality assurance processes to ensure continued excellence in teaching and research.



Master of Science in Geology students during the fieldwork as part of their research.



Geosciences programme of the Faculty of Science (FOS) is the first in Brunei Darussalam to achieve ASEAN University Network Quality Assurance (AUN-QA) programme-level certification.

The AUN-QA certification was awarded for the undergraduate Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Geology programme, a popular option for students in the Faculty of Science. After completion of the BSc in Geology, students have the option of proceeding to Master of Science (MSc) and PhD degrees. Brunei Darussalam is a petroleum-producing country and several leading companies are located here, hence Geology graduates are often recruited by oil and gas companies or associated service companies. Geology graduates can also find attractive careers in other industries related to mineral resources, groundwater exploration, environmental issues and construction, both at home and abroad.

The 180th AUN-QA assessment of the Geosciences programme took place online on September 21-26, and the certification was announced on December 2.

CPI in September increases

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, December 6 - The Consumer Price Index (CPI) in September increased by 1.5 per cent year-on-year compared to September 2019. Prices of Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages increased by 2.2 per cent. Meanwhile, Non-Food prices increased by 1.4 per cent.

The CPI increase was largely attributed to the increase in the prices and costs of Miscellaneous Goods and Services (10.5 per cent); Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages (2.2 per cent); and Transport (0.9 per cent). However, this was moderated by the decrease in prices and costs of Restaurants and Hotels (1.1 per cent); Recreation and Culture (0.2 per cent); and Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels (1 per cent).

The increase in prices of Miscellaneous Goods and Services was mainly due to the increase in the price of insurance.

Prices of Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages were mainly driven

by the hike in prices of fresh vegetables and fresh beef due to limited supply. Meanwhile, high mineral water and soft drinks prices were due to selected non-aerated soft drinks.

The rise in prices of Transport was largely attributed to the prices of air tickets in order to cover operational costs from limited scheduled flights.

On a month-on-month basis, the CPI in September increased by 0.1 per cent compared to August. The Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages Index decreased by 0.04 per cent while the Non-Food Index increased by 0.1 per cent.

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

Total trade September 2020 increases

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, December 15 - In September, Brunei Darussalam's total trade valued at \$1,183.1 million, an increase by 12.5 per cent from \$1,051.8 million during the same month last year. Meanwhile, for month-to-month changes, total trade for September decreased by 14.6 per cent compared to August.

Total exports decreased by 3.5 per cent year-on-year to \$597.4 million compared to \$618.8 million in September 2019. This was mainly due to the decline in crude oil exports to \$115.3 million (September 2020) from \$289.6 million (September 2019) and also a decrease in Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to \$168.0 million (September 2020) from \$277.5 million (September 2019).

The decline in exports of crude oil and LNG was due to the slow global demand and a decline in prices. The total exports volume of Crude Oil decreased to 64.88 thousand barrels per day (September 2020) from 108.66 thousand barrels per day (September 2019), while the average exports price of Crude Oil fell to USD42.85 per barrel (September 2020) from USD67.22 per barrel (September 2019). Meanwhile for LNG, the average exports price declined to USD4.56/MMBtu (September 2020) from USD7.12/MMBtu (September 2019) while the exports volume of LNG increased to 899,458 MMBtu per day (September 2020) from 890,693 MMBtu per day (September 2019).

However, the decline in total exports was offset by an upsurge in exports of Chemicals to \$142.6 million (September 2020) from \$19.3 million (September 2019), particularly to the People's Republic of China and Singapore.

In terms of commodity by section, Mineral Fuels represents the major contributor to Brunei Darussalam's exports with 73.4 per

cent, followed by Chemicals (23.9 per cent), Machinery and Transport Equipment (1.0 per cent), Miscellaneous Transactions (0.6 per cent) and Miscellaneous Manufactured Articles (0.5 per cent).

The main exports market in September was Singapore (35.3 per cent) followed by Japan (20.8 per cent) and Malaysia (10.6 per cent).

For imports, the total value increased to \$585.7 million (September 2020) from \$433.0 million (September 2019) mainly driven by an increase in imports of Mineral Fuels, Chemicals and Food.

The five main imports by commodity were Mineral Fuels (31.0 per cent), followed by Machinery and Transport Equipment (25.3 per cent), Manufactured Goods (12.9 per cent), Chemicals (12.0 per cent), and Food (10.9 per cent).

By End Use category, imports of Intermediate Goods accounted for 57.5 per cent of the total imports, followed by Capital Goods (36.1 per cent) and Consumption Goods (6.4 per cent).

For imports by trading partners, the highest share was from United Kingdom (27.2 per cent), followed by Malaysia (18.6 per cent), and the People's Republic of China (13.6 per cent).

According to the mode of transport, the highest share was transported by sea, amounts to \$1,106.2 million (93.5 per cent). This was followed by air transport (\$50.0 million or 4.2 per cent) and via land (\$27.0 million or 2.3 per cent).

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

Global economy expected to decline

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, December 31 - The Brunei Darussalam Monetary Authority Autoriti Monetari Brunei Darussalam (AMBD) issued the AMBD Policy Statement for the second half of 2020 earlier today.

In the Policy Statement 2/2020, AMBD shared that the global economic growth rate is expected to decline by 4.4 per cent for the year 2020.

The domestic economy expanded by 2.6 per cent year-on-year in the first half of 2020. The AMBD inflation forecast for 2020 remains between 1 to 2 per cent, with the domestic inflation forecast for next year between 0 to 1 per cent.

AMBD also informed that the overall risk level for the banking sector in the Third Quarter of 2020 is lower than in the Second Quarter of 2020. The banking sector maintains a high level of capital and liquidity, and is also improving asset quality. However, the sector experienced a decline in profits. For the first time, AMBD published the financing/loan rates offered by the banking industry for each quarter, on the AMBD Website.

In the attempt to enhance the supervisory efforts of the banking sector, AMBD issued the Domestic Systemically Important Bank (D-SIB) framework. AMBD has produced a risk-based capital and solvency framework for the insurance and takaful sector.

With travel restrictions imposed to control the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic, the currency business sector is still severely affected. In addition to the introduction of temporary measures in April, AMBD also issued a Notice of Temporary Regulatory Relief Measure for Money-Changing Business on October 15, to help reduce one-time annual license payments.

As part of the efforts towards the establishment of Stock Exchange in Brunei Darussalam, AMBD has issued the 'Exposure Draft Listing Rules' to stakeholders at the end of September.

AMBD has conducted the consultation process on the Notice of Requirement for Payment System to obtain feedback on its contents from interested parties, such as payment service providers (PSPs), banks, FinTech Regulatory Sandbox participants, as well as telecommunication companies (Telcos).

The interim measures introduced by AMBD and the Brunei Association Banks (BAB) in March, for the waiver of local interbank transfer fees, has increased the use of the Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) system to over 90 per cent year-on-year between April to September. The use of the Automated Clearing House (ACH) Direct Credit system also showed a significant increase of 59 per cent year-on-year in volume during the same period.

AMBD and BAB have agreed to extend the fee waiver for another six months, from October 1 until March 31, 2021.

AMBD will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation, and its impact on the financial sector. As the effects of COVID-19 are still ongoing with volatile developments, banks are encouraged to continue to provide assistance to customers in need.

Aside from efforts to enhance and streamline the prudential regulatory framework for the financial sector based on international standards and best practices, AMBD has also expanded its macro-prudential surveillance toolkit to mitigate the systemic risk of the financial sector in the country. The complete AMBD Policy Statement 2/2020 can be found on the AMBD Website at 'www.ambd.gov.bn'.



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