



# برونى دارالسلام

# Brunei Darussalam

# Brunei Darussalam newsletter

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## LegCo as a strategic platform for the people and country



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 delivers a *titah* (royal speech) at the official opening of the First Meeting of the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Council (LegCo) at the LegCo Building in Jalan Dewan Majlis.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 9**  
- His Majesty urged Legco members to be further empowered and express their views without hesitation.

"We have high hopes for the LegCo as

a strategic platform for the consideration and deliberation of issues that are crucial for the citizens and the country. All ideas or deliberations need to be based on careful thought and research, supported by accurate facts and focusing only on

relevant issues," His Majesty's *titah* (royal speech).

"It has come to my attention that the LegCo requires more empowerment. Most of the appointed members tend to raise more questions instead of giving ideas. This causes the deliberations to be less interesting," said His Majesty.

In the *titah*, the Monarch also touched on various aspects of the economy that are currently facing uncertainty exacerbated by continuing geopolitical tensions and the startling, adverse effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on the world's financial markets, particularly in the Asian region.

"The outbreak has hindered the economic growth and development of many countries, resulting in a reduction in demand for the world's oil and gas, automatically causing the prices of these two commodities to drop."

This matter, said His Majesty, can lead to

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## Brunei Darussalam records the first case of COVID-19

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 9**  
- The first case of COVID-19 detected in Brunei Darussalam in which initial laboratory tests indicated positive result for the infection.

The first case is a local male aged 53 years old. The patient travelled together with three of his friends to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and arrived back in Brunei on March 3.

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Md. Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health announced the matters at a press conference held at the Ministry of Health.

Currently, said Yang Berhormat, he is receiving treatment at the National Isolation Centre, Tutong.

According to Yang Berhormat, the patient's symptoms began with body ache, fever and cough on March 7 and went to the Emergency Department, Hospital Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha the next day.

The test result is currently undergoing additional verification in line with guidance from the World Health Organization (WHO).

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Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Md. Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health during a press conference on detection of the first confirmed case of COVID-19 infection in Brunei Darussalam held at the Ministry of Health, Berakas.



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## His Majesty receives audience

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 audience from His Excellency Abdulla Shahid, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives on March 7 at the Istana Nurul Iman.



## Congratulatory message

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 a congratulatory message to His Excellency Dr. Arif Alvi, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; His Excellency Imran Khan, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as well as the government and the people of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the occasion of the Pakistan Day on March 23.

## News

### LegCo as a strategic platform for the people and country

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our country experiencing a deficit, after recording an excess in fiscal balance for the Financial Year of 2018/2019.

"Throughout 2019, the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam made several significant achievements, including the transformation of the telecommunications sector which is capable of enhancing innovation for change on the nation's economic landscape towards the digital era and the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution (IR 4.0), through the establishment of Unified National Networks Sdn. Bhd., which is wholly owned by the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam.

On the subject of human resources, His Majesty had given consent for the Manpower Planning and Employment Council (MPEC) to be placed at the Prime Minister's Office, for the cogitation of effective methods towards raising employment opportunities and tackling unemployment issues.

For that purpose, the Monarch stressed that it is important to review current policies, such as those related to the recruitment of foreign workers; obstacles or processes that can prevent the business community from expanding; conducting training to help job hunters, reviewing the syllabuses for training programmes; and reviewing the processes to expedite the filling of vacancies in civil services and others.

His Majesty also consented for the establishment of the Temburong District Development Authority (AKDT) for generating the economy and improving the quality of life for citizens and residents in Temburong District.

The Monarch then touched on the rising government expenditure over the years and called on all agencies to be sparing in the use of the allocated budget.



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 receives a royal salute at the official opening of the First Meeting of the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Council (LegCo) at the LegCo Building in Jalan Dewan Majlis.

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## LegCo as a strategic platform for the people and country



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam inspects a Guard of Honour mounted by 108 personnel of the Royal Brunei Police Force.

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“It must be remembered that large revenues are not necessarily capable of securing financial stability or strength, if they are not managed efficiently. *InsyaaAllah*, our country can reinforce the stabilise micro-economy and the nation’s financial standings with prudent practice and efforts to diversify the economy,” His Majesty said.

His Majesty reminded that when using the government budget, it must be with

transparency and trust. The fact that this is government’s expenditure, it does not mean that it can be used up for unimportant projects or when the big budget involves ‘back-door’ drama between certain parties outside of the government.

The First Meeting of the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Council (LegCo) session will focus on the issues and questions to the implementation of strategies for sustainable economic growth towards diversifying the country’s economy in the interest of youth development

as well as welfare and well-being of citizens and residents of this country.

The Opening Ceremony of the First Meeting of the 16<sup>th</sup> LegCo session was officiated 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.

Shortly after arriving, His Majesty received the Royal Salute accompanied with the National Anthem and inspected the Guard of Honour mounted by 108 personnel of the Royal Brunei Police Force led by Superintendent of Police Haji Mahran bin Haji Ahmad, Parade Commanding Officer.

Also present were His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister’s Office as Ex-Officio Member; His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah; His Royal Highness Prince Haji Sufri Bolkiah; and His Royal Highness

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Atmosphere at the Legislative Council (LegCo) Conference Hall of the First Meeting of the 16<sup>th</sup> LegCo session.



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and other members of the Royal Family in a group photo with the members of the Legislative Council (LegCo).

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Prince Haji Jefri Bolkiah.

His Majesty and other members of the royal family entered the conference hall accompanied by the procession of bringing in the Ceremonial Mace of the LegCo.

Prior to leaving the Council Building, His Majesty and other members of the royal family consented for a group photo session together with members of the LegCo.

Adjacent to the LegCo conference, it is intended to observe and confirm the

minute of the 16<sup>th</sup> LegCo meeting that will be held for 11 days starting on March 7 to 23.

The 16<sup>th</sup> LegCo session will be chaired by Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Lela Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdul Rahman bin Dato Setia Haji Mohammed Taib, with the assistance of clerk to LegCo, Pehin Orang Kaya Pekerma Jaya Dato Paduka Haji Judin bin Haji Asar, and Deputy Clerk to the LegCo, Rose Aminah binti Haji Imail.



Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Lela Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdul Rahman, Speaker of the LegCo.

## ‘Semangat Kebangsaan 2020’ Cycling Recreation towards a healthy community



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 joined the ‘Semangat Kebangsaan 2020’ Recreational Cycling, which further enlivened the atmosphere in conjunction with the 36<sup>th</sup> National Day.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 1** - ‘Semangat Kebangsaan 2020’ Recreational Cycling not only combines aspects of healthy living and recreation but unites the nation through an appreciation of sports culture and a comprehensive community involvement that leads toward healthy citizens, which is crucial in achieving Brunei Vision 2035.

Despite the scorching weather, the atmosphere in the capital was lively with thousands of visitors from all walks of

life participating in the event to celebrate Brunei Darussalam’s 36<sup>th</sup> National Day Celebration this year.

The atmosphere in the capital became more sprightly as 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 joined the ‘Semangat Kebangsaan 2020’ Recreational Cycling, which began and ended at Taman Haji Sir

Muda Omar ‘Ali Saifuddien.

Also present were His Majesty’s sons and brother, 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; and His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah.

Upon arrival, His Majesty was greeted by

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## 'Semangat Kebangsaan 2020' Cycling Recreation towards a healthy community



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam get-together with citizens and residents at the Taman Haji Sir Muda Omar 'Ali Saifuddin.

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Cabinet Ministers led by 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.

Shortly after arriving, His Majesty launched the 'Semangat Kebangsaan 2020' Cycling Recreation and signed a framed special jersey that had been specially commissioned for the occasion followed by choir performances and music from 'band' cadets.

His Majesty then led the 11.5-kilometre cycling event, passing through several main roads around the capital. The cycling event was also joined by cabinet ministers, deputy ministers, permanent and deputy permanent secretaries as well as the public including foreigners.

The event route passed through Jalan Pretty; Jalan Elizabeth Dua, Jalan Masjid Omar Ali Saifuddin; Jalan Kianggeh; Jalan Sekolah; Jalan Kumbang Pasang; Jalan Gadong; Jalan Perdana Menteri and Jalan Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha before ending at Taman Haji Sir Muda Omar 'Ali Saifuddin.

