



# برونى دارالسلام

## Brunei Darussalam

# Brunei Darussalam newsletter

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## Royal 59<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary speech: Socio-economy remains top priority

The development of the economy and the welfare of the people of Brunei Darussalam receive top priorities by the government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam.

These were emphasised by His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkhiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in his royal speech on July 15 in conjunction with the 59<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary of His Majesty.

In his royal speech, His Majesty outlined several developments that had occurred the past few months namely; the change in the Ministerial Cabinet in May; the strengthening of the Financial climate in the country including the progress of Brunei International Financial Center (BIFC) and the recent merger of the Islamic Bank of Brunei (IBB) and Islamic Development Bank of Brunei (IDBB).

On the reshuffling of the membership of the Council of Cabinet Ministers, His Majesty said that it is a normal practice exercised everywhere. The newly appointed Ministers and Deputy Ministers come from a wealth of background experience and skills. The newly appointed are not only from the public sector but also from private sector.

On the welfare of the citizens, His Majesty said that providing basic facilities for the public such as housing remains a top priority on the government's work list.

"The effort to house every citizen is an ongoing priority in nation-building. In spite of the many challenges that inflict this ambition, I am confident the rate of house building stipulated in the housing schemes could still be quickened in a bid to fulfil citizens' demands. The provision of basic facilities in rural and urban areas should not be neglected. All of these facilities had been put in place; the task now is to upgrade their quality," said His Majesty.