Shortly after completing the event, His Majesty and other members of the royal family watched the march past led by 36 cyclists from four districts who have completed the 36-kilometre route. Also joining the march past were youths from various age groups. His Majesty also watched a performance by the National Service Programme trainees.

Besides cycling, His Majesty and the royal family also took a closer look at the festivities of 'Bandarku Ceria' with



A performance by National Service Programme trainees.



His Majesty and other members of the Royal Family in a group photo in front of a replica of an antic car on display in 'Bandarku Ceria'.

various activities, festivals and performances prepared by 13 ministries, National Youth and Sports Associations, National Service Programme (PKBN) and Brunei Darussalam Contingent to the SEA Games 2019 in the Philippines.

In addition, private agencies also organised activities such as Financial Literacy Interactive Games; Bike Balancing Challenge, Workout Challenge and Mini Obstacle Race; Introducing the Tyran Maton Application activity to prevent bullying; cup stacker, goalball and flying disc activities; Health Screening Program, Know Your gut and COVID-19 Exhibition; Smart Jawi Activity; Food Safety Exhibition and Brunei GAP (plant Industry); Exhibition and Biodiversity quiz and the importance of forests; Poni Divers Exhibition; Brunei ICT Award Competition Promotion and Local ICT Innovative Products as a component of industrial revolution 4.0; National Environmental Health Authority (SHENA) Safety Activities; Kite Flying; Frisbee Showcase; Parkour Showcase; bird singing activities; paintball and archery.

The 'Semangat Kebangsaan 2020' Cycling Recreation was organised by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports with the Ministry of Home Affairs; Ministry of Religious Affairs; Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism; Ministry of Defense; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Transport and Info-communications and other ministries as well as the Brunei Darussalam Cycling Federation.

The success of the event has been even more meaningful with active participation from all parties through the Whole of Government and Nation approach involving the entire community including non-governmental or NGO's in carrying out the tasks and trusts provided in making this cycling adventure successful.



The march past led by 36 cyclists from four districts who have completed the 36-kilometre route.

## PKBN shape youths into high quality human resource models

TEMBURONG, March 12 - The National Service Programme (PKBN) made history for a total of 393 trainees of the 9<sup>th</sup> PKBN intake after completing 15 weeks of training beginning in December 2019.

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 attend PKBN Intake Passing Out Parade Ceremony at the PKBN Training Camp in Batu Apoi, Temburong.

Upon arrival, His Majesty was greeted by 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; Dato Paduka Haji Mohammad Irwan bin Haji Hambali, Commissioner of the Royal Brunei Police Force; Major General Pengiran Dato Paduka Seri Aminan bin Pengiran Haji Mahmud, Commander of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF); Pg. Mohammad Amirrizal bin Pg. Haji Mahmud, Permanent Secretary for Administration, Finance and Estate at the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports; and Retired Colonel Pg. Haji Zulkifli bin Pg. Haji Ismail, Director of National Service

Division.

His Majesty then inspected the parade comprising of 237 male trainees and 156 female trainees.

His Majesty then witnessed the march-past in the slow and fast movements from the PKBN trainees accompanied by the Royal Brunei Armed Forces Band joined with the Sarunai and Tambur Royal Brunei Land Forces.

After the parade ceremony, His Majesty delivered a *titah* (royal speech) and highlighted that the PKBN is able to shape youths as useful and high-quality human resource. However, efforts still need to be made to ensure that these PKBN graduates showcase their abilities upon completion of the course, such as carry out their duties and gaining success in their field of studies.

His Majesty hopes to see the board and working committee members of the PKBN continue to ensure its alumni are actively involved in community services.

"Because the goal of the training was not just to develop youth, but the youth that are built were also heroes who can join the fieldwork with the community at any



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam receives salute from the Passing Out Parade of PKBN trainees.

time as an obligation," said His Majesty.

Since its establishment 10 years ago, the PKBN has shown its ability to build youth that are progressive and resilient, capable of aiding in the country's socio-economic growth and development and strengthening national defence.

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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 inspected the parade comprising a total 393 trainee of the 9<sup>th</sup> National Service Programme (PKNB) intake after successfully completing 15 weeks of training beginning in December 2019.



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam presents awards to the Overall Best Male, 12554 Mohammad Wafiq Mustaqim bin Bahrin (left) and Overall Best Female Trainees, 12345 Nurul Maziah binti Abdullah Kamarul Sarip (right) both from Platoon 2.

## PKBN shape youths into high quality human resource models

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His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkih Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam delivers a *titah* (royal speech) at the Passing Out Parade of the 9<sup>th</sup> National Service Programme (PKBN) Intake which took place at the PKBN Training Camp in Batu Apoi, Temburong.

His Majesty then presented awards to the Overall Best Male, and Female Trainees to 12554 Mohammad Wafiq Mustaqim bin Bahrin and 12345 Nurul Maziah binti Abdullah Kamarul Sarip both from Platoon 2. The Best Trainee in Drill was awarded to Trainee 12417 Amirul Afizan bin Moxsin of Platoon 2. The Best Female Trainee in Drill was Trainee 12269 Nur Munawwarah binti Haji Ismail of Platoon 7. The Best Male in Physical Training Award was awarded to Trainee 12305 Kasyful Asymawi bin Haji Khairul Ariffin of Platoon 6; while 12324 Nur Hernna Syafiqah binti Abdullah Hirman received the Best Female Physical Training Award of Platoon 5.

Soon after the award ceremony, three chants of '*Daulat*' were shouted by the PKBN trainees upon successful completion in their training programme.

From the parade ground, His Majesty proceeded to the Block 1 Lobby of the PKBN Training Camp to tour an exhibition by the PKBN Alumni Association

Committee and Young Farmers Programme of the Youth Development Centre.

His Majesty's attendance demonstrates His Majesty's keen interest in the development of youth in the country especially the PKBN trainees who have completed their training.

Besides, it gave the trainees motivation and inspiration to continue in playing their crucial role as independent, disciplined, visionary, courteous, pious and holistic youths. It is hoped that the trainees will apply the lessons obtained from the programme in the service of the nation, race and religion, which was the core aspiration of the PKBN formation.

Since its formation, PKBN has produced two thousand and nine hundred, thirty (2,930) alumni. They were trained by 150 people consisting of supervisors, instructor, medical staff and operators from various organisation to shape youth, who are disciplined and prepared to face changes.



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkih Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in a group photo with the Overall Best Male and Female Trainees.



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam receives a short brief from the PKBN Alumni Association Committee during the tour exhibition.



His Majesty greets by members of the public.

## Trust in Allah the Almighty as the foundation of determination

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 21** - It is not appropriate for people to go against the etiquette and religion such as refusing to undergo examination or treatment with false excuses and only wanting to rely on Allah the Almighty.

"To my understanding, the basis of trust in Allah the Almighty is determination or endeavour and not being reckless," said His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkih Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in a special *titah* (royal speech) on the COVID-19 Pandemic held at Istana Nurul Iman.

We, said His Majesty, hope to curb new infectious diseases with Allah the Almighty's assistance.

"We should not be complacent in tackling this outbreak. From what has been happening around the world, many have predicted that this outbreak will be a long-term threat," His Majesty said.

Hence, Brunei Darussalam must be prepared in an integrated manner to shield ourselves from this outbreak. Physically, we are encouraged to prioritise cleanliness, use face masks and hand sanitisers. However, this is not enough. Psychologically, we must be committed, patient, calm and convinced with Allah the Almighty's assistance, urged His Majesty.

His Majesty added that the current threat is not from storms, fire or flash flood. If such a threat comes from these elements, we, said His Majesty, could mobilise security units to assist us. However, COVID-19 was like the SARS outbreak, and we cannot depend totally on these units to assist us.

In fact, what is needed are treatment and prevention through various processes such as by not attending mass gatherings, using face masks, using hand sanitisers, restricting entry and exit to the country and intensify *doa* (prayers).

"This is our joint responsibility, and no one should run away from such responsibility. Not adhering to regulations or failing to abide orders is an example of one escaping from their responsibility," said His Majesty.

The government, through the Ministry of Health has taken steps to enhance human resource capacity, not only in terms of doctors and nurses but also clinical capability.



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkih Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam delivers in a special *titah* (royal speech) on the COVID-19 Pandemic held at Istana Nurul Iman.

To enhance the laboratory analysis capability, His Majesty has consented for the construction of an additional virology laboratory at the National Virology Reference Lab.

"Additional laboratory which is capable of increasing the analysis capability up to 10 times and able to release test results quickly," the Monarch said.

"Currently, we are tested with COVID-19. However, we are not alone. It is affecting globally. The pandemic has spread fast, affecting 180 countries with over 260,000 cases leading to over 11,000 deaths," said His Majesty.

His Majesty said for three months since the outbreak, Brunei Darussalam was free from COVID-19 while several countries have been affected, but eventually, Brunei Darussalam is affected.

The source of the outbreak affecting Brunei Darussalam was identified as the group of Bruneians who participated in the *Tabligh* gathering in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The first case was detected on March 3, 2020, a 53-year-old local. To date, the number has increased.

His Majesty said the *Hukum Syarak* had outlined guidelines based on Al-Quran for us not to drag ourselves towards catastrophes while the *Hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam has strongly prohibited us from

entering any place where there is an infectious disease outbreak and not to leave the place after entering it. *Hadith* also reminded us to escape from such diseases.

The Monarch is aware that all of us are experiencing shock but not to the extent of panicking as it could affect stability.

In a *titah* (royal speech), His Majesty stressed that as a nation with belief, besides continuing physical efforts, we were also urged to intensify our spiritual efforts by multiplying supplications or *doa* and remembrance of Allah the Almighty (*Zikir*) and to do good deeds and prohibit wrongdoings.

"This is where our culture differs from others. We know that this outbreak does not exist on its own but from the Creator. No one knows why it comes. However, based on events recorded in Al-Quran, we understand that every unfortunate event or outbreak is a reminder or punishment or *Intiqam* (vengeance) from Allah the Almighty," said His Majesty.

The only hope left is to be humble, plead guilty and seek forgiveness. "We pray to Allah the Almighty for safety from this terrible outbreak and to protect us," said His Majesty.

There have been reports of people who are engaged in panic buying of necessities

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## Trust in Allah the Almighty as the foundation of determination

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leading to a drastic drop in rice supplies at shops in the country.

"The Ministry of Finance and Economy has reaffirmed that rice and sugar stocks are adequate for daily needs and the timeline for sale to companies at state stores has also been extended as these are open daily including Friday, Sunday and public holidays," His Majesty said.

The Monarch also reminded retailers not to take advantage of increasing the prices

of goods. "If it happens, my government will not hesitate to take legal action."

His Majesty called on the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) to guide the citizens to supplicate (*Doa*) and intensify *Zikir* in remembering Allah the Almighty.

His Majesty also urged the MoRA to provide *Doa* and *Zikir* texts which are easy to comprehend but *Wirid* that can easily be used by the public.

"*InsyaaAllah* through such efforts, may Allah the Almighty accept our prayers," said His Majesty.

His Majesty expressed his thanks and appreciation to the health workforce and nurses, public servants, especially the army and police that are working vigorously. Similar appreciation was also extended to volunteers who contributed directly and indirectly in tackling COVID-19.

## His Royal Highness visits HMAS Dechaineux

**MUARA, March 7** - His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkhiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office, made a working visit to the Australian Collins Class Submarine, HMAS Dechaineux.

HMAS Dechaineux was the first submarine to dock in Brunei Darussalam from 7 to 9 March.

Upon arrival at Muara Commercial Wharf, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince was welcomed by Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd. Yussof, Second Minister of Defence; Major General Pengiran Dato Paduka Seri Aminan bin Pengiran Haji Mahmud, Commander of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces; Her Excellency Nicola Rosenblum, High Commissioner of Australia to Brunei Darussalam; Brigadier General (Rtd) Dato Seri Pahlawan Shahriil Anwar bin Haji Ma'awiah, Permanent Secretary of Defence; Service Commanders and Joint Force Commander as well as Vice Admiral Michael Noonan, Chief of the Royal Australian Navy.



His Royal Highness listens to a briefing from Commanding Officer of HMAS Dechaineux, Commander Brad Francis.

Upon arrival, His Royal Highness boarded the submarine and visited the Senior Sailors Mess; Control Room; Weapon Storage Compartment; Junior Sailors Mess; Motor Generator Room.

The HMAS Dechaineux submarine based at Fleet Base West in Western Australia

is the fourth Collins Class submarine that was commissioned for service in the Royal Australian Navy on 23 February 2001.

The submarine is capable of accommodating 38 sailors and 10 officers

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His Royal Highness takes a closer look at the facilities available in HMAS Dechaineux.



His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah receives junjung ziarah from Commanding Officer of the Royal Australian Navy.

## His Royal Highness visits HMAS Dechaineux



His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkhiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office in a group photo with Second Minister of Defence; High Commissioner of Australia to Brunei Darussalam; Vice Admiral Michael Noonan, Chief of the Royal Australian Navy, Commanding Officer of HMAS Dechaineux, Commander Brad Francis; and the Royal Australian Navy as well as the Ministry of Defence and the Royal Brunei Armed Forces.

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and is one of the first submarines which were designed with computers.

The submarine also boasts a range of features including a high-performance hull form, highly automated controls, high shock resistance and an efficient weapons handling and discharge system.



His Royal Highness was given a short briefing about to the Australian Collins Class Submarine HMAS Dechaineux.

## Smart City initiatives as a viable strategy



Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah binti Pengiran Haji Salleh Ab. Rahaman delivers a *sabda* (royal speech) at the Opening Ceremony of the International School Brunei (ISB) Borneo Global Issues Conference (BGIC) at the International Convention Centre in Berakas.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 7** - This year's Borneo Global Issues Conference (BGIC), International School Brunei (ISB) theme 'Youths Call for More Sustainable Cities and Communities' aims to promote youths and community leaders towards achieving Brunei Vision 2035.

Consented to attend the opening ceremony of the ISB BGIC at the International Convention Centre in Berakas was Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah binti Pengiran Haji Salleh Ab. Rahaman as the Royal Patron of the Conference. Upon arrival, Her Royal Highness was greeted by Laura Thomas, ISB's Executive Principal.

The event began with a welcoming address from Laura Thomas followed by the keynote address of two guest speakers, Darren Tan, who leads the Education and Community Outreach efforts in ComCrop Singapore, and

Chloe King, a 2019 Fullbright US Scholar researching sustainable tourism in Sulawesi, Indonesia.

Also present at the opening of the conference was 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.

"With no signs of the fast pace of urbanisation around the world slowing down. Mega-cities look like they will become a fixture in future infrastructure developments and have changed the way of living today's perception and expectations," said Her Royal Highness in her *sabda* (royal speech).

The UN Development Programme stated more than half of the world's population now lives in mega-cities, and it is believed the figure will increase by 6.5 billion by 2050, marking two-thirds of the global

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## Smart City initiatives as a viable strategy

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population.

Her Royal Highness also said, with rapid urbanisation gaining momentum and with cities being underprepared, we see the devastating effects of overcrowding, rising economic inequality, high energy consumption and pollution.

The inability to effectively manage the big influx of people will indefinitely lead to destructive and, often, irreversible outcomes to societies and future generations.

To curb this issue, Her Royal Highness emphasised that many countries are considering Smart City initiatives as a visible strategy. This concept explores how technologies such as the Internet of Thing and big data can be used to manage public assets effectively. It is not just to enhance people's quality of life, but to improve access, reduce traffic congestions, control pollution and improve energy efficiency.

More importantly, it can help minimise the harmful effects of human consumption on the environment. Her Royal Highness continued in a *sabda*, ASEAN Leaders have already acknowledged the importance of smart and sustainable urban development by establishing the ASEAN Smart Cities Network in April 2018.

Through this, ASEAN Member States can work together to improve urban living with technology as the enabler. In line with this, Her Royal Highness said, the government of His Majesty, through the Ministry of Home Affairs, has drawn up its own 'Smart City Action Plan' that focuses on revitalising existing infrastructure in Bandar Seri Begawan, cleaning up our rivers, improving access to community services including health and recreational facilities, and at the same time encouraging entrepreneurial activities and promote the local tourism industry. These potentially can bring about a positive impact.

HRH was pleased to see that 16<sup>th</sup> ISB BGIC has chosen a theme that considers the threats we are facing today, as well as the concerns that may affect our future. Our impulse is always to leave the world a better place for the next generation.