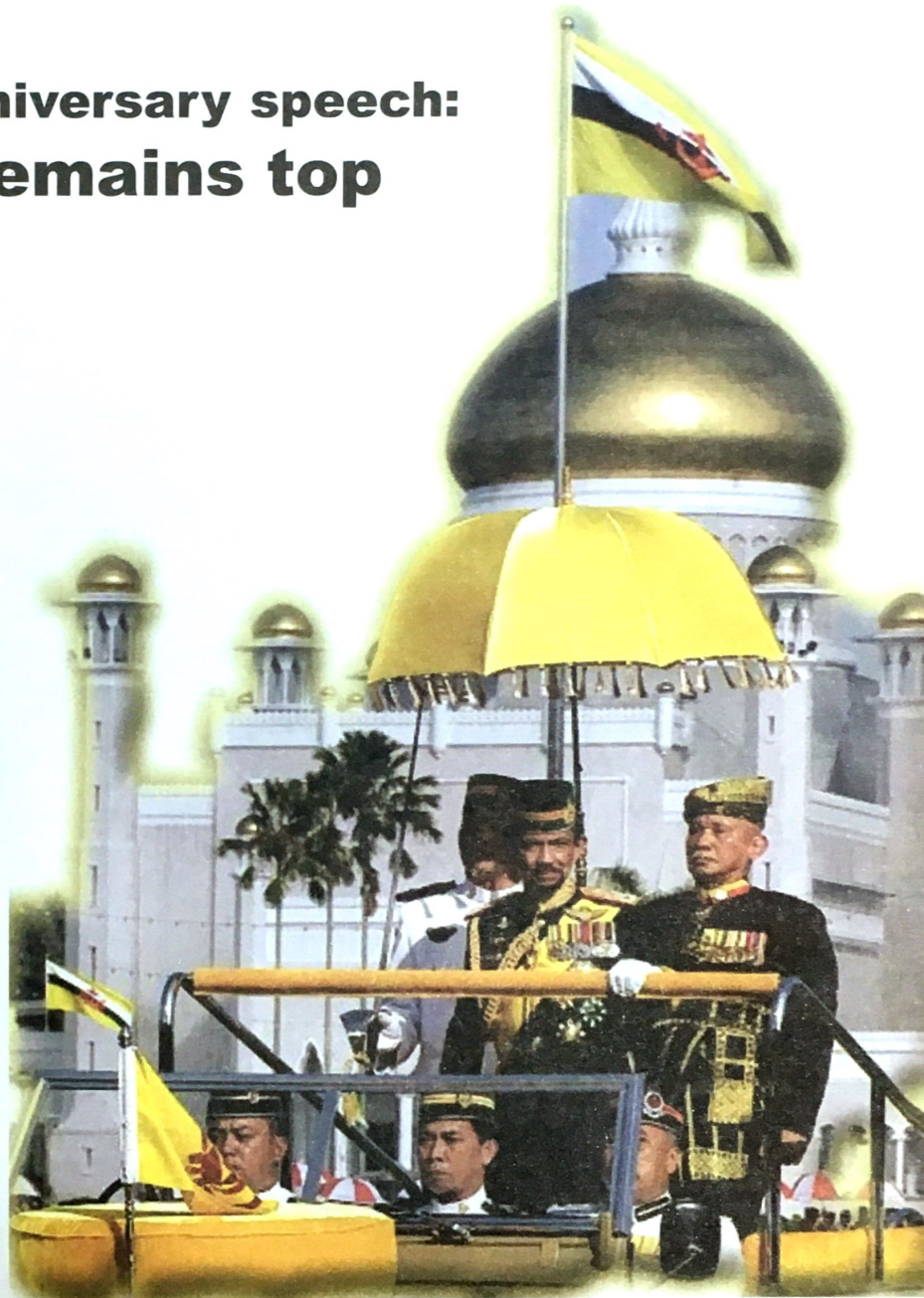
Touching on the development of the

economy, His Majesty stated that through the Ministry of Finance, measures to strengthen monetary stability are currently implemented. Among others, the Insurance Act, the Banking Act, the Financial Companies Act, and the Pawn Broking Act are currently being deliberated or amended.

"With the introduction of such laws or amendments, it is hoped that authorities are better able to supervise

the financial institutions that match the international norms practices by the developed nation-states. They are also designed to ensure that the operations of Brunei-based financial institutions are better structured, which are in line with the international standards," said His Majesty.

His Majesty had also agreed to the merging of two local banks; the Islamic Bank



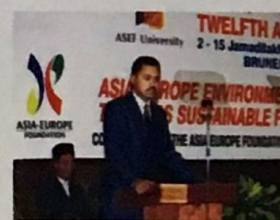
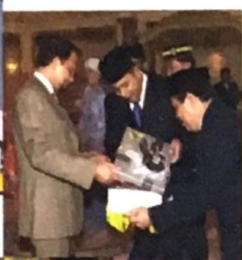
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# PALACE NEWSROUND...



**Her Majesty Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha granted audiences at the Istana Nurul Iman for:**

- ❶ Mrs Salihah Farhat-Ud-Deen, spouse of the outgoing High Commissioner of Pakistan to Brunei on July 25.
- ❷ Ibu Praptiningsih Yusbar, spouse of the outgoing Ambassador of Indonesia to Brunei on July 25.
- ❸ Mrs Rebecca Stanford Christy, spouse of the outgoing Ambassador of the United States to Brunei on July 25.



**His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah received audiences at the Istana Nurul Iman from:**

❶ His Excellency Dr. Daniel Woker, non-resident Ambassador of Switzerland to Brunei and his spouse on July 13.

❷ His Excellency Major (Rtd) Badr-ud-Deen, the outgoing High Commissioner of Pakistan to Brunei and his spouse on July 25.

**His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office received audiences at the Istana Nurul Iman from:**

❶ His Excellency Dr. Yusbar Djamil, the outgoing Ambassador of Indonesia to Brunei on July 14.

❷ His Excellency Mr. Gene B. Christy, the outgoing Ambassador of the United States of America on July 30.



**Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah received audience at the Istana Nurul Iman from Ibu Praptiningsih Yusbar, spouse of the outgoing Ambassador of Indonesia to Brunei on July 26.**



# PALACE NEWSROUND...

Their Majesties received in audience invited foreign dignitaries in conjunction with His Majesty's 59th birthday anniversary at the Istana Nurul Iman on July 15. The invited foreign dignitaries were:



**Her Royal Highness Princess Basma binti Talal and His Excellency Dato Seri Setia Al-Sayed Walid Ismail Al-Kurdi of Jordan.**



**The Honourable Datuk Seri Syed Hamid bin Syed Jaafar Albar, Malaysia Foreign Minister.**



**The Honourable Dato Seri Hishamuddin bin Tun Hussein Onn, Malaysia Education Minister.**



**The Honourable Alberto G. Romulo, Philippines' Secretary of Foreign Affairs.**



**His Excellency Dr. Kantathi Suphamongkhon, Thailand's Foreign Minister and spouse, Madam Suparvan Suphamongkhon.**



**The Right Honourable Datuk Musa Haji Aman, Sabah's Chief Minister.**



**The Honourable Tan Sri Dato Seri Pahlawan Mohd. Bakri bin Haji Omar, Malaysia's Inspector General of Police.**



**The Right Honourable Pehin Seri Dr. Haji Abdul bin Mahmud, Sarawak's Chief Minister.**



**Datin Seri Sharifah Aziah, spouse of The Honourable Datuk Seri Syed Hamid bin Syed Jaafar Albar.**



**Yang Mulia Tengku Datin Seri Marsila binti Tengku Abdullah, spouse of The Honourable Dato Seri Hishamuddin bin Tun Hussein Onn.**