With that, Her Royal Highness urged young people to use this platform to find their voice in the discussion, to learn and engage, build valuable networks continuously, and use new knowledge to create impactful solutions.

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Her Royal Highness presents an appreciation gift to one of the working paper presenters.



Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah binti Pengiran Haji Salleh Ab. Rahaman launches Borneo Global Issues Conference (BGIC), International School Brunei (ISB).



Her Royal Highness in a group photo with participants who attends the conference.



Her Royal Highness in a group photo with committee members of the 16<sup>th</sup> ISB BGIC.

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As the leaders for tomorrow, said Her Royal Highness, this platform should not just be seen as the place to talk about the issues we face today, but a place to tolerate diverse views, to negotiate, and think critically.

Her Royal Highness is confident that this year's conference will be yet another

successful one, and wish all the best in their deliberations and debate.

Subsequently, Her Royal Highness consented to present certificates and appreciation gifts to the invited presenters, sponsors and supporters of BGIC. Her Royal Highness also watched musical performances from ISB students.

ISB BGIC is an annual student-led

model United Nations conference where participants represent various countries, sharing their views on current and real-world issues.

The four-day conference, which runs until March 9, was attended by 25 schools comprising of ISB, Colleges and Schools in the country with the aim of expanding student's understanding of global citizenship.



A musical performance by ISB students.



Participants at the conference.

## Gallery of the Yayasan Islamic Calligraphy and Arts Studies Centre launches

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 5** - The Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Islamic Arts and Calligraphy Studies Centre (PPKKI-YSHHB) is an institution that assists Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah (YSHHB) in its efforts to propagate Islamic Syiar through the dissemination of Islamic arts and its teachings in Brunei Darussalam.

The objective of the establishment is to provide services in developing a range of knowledge, skills and expertise, particularly in terms of Islamic Calligraphy and decorative arts.

In this regard, various works of Calligraphy and Islamic Art Crafts produced by locals are for sale displayed at the newly opened PPKKI-YSHHB Gallery.

The Gallery is intended as the Islamic Arts and Calligraphy Convergence Centre for developing and refining talents and skills besides instilling interest among local youth so that they can compete with regional and international works.

His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Chairman of the YSHHB Board of Governors graced the opening of the PPKKI-YSHHB.

Upon arrival, His Royal Highness was greeted by Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Indera Setia Diraja Sahibul Karib Pengiran Anak



His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah receives a pesembah a string art portrait of His Royal Highness.

Haji Idris bin Pengiran Maharaja Lela Pengiran Muda Abdul Kahar, First Deputy Chairman of the Yayasan Board of Governors; Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Seri Maharaja Dato Paduka Seri Setia (Dr.) Ustaz Haji Awang Abdul Aziz bin Juned, State Mufti as Second Deputy Chairman of the YSHHB Board of Governors; Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Rtd) Dato

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## Gallery of the Yayasan Islamic Calligraphy and Arts Studies Centre launched



His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik takes a closer look at the work of Calligraphy Art in the Gallery space.

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Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd. Yusof, Second Minister of Defence as the Chairman of the YSHHB Board of Directors; 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 as the Deputy Chairman of the YSHHB Board of Directors; and Dr. Dayang Nor Intihan binti Haji Abdul Razak, Permanent Secretary for Planning, Land Use and Environment at the Ministry of Development as the Acting Managing Director of YSHHB.

Following the opening ceremony, His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik consented to tour the works of calligraphy artwork at the PPKKI-YSHHB Gallery, Lauhah Al-Islamiah Gallery, Al-Aswad Gallery and At-Tasmeem Gallery.

The Lauhah Al-Islamiah Gallery exhibits artworks and artefacts from overseas. It focuses mostly on 'Zukhruf' calligraphy and illuminations collection of PPKKI-YSHHB that uses canvas and 'waraq muqahhar' which is produced using traditional methods.

The Al-Aswad Gallery displays the work, artefacts, the process of *Jawi* writing concerning the development of the *Jawi* script in the Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam which was displayed using hologram technology. Meanwhile, the focus of khat is more on '*Khat Al-Mansub*' which was the seven khat commonly used in Islamic calligraphy arts civilisation.

While, At-Tasmeem Gallery exhibits

interior decoration products that combine calligraphy and designs from the PPKKI-YSHHB in At-Tasmeem Gallery produced by local companies.

His Royal Highness then viewed several activities and facilities available at the PPKKI-YSHHB such as Al-Ma'rifah Hall, lecture room, Semaun Souvenir Shop, the Semaun Cafe, meeting room and Musolla.

His Royal Highness also consented to receive two *pesambah* (gift). The first was a decorated Al-Quran bearing a plumeria motif with six petals representing the pillars and faith in Islam. The theme was designed by Muhammad Asyraf bin Haji Rambli, one of the staff members at the



His Royal Highness taking a closer look at an Islamic Calligraphy writing.

PPKKI-YSHHB.

The second *pesambah* was a string art portrait of His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik by Awang Muhammad Miqdam bin Zaini, a Yayasan scholarship recipient pursuing further studies under the diploma in Mushaf Arts at Restu International College, Malaysia.

The centre began its operation on July 22, 2013, where the first step in the implementation of its establishment was to work through a Memorandum of Understanding with several institutions of study in Islamic calligraphy.

In complementing the centre with highly skilled human resources in the field of Islamic arts, YSHHB funded 11 students to undergo a full-time Diploma in Mushaf Arts, at the Restu International College in Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia gradually began in 2011, and seven of those students are now employed at the centre.

Since formal education programs are still in the planning phase, the centre has successfully introduced several study programmes, including a short course in basic and advanced calligraphy, which was first opened for public participation in 2017.

PPKKI-YSHHB also offers a variety of programs and activities throughout the year for the public to participate, including students such as Khat Arts and Islamic Design Workshops, Seminars and Khat Arts Competitions.

The PPKKI-YSHHB Gallery is open to the public including students and tourists daily; Monday to Sunday, from 9.00 a.m to 5.00 p.m except on Friday open from 9.00 a.m to 12.00 p.m and 1.30 p.m to 5 p.m and entry is free.

## Brunei Darussalam records the first case of COVID-19

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At present, the patient is currently in a stable condition.

The Ministry of Health has responded immediately to detect and conduct contact tracing to all of the patient's contact including family members and three of his friends who was on the same trip as the patient.

"All close contacts are undergoing quarantine for 14 days and will also undergo laboratory tests to detect the COVID-19 infection," said Yang Berhormat.

The Ministry of Health will continuously maintain high vigilance to prevent and control the spread of the COVID-19 infection in Brunei Darussalam. Over the last two weeks, due to the rise of infection cases within the Asia-Pacific region, we have enhanced surveillance to detect any COVID-19 infection within the

community.

In this regard, the Ministry of Health advice the public not to panic and ensure that they take preventive measures including: Observing good personal hygiene; Practicing frequent hand washing with soap and clean water (especially before handling food or eating, after going to the toilet, or after coughing or sneezing); Wearing a face mask if you develop respiratory symptoms; Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue paper when coughing or sneezing, and disposing the soiled tissue paper in the rubbish bin immediately; Being socially responsible if you have develop any respiratory symptoms, i.e. to seek medical attention and rest at home, as well as avoid from going out to public places and attending any social gathering.

The Ministry of Health recommends postponing any unnecessary travel to affected countries, to reduce the likelihood of imported cases into the

country, as we know that there is definite human to human transmission of the disease.

The Ministry of Health seeks the public cooperation to act responsibly and avoid spreading any information that is misleading and untrue, as well as to respect the privacy of the patient and his family members.

The Ministry of Health will continue to monitor the development of the COVID-19 through information received from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and regularly update the public.

For further and latest information, members of the public can visit the Ministry of Health's website at [www.moh.gov.bn/SitePages/COVID-19.aspx](http://www.moh.gov.bn/SitePages/COVID-19.aspx) or contact the following numbers: Health Advice Line at 2381380 or 2381383 (during office hours) or; Talian Darussalam 123 (after office hours).

## MoH appreciate volunteers' dedication



Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Md. Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health at a press conference.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 26** - The Minister of Health (MoH) expressed his appreciation for the assistance provided by volunteers in the government's effort to control the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak in the country.

Yang Berhormat said that the dedication and commitment given in terms of time, energy and even personal finances is a great sacrifice to the country's security and well-being.

"The Ministry of Health would like to reassure volunteers and parents or guardians that the tasks organised by the Ministry of Health through the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports for volunteers are of low-risk," said Yang Berhormat

Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Md. Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health at a Press Conference held at Al-'Afiah Hall, Ministry of Health.

Yang Berhormat said, these tasks include checking body temperature; assisting in secretarial work in monitoring or isolation facilities; and so on, according to the guidelines provided by the agencies involved.

"Continue contributing to the country and together commit to helping the Government for the sake of the country's security and well-being," he added. MoH is very much looking forward to the continued cooperation and assistance of the volunteers.

## COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool

**BERAKAS, March 29** - The Ministry of Health urged the general public to use the COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool, to aid the Ministry in monitoring and evaluating the COVID-19 situation in the country, as well as to plan ahead to address the COVID-19 situation through the web application [healthinfo.gov.bn](http://healthinfo.gov.bn).

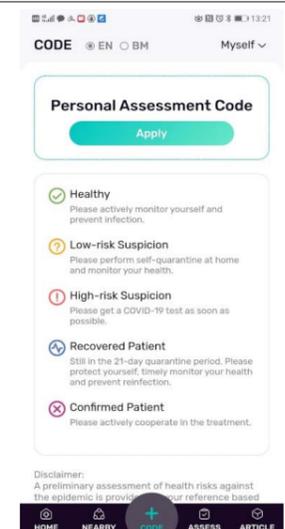
Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Md. Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health said one of the positive findings was the result of the application of the COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool.

For further information and latest updates, members of the public can visit the

official website of the Ministry of Health at [www.moh.gov.bn](http://www.moh.gov.bn) or by contacting the Health Advice Line 148 (operating 24-hours) or through the web application [healthinfo.gov.bn](http://healthinfo.gov.bn).

On this occasion, the Ministry of Health would like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation for all the efforts made by all parties in complying with the recommendations and advice given.

"This has helped in the government's efforts to control the spread of COVID-19



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## COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool

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infection,” said Yang Berhormat.

“The Ministry of Health would also like to re-express our appreciation and thank all the agencies and volunteers involved in the efforts to contain the COVID-19 infection, including other frontliners such

as the National Disaster Management Centre; Royal Brunei Armed Forces; Royal Brunei Police Force; Royal Brunei Airlines air crew; Brunei Darussalam Red Crescent Society; Health Advice Line 148 operators; and volunteers from various agencies including the Ministry

of Culture, Youth and Sports; the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism; and the non-government organisations; who have all been working together as part of a national effort to control the outbreak of COVID-19 in the country,” Yang Berhormat added.

## National Virology Reference Laboratory officially opens



The keys to the building were presented to Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Md. Isham bin Haji Jaafar by Dato Paduka Haji Ahmad bin Kadi, Director of LSL Sdn. Bhd.



Yang Berhormat took a closer look at the lab.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 30** - An additional building of National Virology Reference Laboratory located in Kampung Sumbiling, Bandar Seri Begawan will be used as a Diagnostic Molecular Unit for respiratory viral infections and specifically for the COVID-19 analysis tests.

In an interview with the Head of National Virology Reference Laboratory, Dr. Zainun binti Zaini explained that the additional building has four main rooms namely sample reception lab, sample processing lab, reagent preparation lab and amplification laboratory.

With this new building, all the molecular COVID-19 tests will be transferred to the new lab to enable the increase in test capacity.

According to Dr. Zainun, for the placement of the staff who will be conducting the tests at the laboratory, they will be stationed with seven people at a time and on-duty shift.

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Md. Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health, held a key handover ceremony and the official opening of the additional building of National Virology Reference Laboratory.

She added that 26 personnel have already been selected for placement and training in different areas at the facility.

Following the recitation of a *Doa Selamat*, the keys to the building were presented to Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Md. Isham bin Haji Jaafar by Dato Paduka Haji Ahmad bin Kadi, Director of LSL Sdn. Bhd.

“The samples will be tested in batches; about 240 samples can be processed in one day, which is six batches,” she added.

The Minister then handed the keys to Dr. Hajah Surita binti Haji Mohd. Taib, Acting Director of Laboratory Services, before touring the newly-built facility.

She further explained that with the construction of the additional building, the sample test capacity could be further enhanced using ‘semi-automated’ procedures.

Safety features were also enhanced at the new laboratory to ensure the safety and well-being of officers and staff on duty.



Amongst of the facilities provides at the additional building of National Virology Reference Laboratory located in Kampung Sumbiling, Bandar Seri Begawan.



## 129 COVID-19 cases as of March 31



Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Md. Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health at a press conference.

**BERAKAS, March 31** - Two new case of COVID-19 infection in the country, bringing the total number of cases in Brunei Darussalam to 129 people announced Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Md. Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health at the Media

Conference of the COVID-19 held at Al-Afiah Hall, Ministry of Health.

Case 128, aged 36 years old is the wife of Case 111. She does not have travel history and started developing symptoms on March 27, 2020.

While Case 129, aged 25 years old returned from Phuket, Thailand on March 20, 2020 onboard Royal Brunei B1520 (seated at 33H). He started developing symptoms (flu) on March 30, 2020.

The Ministry of Health would like to inform the public that *Alhamdulillah*, by the grace of Allah Subhanahu Wata’ala, seven more cases treated at the National Isolation Center has recovered and allowed to return home, bringing total number of people recovered so far are 45 people. There are 83 cases still being treated at the National Isolation Center.

Of these, Yang Berhormat said, three are still in critical condition and requires respiratory assistance at the Intensive Care Unit at the National Isolation Center, where one of the patient requires heart/lung machine (ECMO) assistance. Meanwhile, one patient is still under close

monitoring and the rest are in a stable condition.

The Ministry of Health also informed that currently, a total of 854 individuals are undergoing quarantine in accordance with the Infectious Disease Act (Chapter 204). Meanwhile, 1,424 individuals have completed their quarantine and are in a stable condition.

Since early January 2020, a total of 6,421 laboratory tests for COVID-19 have been conducted, leading to a ratio of one in 67 people in the country has been examined.

On March 28, Brunei Darussalam reported the first death case from COVID-19, a 64-year-old local man.

The deceased had recently travelled to Kuala Lumpur and Cambodia, returned to Brunei Darussalam on March 4. He reported the onset of symptoms on March 8 and tested positive for the coronavirus on March 12.

He began receiving treatment at the National Isolation Centre and admitted to the Intensive Care Unit on March 16.

## Brunei defers business, personal and property loans as total stimulus rises to \$450 million



Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew bin Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Minister of Finance and Economy II at a press conference.

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew bin Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Minister of Finance and Economy II announced the new deferments endorsed by the Autoriti Monetari Brunei Darussalam (AMBD) and the Brunei Association of Banks in a press conference this afternoon.

All deferments must be applied by businesses or individuals directly to and be approved by their lending institution or bank between April 1 to December 30.

The deferments will be valid from the lender's date of approval until March 31, 2021. All deferments are for the principal amount borrowed, which means the interest or profit rate (for Islamic banks) still have to be paid.

There are four deferments or eligible delays:

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 30** - The Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE) is deferring all business, personal and property loans in a new stimulus package that raises the total economic relief provided by the government amid the COVID-19 outbreak to \$450 million.

1. Deferment on repayment for loans or financing for all business sectors.
2. Restructuring and deferment of repayments for personal loans and hire purchase facilities including car loans for up to ten years for businesses and working

individuals, including the self-employed.

3. Delaying repayment of property/real estate loans for businesses and working individuals, including the self-employed.

4. Restructuring outstanding credit card debt into loans not longer than three years for private-sector employees and the self-employed. However, credit card limit will not be raised within these three years.

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew said the deferments and the waiving of bank fees would cost the financial sector approximately \$250 million. When factoring previous COVID-19 related economic relief measures including deferred Employees Trust Fund (TAP)/SCP payments, 25 per cent salary contribution for MSME's Bruneian employees and sponsored training programmes for graduates, employees and businesses the total government-led contribution is worth \$450 million.