**Madam Rosie Lovleyt Romulo, spouse of The Honourable Alberto G. Romulo.**

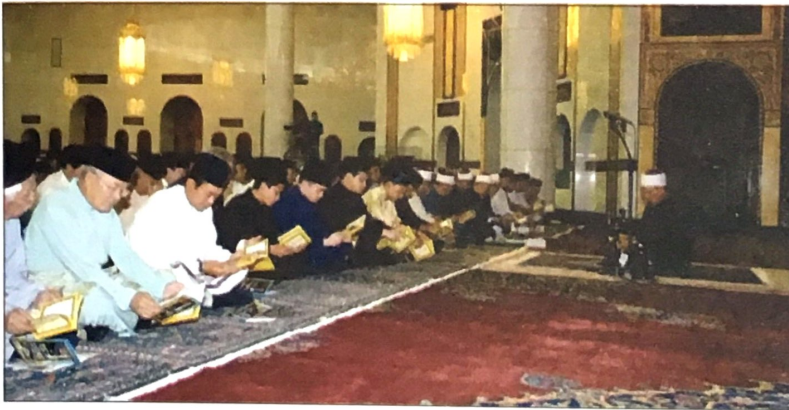


**Datin Hajah Faridah Haji Tussin, spouse of The Right Honourable Datuk Musa Haji Aman.**



**Puan Sri Zaleha binti Mohammad, spouse of The Honourable Tan Sri Dato Seri Pahlawan Mohd. Bakri bin Haji Omar.**





## Thanksgiving prayer to mark 59<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary of His Majesty

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and members of the royal family joined scores of Muslims for the thanksgiving prayer in conjunction with His Majesty's 59<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary at the Jame' 'Asr Hassanil Bolkihah Mosque on July 14.



\* From frontpage  
(Royal 59<sup>th</sup> birthday)

of Brunei Berhad (IBB) and the Islamic Development Bank of Brunei (IDBB). This is to improve their abilities and competitiveness both at home and abroad.

Also stated by His Majesty was the progress of the Brunei International Financial Centre (BIFC). In the five years of her existence, nearly 3,000 licences were issued to international companies where six were for banking transaction licences in which two were licences to operate Islamic banking.

Since November 1, 2004, His Majesty said that the Government had empowered each ministry to form a mini tender board. Each of this board could now consider and

\* Continued on page 6



## His Majesty's receive congratulatory greetings

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam received congratulatory messages from the heads of state and other foreign dignitaries in conjunction with His Majesty's 59<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary on July 15.

The messages were from Their Majesties Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin ibni Almarhum Tuanku Syed Putra Jamalullail, Yang Di-Pertuan Agong of Malaysia; King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia and the Guardian of Two Mosques; King Abdullah II ibni Al-Hussein of Jordan; Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and the Northern Island; and Emperor Akihito of Japan.

Also sending congratulatory messages were Their Excellencies President Dr. H. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia; President S.R. Nathan of Singapore; President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo of Philippines; President Tran Duc Luong of Socialist Republic of Viet Nam; President Khamtay Siphandone of the Lao People's Democratic Republic; Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, President of India; General Pervez Mushraff, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; Professor Dr. Iajuddin Ahmed, President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh; and President Victor Yushchenko of Ukraine.

The Right Honourable Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi of Malaysia; and Their Excellencies Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore; Prime Minister Phan Van Khai of Socialist Republic of Viet Nam; Prime Minister Boun Nhang Vorachith of the Lao People's Democratic Republic; Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia of People's Republic of Bangladesh.





\* From page 5  
(Royal 59<sup>th</sup> birthday)

approve offers worth B\$250, 000 for the approval of each minister.

"The purpose of this exercise is to quicken the workings of procedures for quotations and offers in all government ministries and agencies. As such I hope each tender board member exercise his task diligently, honestly, with integrity and responsibility for the sake of the nation-state and its population. A system for improvement and enhancement are very important, especially for the public service," said His Majesty.