The Minister emphasised that a key component of Brunei's economic stimulus was keeping and upskilling Bruneians within the workforce, and enabling graduates to enter the workforce with measures

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## Brunei defers business, personal and property loans as total stimulus rises to \$450 million

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including the government-sponsored apprenticeship programme i-Ready, which has been extended to Level 5 Diploma and Level 2 to 5 TVET holders.

"We want to avoid increasing (local) unemployment as much as possible," said Yang Berhormat.

"If someone becomes unemployed (because of the COVID-19 impact) and then receives (cash) handouts from the government, it will not be sustainable, as what happens after they are done spending? If they are kept in employment, they will continue to be productive and be able to contribute to society, and could even fill in positions held by foreigners who are leaving."

He also encouraged employees and businesses experiencing a decrease in commercial activity to consider investing their time into government-sponsored training which includes online business courses from Darussalam Enterprise (DARE) and IT or industry-specific workforce training by the Manpower Planning and Employment Council (MPEC).

## MoFE unveils third set of economic measures

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, MARCH 29** - The Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE) has unveiled a third set of economic measures to help the private sector mitigate the impact of COVID-19 outbreak, including paying 25 per cent of MSME employees' salary for three months.

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew bin Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Minister of Finance and Economy II announced the new measures in a press conference this as COVID-19 cases rose to 120 with the country recording its first death on March 28.

The latest measures focus on upskilling and supporting graduates, employees and local businesses with subsidies, training, grants and paid apprenticeships. The first two interim measures announced on March 19 and 21 covered discounts on corporate tax and utilities and deferment on loan repayments and social security contributions.

### Up to 25 per cent salary subsidy for MSME employees for three months

Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) defined as businesses with less than 100 employees can claim up to 25 per cent in salary subsidies and full Employees Trust Fund (TAP) contribution for three months for their Bruneian employees with salaries less than \$1,500.

MSMEs need to apply for the subsidy by downloading the form from the TAP website starting April 1 and submit to payments@tap.com.bn.

### Paid apprenticeships: i-Ready scheme expanded to HND/TVET graduates

The i-Ready scheme, a paid apprenticeship scheme for degree holders of up to three years with a monthly allowance of \$800 from the government, has been reduced to 18 months and been expanded to include two additional tiers: Bruneians with a Level 5 Diploma (HND or Advanced Diploma equivalent) and those completing Level 2 to 4 under Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET).

Those with degrees and above are to receive a monthly allowance of \$800 plus a \$400 top-up from their employer/host organization, those with Level 5 Diplomas will receive an allowance of \$600 plus a \$300 top-up and TVET holders will receive \$400 in allowance with \$300 topped up.

All top-ups must be borne by the host organisation from the 11-month mark of their apprenticeship. The government will also contribute TAP and SCP payments during their apprenticeship. The availability of i-Ready positions are based on the submitted demand by hiring organisations.

Organisations and graduates looking to participate in the i-Ready scheme can visit JobCentre Brunei (JCB).

### Grants and business matching for e-Commerce and logistics

Darussalam Enterprise (DARE) will be prioritising its existing co-matching grant of up to \$20,000 for businesses looking to start or expand into e-Commerce and logistics. As dining at eateries has been banned and social distancing is being encouraged during the outbreak, online shopping and delivery provides a convenient and safe alternative to buying goods including daily essentials.

Together with AITI, DARE will also be

matching businesses with local e-commerce platforms with delivery solutions. The endorsed platforms, along with information on how to participate, will be announced on April 1 on DARE and AITI's websites.

### Revamping of JCB website

The JCB website has been revamped to streamline the filing of job applications while also adding new features such as real-time notifications for job matches and updates on applications.

Companies will also be able to get talent profiles and compatibility reports on potential employees for particular positions based on algorithms. The Manpower Planning and Employment Council (MPEC) who oversees JCB will also be working with the private sector, especially the sectors of manufacturing, security, online services and logistics, which have been identified as needing a larger workforce.

### Online business courses

DARE will be offering its Industry Business Academy online through Coursera, a leading online learning platform that provides business capacity building classes by accredited experts around the globe. Over 300 business-related courses in seven key domains including marketing and sales, finance and accounting, innovation and design and data skills will be accessible to businesses and fully sponsored by DARE.

### Upskilling of the private sector

MPEC is encouraging companies to send their Bruneian staff for upskilling and reskilling. MPEC is providing online and hands-on courses in IT, including programming and data analytics, as well as in food and beverage.

## New measures introduced to support businesses

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 23** - The Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE) has introduced a second set of

interim measures centered around tax, utility and social security deductions and deferments to help Brunei's private sector

amidst the COVID-19 outbreak.

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## New measures introduced to support businesses

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Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew bin Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Minister of Finance and Economy II announced the new measures on March 21, two days after he announced the first state-led economic remediation measure enabling businesses in select sectors to defer loan repayments for up to six months with banks.

The Minister also clarified that the deferring of loan repayments would be extended to the wider business community, subject to case review by the lending institutions.

"Businesses that have been affected can approach their banks to have their repayments reviewed or restructured," said the Minister.

The new measures effective April 1, for six months are:

1. A six-month deferment on Employees

Trust Fund (TAP) and Supplementary Contributory Pension (SCP) for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) with employees earning less than \$1,500. The government will continue monthly contributions to ensure that the annual dividend payments to employees are not affected. MSMEs need to apply for the deferment and are to repay the contributions within a year after the final month of deferment. MSMEs are defined as businesses with less than 100 employees.

2. The government will provide the full SCP contribution for the self-employed. The self-employed SCP scheme carries a survivorship benefit which includes a \$400 monthly payout to dependents for up to 15 years in addition to receiving the SCP already paid up if the participant passes away before 60 years old.

3. For the sectors of tourism, hospitality (including hotels and registered lodging houses), food and beverage as well

as air and water transport: 30 per cent discount on rental rates for government buildings for MSMEs, 50 per cent discount on corporate tax for companies (private/public limited or sendirian berhad/berhad) and 15 per cent discount on water and electric bills.

4. Up to six months extension for i-Ready apprentices for trainees whose contracts are ending before September 2020.

5. Temporary exemption of customs and excise duties on personal hygiene products to help retailers and consumers manage prices amidst increasing demand. Pricing of essentials items will continue to be monitored and regulated under the Consumer Protection Order and Price Control Act.

6. Business matching by Darussalam Enterprise (DARE) for MSMEs to onboard e-commerce platforms to help market their services/products online more effectively to mitigate challenges in offline retail.

## Temburong bridge opens to traffic

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 18** - Brunei-Muara to Temburong District bridge was opened on March 16, 2020 from 6.00 a.m to 10.00 p.m.

During a press conference at the Al-Afiah Hall, Ministry of Health Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew bin Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Minister of Finance and Economy II, the chairperson of the National Committee for the Brunei-Muara and Temburong Connecting Bridge Project announced that starting Thursday, March 19, the bridge will be opened from 6.00 a.m to 6.00 p.m.

Yang Berhormat informed that physical works of the bridge have been completed and handed over to the Ministry of Development, namely the Public Works Department for management and maintenance starting Monday, March 9.

CCTV and electric cables installation works are currently ongoing. It is expected

to be completed by the end of April, and the construction of the operation centre in Jalan Kota Batu is currently ongoing. "Meanwhile, the ongoing road expansion works at Jalan Kota Batu is expected to be completed by the end of April," he said.

The Temburong Bridge Management Committee which was jointly chaired by the Minister of Development and Minister of Transport and Infocommunications has agreed for the bridge to be opened to the public.

The Bridge Maintenance Office comprising personnel of the Ministry of Development and Ministry of Transport and Infocommunications will be operating and delegated to control and ensure safety aspects and wellbeing of users.

A patrol team has been prepared to control traffic during its operation.

"Only vehicles with Brunei Darussalam registration Classes 1, 3, 4 and 6 are

permitted to use the bridge. However, Commercial vehicles registered in Brunei Darussalam under Class 5 can submit their application to the Bridge Maintenance Office," he said. The use of bicycles is also not permitted on the bridge.

For emergency, contact the Operational Centre through Talian Darussalam 123. Bridge users are required to abide the maximum speed of 80 kilometres per hour for standard vehicles, while commercial vehicles registered in Brunei Darussalam are to abide by the maximum speed of 65km/hour.

Foreign commercial vehicles are advised to use the designated route as permitted by the ASEAN Highway 150 or AH 150.

The Royal Brunei Police Force will assist in ensuring the traffic safety of all users.

The authorities will continue to patrol the bridge and will close the bridge at any time deemed suitable if the weather does not permit or other conditions.

## The first term of school holiday prefix

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 10** - Subsequent to the recent COVID-19 announcement made by the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) declared March 11, 2020 as the commencement of the first-term school break, instead of March 16.

It was to take precautions to ensure

the possibility of infection is controlled. The amendment covers primary schools, secondary schools, colleges, sixth-form centres and the Institute of Brunei Technical Education (IBTE) under the jurisdiction of the MoE; schools under the MoRA; private schools; and international schools.

The second-term school session will

commence as scheduled. Any updates on the situation will be announced through official media channels and the MoE.

The MoE and the MoRA, in collaboration with the MoH, are monitoring developments in the COVID-19 case, while encouraging the practice of good hygiene to minimise the risk of infection.

## Home Learning Package assist students in need



**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 26** - To enable school children who do not have internet access and hardware facilities such as computers or laptop for online learning during the first day of the second term of schooling session, the school has provided the Home Learning Packing on a hardcopy basis.

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Hamzah bin Haji Sulaiman, Minister of Education said, parents or guardians, can request with the school to get a Home Learning Package for their children.

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Hamzah bin Haji Sulaiman, Minister of Education announcing the matter at a Press Conference held at Al-'Afiyah Hall, Ministry of Health.

During the question and answer session at a Press Conference held at Al-'Afiyah Hall, Yang Berhormat also shared that the Ministry of Education will continue to assist any school in need of teaching and e-learning.

E-learning platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom, Zoom and others have long existed and been used by schools, said Yang Berhormat.

The platform has been used by some teachers and it is available for teachers who wish to try the e-learning," said Yang Berhormat.

In regards to the special need students, the Minister advised contacting their respective schools of which they are arranged with special teaching and learning procedures.

## Strong ties eases repatriation, 366 Bruneian returns

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 26** - A total of 366 Brunei students have returned home after being evacuated from Egypt amid the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The students, the majority of whom studies at Al-Azhar University were flown from Cairo in two chartered flights operated by Royal Brunei Airlines.

The first flight arrived on Saturday morning carrying 236 students, while the second flight arrived on Sunday morning carrying 131 Bruneian students as well as 84 Malaysians stranded in Egypt.

The Malaysian contingent from Cairo flew back to Kuala Lumpur that afternoon, accompanied by another 25 Malaysian nationals who were stranded in Brunei

Darussalam.

Brunei Darussalam assisted Malaysia with the repatriation of 84 Malaysians who were stranded in Cairo. Malaysia, on the other hand, assisted Brunei Darussalam with the repatriation of 134 Bruneians who were stranded in Kuala Lumpur. The strong bilateral ties have made this collaboration possible.

## Recruitment of foreign workers to Brunei suspended

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 21** - Applications to recruit new foreign workers into Brunei Darussalam has been suspended starting March 21 until further notice as the COVID-19 outbreak rose to 78 cases yesterday.

However, foreign manpower required for critical operations of certain sectors in Brunei Darussalam will still be assessed said the Minister of Home Affairs during the announcement of the new recruitment measures yesterday in a press conference.

Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Kerna Dato Seri Setia (Dr.) Haji Awang Abu Bakar bin Haji Apong, Minister of Home Affairs added applications to renew the Foreign Workers License (LPA) of expatriates currently residing in Brunei would still be accepted.

The suspension affects the following:

- LPA applications for foreign workers, including those made before March 21.
- Applications to recruit domestic workers, including those made before March 21.

- Applications for work visas, including those made before March 21.
- Work visa authorisation letters issued by the Immigration and National Registration Department.
- Work visas issued by embassies and high commissions of Brunei abroad.

In addition, foreign workers currently residing in their home countries that have been issued work visas or re-entry visas to Brunei Darussalam are to delay their travel to Brunei Darussalam until further notice.

## Close bilateral and multilateral defence relations

**BOLKIAH GARRISON, March 3** - His Excellency Yasunori Nishida, the Vice-Minister of Defense for International Affairs of Japan called on Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd. Yussof, Second Minister of Defence.

Also present during the courtesy call was His Excellency Eiji Yamamoto, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Brunei Darussalam.

During the call, both sides reaffirmed the warm and friendly relations between Brunei Darussalam and Japan. Both sides expressed their satisfaction at the comprehensive defence engagements at the bilateral and multilateral platforms including exchanges of visits as well as participation at the Japan-ASEAN Defense Vice-Ministerial Forum.

As part of His Excellency's programme, he also had a meeting

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with Brigadier General (Rtd) Dato Seri Pahlawan Shahril Anwar bin Haji Ma'awiah, Permanent Secretary of Defence.

In addition, His Excellency also had the opportunity to visit the Royal Brunei Armed Forces Museum and places of interest such as the Royal Regalia Museum and Botanical Research Centre at Universiti Brunei Darussalam.

Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd. Yussof, Second Minister of Defence receives a courtesy call from His Excellency Yasunori Nishida, the Vice-Minister of Defense for International Affairs of Japan.



## Hosted to a dinner reception aboard the Australian submarine



Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd. Yussof, Second Minister of Defence during the dinner reception aboard the Australian Collins Class Submarine HMAS Dechaineux.

The first submarine to dock in Brunei Darussalam will be from March 7 until Mac 9, 2020.

Also present were Major General Pengiran Dato Paduka Seri Aminan bin Pengiran Haji Mahmud, Commander of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF); Brigadier General (Rtd) Dato Seri Pahlawan Shahril Anwar bin Haji Ma'awiah, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Defence and Service Commanders.

Upon arrival, the Second Minister of Defence and delegation from the Ministry of Defence and RBAF were welcomed by Her Excellency Nicola Rosenblum, High Commissioner of Australia to Brunei Darussalam; Vice Admiral Michael Noonan, Chief of Navy of the Royal Australian Navy; and Commander Brad Francis, Commanding Officer of HMAS Dechaineux.

**MUARA, March 8** - Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd. Yussof, Second Minister of Defence was hosted to a dinner reception aboard the Australian Collins Class Submarine HMAS Dechaineux.

The inaugural submarine visit underscores the close and long-standing defence relations between Brunei Darussalam and Australia that in recent years has continued to strengthen through a comprehensive spectrum of bilateral and multilateral engagements.

## 6 receive new house keys



Yang Berhormat Pehin Udana Khatib Dato Paduka Seri Setia Ustaz Haji Awang Badaruddin bin Pengarah Dato Paduka Haji Awang Othman, Minister of Religious Affairs as President of Brunei Islamic Religious Council (MUIB) and Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia (Engineer) Awang Haji Suhaimi bin Haji Gafar, Minister of Development present a plaque and certificate of house completion in the Tutong District to a recipient during a New Housing Aid Handover Ceremony.

**TUTONG, March 4** - The Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Darussalam through the cooperation of relevant government agencies is committed to ensuring the well-being and welfare of the underprivileged in the country.

to six recipients were Mohd. Mashuarat bin Abdullah Bungo; Haji Yusof bin Haji Tuah; Metussin bin Abdullah; Enny Kartini binti Masail; Raheemah binti Abdullah dan Rohana binti Amas.

In this regard, with the new house keys presentation ceremony

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## 6 receive new house keys



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 presents a plaque to one of the recipients.

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The plaques and certificates of completion for the new houses were presented by Yang Berhormat Pehin Udana Khatib Dato Paduka Seri Setia Ustaz Haji Awang Badaruddin bin Pengarah Dato Paduka Haji Awang Othman, Minister of Religious Affairs as the President of Brunei Islamic Religious Council (MUIB).

The housing is divided into two types: bungalows and single-

storey houses, which are each fitted with three bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen, one bathroom and one toilet.

MUIB provided funding for the construction of these houses through the Zakat Asnaf Fakir Miskin Fund, amounting \$401,804.38.

The six houses are part of the 27 aid houses that are currently being built by Syarikat Noracon Sendirian Berhad with a total project cost of \$1,977,283.60.

Construction work for the housing aid project commenced on October 25, 2018, with the target date of completion set for April 25, 2020.