His Majesty also spoke on international relations where he said that Brunei Darussalam would continue to exercise her

role as a respectable member of the international community that holds strong principles of national interest.

"In areas of economic cooperation, we will implement all of the treaty stipulations that had been signed with our regional and international partners that include ASEAN, APEC and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). We also welcome all efforts and measures that enhance understanding on the existing bilateral relations between us and our partners. Our policy is: 'Together we build a just and equitable world'," said His Majesty.



## State awards issued at His Majesty's 59<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam issued state awards in conjunction with the sovereign's 59<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary.

Forty recipients received theirs on July 15 at the *Balai Singgahsana* (throne chamber) *Indera Buana* of the Istana Nurul Iman. Among the recipients was Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah who received The Most Esteemed Family Order Laila Utama (D.K.).

Two hundred and one received theirs on July 26.







Their Majesties and members of the royal family at the state banquet to celebrate the 59<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam

## Banquets for His Majesty's 59<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary

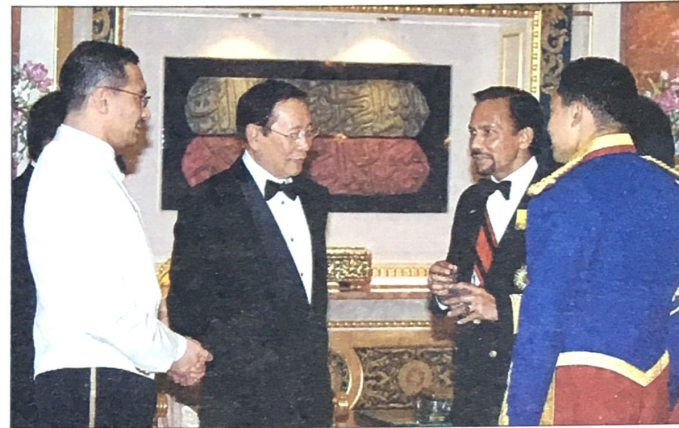


Their Majesties also celebrated their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary at a dinner hosted by Royal Brunei Police Force

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and Her Majesty The Raja Isteri attended banquets and dinners held in conjunction with His Majesty's 59<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary.

On July 15, Their Majesties attended the state banquet. While on July 17, Their Majesties attended the banquet for uniformed personnel government departments and civilian organisations. Both ceremonies took place at the Istana Nurul Iman.

Their Majesties also attended dinners hosted by; the Royal Brunei Armed Forces on July 23; Brunei-based heads of diplomatic missions on July 25 and Royal Brunei Police Force on July 30.



His Majesty with invited foreign dignitaries prior to state banquet



His Majesty mingles with members of the Scout Association



Brunei-based foreign missions celebrating His Majesty's birthday



Cake-cutting ceremony at a dinner hosted by RBAF



**His Majesty receives a memento from the Scouts Association**



## Scouts Association capable producing good leaders

The Brunei Darussalam Scouts Association is capable of producing good leaders. This is because the association has secure and strong foundation.

This nation needs leaders with good characteristics, a leader which could bring changes to the community. Without these characteristics, a leader remains at his minimum.

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-

Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam said at the official opening of the new headquarter for the Brunei Darussalam Scouts Association on July 3.

The Brunei Darussalam Scouts Association started in 1933 with 12 members. She was registered as an affiliated member of the World Scout Movement in London in 1939. Patron of the association is His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei

Darussalam. This was in conjunction with the movement gaining entry as a member of the World Scout Association of Asia Pacific Region in the World Movement (WOSM/WSB) in 1981. His Majesty is also one of the World Scouts Patron.

At the opening ceremony, His Majesty was awarded the Brunei Darussalam Scouts Association's highest honour – Bintang Nakhoda Ragam.



**His Majesty signs a relic to commemorate the opening of the Scouts Headquarter**



**His Majesty conducting the RBAF musical band at the Regimental Dinner**

## RBAF hosts Regimental Dinner

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam attended the Regimental Dinner hosted by Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) on July 13 at the Berakas Garrison.

Also present was His Royal Highness Crown Prince General Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office.

His Majesty and His Royal Highness The Crown Prince also toured the exhibition on '3-G Leadership'.

## Citizens receive keys and land lots

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam issued land lots and keys to new homes to 101 recipients on July 5. The ceremony was held at the Paduka Seri Begawan Sultan Science College in Jalan Muara.