Also present at the handover ceremony were Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Engineer Awang Haji Suhaimi bin Haji Gafar, Minister of Development ;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; Pengiran Dato Seri Paduka Haji Bahrom bin Pengiran Haji Bahar, Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs in his capacity as the Deputy President of MUIB; Legislative Council member; permanent secretary (Law and Welfare) at the Prime Minister's Office, acting permanent secretary at the Ministry of Religious Affairs and acting secretary of MUIB.

It is hoped the assistance will provide comfort and secure homes for the unfortunate and destitute to live in and perform religious activities.

## Prisons Department to expand efforts in improvement of services

**TUTONG, March 5** - In reaching the 66<sup>th</sup> year of establishment, the Prisons Department continues to play a role and responsibility to ensure the country's harmony and well-being.

As such, the Parade ceremony in conjunction with the 66<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Prisons Department was held at the Drill Grounds, Prisons Department Training Centre, in Tutong District.

Present as a guest of honour was Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Kerna Dato Seri Setia (Dr.) Haji Awang Abu Bakar bin Haji Apong, the Minister of Home Affairs.

Earlier, the ceremony began with an inspection of the parade by the Minister of Home Affairs.

Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Kerna Dato Seri Setia (Dr.) Haji Awang Abu Bakar bin Haji Apong highlighted that based on the offences sentenced on today's inmates, theft and drug abuse are still the two highest offences and the matter is worrying, especially those involving the country's youths.

Yang Berhormat urged the Prisons Department to continue working together with other agencies including Mukim

Penghulus and Village Heads to reduce the occurrence of such cases in the country.

"Towards this end, one of the Prisons Department efforts is by reducing the rate of recidivist or repeat offender. It was understood that the Prisons Department had reached the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) target based on the rate of recidivist on the cohort year 2015 which was 15.73 per cent. The rate for the cohort year 2016 has declined to 9.69 per cent and continue to decrease to 7.77 per cent for the cohort year 2017," said Yang Berhormat.

According to Yang Berhormat, the declining rate of recidivist during the three years from 2015 to 2017 has proved that majority of the rehabilitation in-care and after-care programmes which was planned and executed by the department has brought a positive impact to the inmates.

It is hoped that the Prisons Department's (KPI) target for the cohort 2020 reduce 15 per cent rate of recidivist will be accomplished.

In addition, the Minister explained that in strengthening the management of prisons, the Prisons Department should plan for



Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Kerna Dato Seri Setia (Dr.) Haji Awang Abu Bakar bin Haji Apong, Minister of Home Affairs delivers a speech at the Parade ceremony in conjunction with the 66<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Prisons Department.

the development of human resources well and orderly.

"In facing the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution, the Prisons Department need to rethink its policy and strategy to address the work requirement that will not only impact the working methods of the officers and staff, but also change the variety in skill sets training for prison inmates who are undergoing rehabilitation programmes," said Yang Berhormat.

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Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Kerna Dato Seri Setia (Dr.) Haji Awang Abu Bakar bin Haji Apong, Minister of Home Affairs inspects the Guard of Honour.



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Yang Berhormat urged all member of the Prisons Department to always explore broader knowledge, in addition to being innovative, resilient and confident, while expanding efforts in the improvement of services.

Upon completion of the ceremony, the guests proceeded to the Dewan Silaturahmi, Training Center Department with the signing of the Group Takaful Scheme for officers and staff of the Prisons Department with Takaful Brunei Am Sendirian Berhad and a certificate and prize presentation for Prison Service Employee Excellence Award 2020.

Signing on behalf of the Takaful Brunei Am Sendirian Berhad was Haji Shahrildin bin Pehin Orang Kaya Lela Utama Dato Paduka Haji Jaya, Managing Director while Signing on behalf of Prisons Department was Haji Muhammad 'Isamuddin bin Abdullah Juna, the Acting Director of Prisons.

At the event, Yang Berhormat presented certificates and awards to 20 recipients.

The award was given to the officers and staff in honour and recognition of their loyal and excellent service to the department.

Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Kerna Dato Seri Setia (Dr.) Haji Awang Abu Bakar bin Haji Apong witnesses the signing ceremony between the Group Takaful Scheme for officers and staff of the Prisons Department with Takaful Brunei Am Sendirian Berhad.

## React.co, EPG organised 'Re/Think Food'



Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Ali bin Apong, Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism with vendors at the Farmer's Market.

**LAMUNIN, March 8** - React Company and Eco Ponies Garden has organised a Farmer's Market dubbed 'Re/Think Food' in conjunction with Brunei Gastronomy Week 2020 (BGW 2020) which also coincided with the International Women's Day 2020.

The third edition of the event was a collaboration with EPG which enliven the BGW 2020 with the theme of using coconut as the main ingredient in cooking, treated with a variety of herbs from around the village as well as forests.

Attended to officiate the ceremony was Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Ali bin Apong, Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism.

Nazurah Hamizah binti Haji Mohd. Salleh, the co-founder of React Co. in a welcoming speech among others said The Farmer's Market aims to encourage more communities and small home businesses to adopt a farm-to-table lifestyle, and increase awareness of culture and heritage products among locals and foreigners.

With this community work, she added, it is hoped that this 'treasure of Brunei' will be enjoyed by all.

The event was also filled with a cooking demonstration by Indonesian Chef Association, ICA and 'Dapur Bidasari' that showed cooking preparation using ingredients from the forest and community park.

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## React.co, EPG organised 'Re/Think Food'

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The two-day event started on March 7 highlighted with talks and workshop themed sustainability, community building and protecting culture and heritage, with the

participated communities from Tutong and Belait District comprised of Lamin Warisan, Kampong Lamunin village Consultative Council's (MPK) Women's Bureau, MPK Bukit, and Pangkalan

Waris.

The event was supported by the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism and Profresif Cellular Sendirian.

## MPRT visits prawn farm site

**TUTONG**, March 2 - The Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT) made a working visit to Sungai Penyatang Prawn Farm Site, Telisai and Sea Water Supply Pump Station in Kampung Keramat, Tutong District.

The visit which was led by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Ali bin Haji Apong, Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism is part of a series of the ministry's visit to take a closer look at the progress of the fishing industry in the area.

The visit of the Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism began at the 200-hectare Sungai Penyatang Prawn Farm Site run by Golden Corporation Sendirian Berhad.

Yang Berhormat and delegation were briefed on the farm's operation, including the use of automated water quality equipment that shows the water parameter data in the prawn rearing ponds such as salt levels of water in the breeding ponds, along with oxygen solution, temperature and other water parameters, utilising a water quality sensor system and computerised electronics by mean of Internet of Things (IoT).

The Minister and delegation witnessed the harvesting of the first Vannamei (white shrimp) cultured at Zone 'A', Golden Corporation Sdn. Bhd., with a production yield of three metric tonnes.

With this harvest, Golden Corporation's prawn production is expected to triple from 104 metric tonnes of marine prawns, which consists of 44 metric tonnes of Vannamei and 60 metric tonnes of Tiger Prawns until March 2020.

The company is targeting a production yield of up to 2,000 metric tonnes of prawns to the value of \$15.98 million by 2020.

Golden Corporation Sdn. Bhd. has begun farming Vannamei prawn as of October 2019, as an additional species for the marine prawn farming enterprise in the country, apart from the existing Rostris and Tiger Prawn.

Golden Corporation Sdn. Bhd. also has integrated company for the entire prawns breeding chain, ranging from breeds



Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Ali bin Haji Apong, Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism takes a closer look at the prawn harvest.

development, hatchery, nursery, grow-out in the pond and its processing.

Apart from its 200-hectare Sungai Penyatang farm, Golden Corporation Sdn. Bhd. is raising Rostris and Vannamei culture at a 31-hectare site in Kampung Keramat, Telisai, along with a 25-hectare plot in Sungai Paku. The company also has a contract farming scheme with several other shrimp farms.

Yang Berhormat and delegation then took a closer look at the Sea Water Supply Pump Station facility in Kampung Keramat, provided by the Fisheries Department as a government aid to facilitate the pond reared marine prawn enterprise operations in the area of Kampung Keramat Prawn Site.

The seawater pump station is critical to supply seawater to the prawn farmers operations in the area. The seawater pump station will be upgraded to ensure that sufficient seawater is supplied consistently to pond reared marine prawn farms in the Kampung Keramat area which covers 92 hectares.

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