From the total recipients; 17 received land lots under the Rimba National Housing Plan; seven received house keys under Rimba National Housing Plan; two received house keys under Indigenous Landless Scheme based at Kampong Rimba, 70 received house keys under the Indigenous Landless Scheme based in Kampong Tungku (Katok 'A') and five received house keys under the Indigenous Landless Scheme conducted by developers located at various area in Brunei Muara district.

His Majesty also visited; Tunas Jaya PGGMB School and Madang Religious School; several homes of recipients including the homes of few village heads under Mukim Berakas 'B'. The sovereign also visited financial institutions; business centres and four companies at the Lambak Kanan Industrial Area.

## Brunei establishes diplomatic relations with Venezuela

The Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has established diplomatic relations with the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, effective July 13.

The signing of the joint communiqué took place at the Permanent Representative of Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations (UN), New York.

Brunei was represented by His Excellency Haji Shofry bin Haji Abdul Ghafor, Brunei's ambassador to the UN.

His counterpart was His Excellency Mr. William Izarra, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs for Asia, Middle East and Oceania of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.





The eleven-day convention premiers education and professional in Brunei Darussalam

## Balance growth produce progressive nation

Development should be balance between physical and spiritual. Without one of these elements, development would be effected and would not be able to produce a progressive nation.

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam said on July 27 at the opening ceremony of the Education and Professionalism Convention at the International Convention Centre in Berakas.

His Majesty said that if progress is achieved on the right path, we would not only be seen as noble in the eyes of humankind but as well as Allah The Almighty.

The sovereign also said that organising the eleven-day convention is a step that should be taken. Knowledge is not static but it develops and it should be take to heart. By stopping one self from following knowledge's development, it would hinder progress. Hindering progress is a wasteful action and uncivilised.

"Civilisation does not come rolling like a ball, but it is built with knowledge and determination," said His Majesty.

The convention witness a collection of exhibition where the theme on education and professionalism were discussed. It ran from July 27 to August 6.

## Brunei's New Legislative Building

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam attended a foundation laying ceremony for the New Legislative Council Building. Accompanying His Majesty were His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, His Royal Highness Prince 'AbdulAzim, His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malek, His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen and His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed Bolkiah.

The Legislative Council Building is located at Jalan Kebangsaan. It is under the 8<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan, built on a 26 acre land. The new building would be accessorised with Brunei traditional architecture; with columns, stairs and symmetry thus emphasising Order, Strength and Stability. The entrance would have two columns on each side representing the "Daun Lukut" and "Air Muli" and the walls would be designed with Brunei's traditional Malay Songket (hand-woven fabric) such as "Bunga Bersusun Indah Damai" and "Bunga Melor".

The new building is expected to be ready by 2007.



The new Legislative Building will be intricated with traditional designs

## Parents and public to ensure positive progress of young generation

A bigger responsibility is given to parents and the public to ensure that the young generation would progress to a better future. Negative factors such as abuse, obstruction of rights and negligence should be encountered as they served as building blocks in hindering the growth and development of a child.

This was outlined by Her Majesty The Raja Isteri at the launching of the National Conference and the website of the Women Graduates Association on July 10. The ceremony took place at the International Convention Centre in Berakas.

The Women Graduates Association was officially registered on February 5, 1990. The Association comprise of women graduates from various kinds of specialisation and expertise. It is a pool of professional women who are willing to spare their time and share their knowledge towards the development of the country. Currently, the Association is focusing on women's social and development issues.

The website of the Association is <http://www.psw.org.bn>



The 'Women's Graduate Association Website officially launched

## Tsunami Relief Fund collects \$3,159,789.14

Tsunami Relief Fund had collected up to \$3,159,789.14 from Government ministries and departments, schools, organisations, private sectors and also members of the public. It is hoped that the donations would assist to rebuild or repair basic infrastructures such as mosques, schools and houses. The Tsunami Relief Fund was officially closed on July 31, 2005. The fund had been active since the past six months which started on January 3.

Department of Community Development under the Ministry of Culture Youth and Sports had set up a small committee - Tsunami Relief Fund Committee for the people in Aceh, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Maldives that have been affected by the Tsunami on December 26, 2004. It was formed to carry out a collection of donations for the fund in the whole country.

## Brunei partakes Biology Olympiad

Brunei Darussalam had taken part in the International Biology Olympiad by representing four sixth form students and three officials from the Ministry of Education. The 16<sup>th</sup> International Biology Olympiad (IBO 2005) was held in Peking University in Beijing, China from July 10 to 17.

According to Dayang Apsah binti Haji Abd Majid, Acting Director General of Education as the guest of honor, this is the first time for Brunei to take part the International competition. Through this competition delegates could take the opportunity and show their capabilities to the nations worldwide. This competition offer talented youth from around the world the opportunity to participate and compete against the world's best to exchange ideas and educational material.



## 12<sup>th</sup> ASEF: Conserve forest through education



His Royal Highness at the opening of 12<sup>th</sup> ASEF



Her Royal Highness presented a certificate to one of the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEF's participants

University of Brunei Darussalam had recently hosted the 12<sup>th</sup> Asia Europe Foundation University Programme which carried the theme "Asia Europe Cooperation on the Environment: Towards Sustainable Forest Management". The 12<sup>th</sup> ASEF was officiated by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah on July 9. The ceremony took place at the Chancellor Hall University of Brunei Darussalam. In this edition of ASEF, the strengthening of forest conservation through the power of education were discussed.

Thirty-two students from Asia and European countries participated the two-week academic and cultural programme. The programme included a four-day field trip to Kuala Belalong Field Studies Centre and a cultural programme included a tour of Kampong Ayer and Temburong Longhouses. From this programme, it created opportunities for young people to work together to envision the common future, to solve common problems and also to encourage intercultural exchange among the participants.

The 12<sup>th</sup> ASEF was officially closed by Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah at the Royal Berkshire of Jerudong Park Country and Polo Club on July 20. Throughout the two-week programme Her Royal Highness said, all participants and distinguished experts from abroad shared their knowledge and experience, in their commitment to preserve Brunei's natural heritage in the spirit of cooperation that brought everyone in ASEM closer.

The Asia-Europe Foundation was launched in February 1997 for the purpose of promoting better understanding between the peoples of Asia and Europe through one of the most influential institutions in this age of information, by mass media.

## Brunei on fast track with 3G

Communications in Brunei Darussalam has reached a new level with its first trial of the 3rd Generation technology (3G).

The trial involved 75 selected participants. It was officiated by the Chief Executive (Interim) for B-mobile Communications, Mr Song Kin Koi in a ceremony held at the Orchid Garden Hotel on July 1.

According to Mr Song Kin Koi, the objective of the trial was to introduce the new technology while gathering constructive feedbacks to improve the service. The feedbacks are to prevent glitches before 3G is officially launched.

The new 3G system is expected to bring in benefits such as roaming capability, video mobile phone, wireless broadband access (peak of 384Kbps) and high speed data communication.

It will be based on the WCDMA technology widely adopted by many countries around the world including Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, China, USA and the UK.

B-mobile Communications, service provider for the 3G system is a joint-venture company between Telekom Brunei Berhad and QAF Comserve that was awarded by the Brunei Government the nation's second mobile licensing early this year.

## Broadcasting industry faces new opportunities & challenges

In the past decade, rapid growth of technology was not an issue. It had complimented and enhanced the broadcasting industry. Pehin Dato Paduka Haji Awang Yahya, Minister of Energy in the Prime Minister's Office stated the matter at inauguration ceremony and welcoming dinner of 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Gathering and 4<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) General Conference and Associated Meetings on July 27 at the Empire Hotel and Country Club.

Some broadcasters in the region are moving towards digital broadcasting which promises more programme channels and greater efficiency in the usage of the limited frequency spectrum.

But the rapid development of broadband communications technology and the ease of accessing the internet gives new opportunities and new challenges to the industry.

He further added that the current audience are getting more sophisticated with varying expectations and behaviours.

Therefore, major challenges for content managers were to come up with more innovative and creative products. Training and development of a new generation of managers would be vital.

Organisations like AIBD are urged to explore every possibilities and work to close the digital gap between countries in the region which are at different levels and stages of development.

The Minister of Energy also presented the AIBD awards on television and radio programmes.

## Brunei Television Service 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, Senior Minister at Prime Minister's Office attended the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Brunei's television service on July 9 at Radio Television Brunei (RTB) Complex in Bandar Seri Begawan.

His Royal Highness then officially launched a new station indent for the new channels 5 and 8.

RTB began its television service on July 9, 1975. It was the first TV station in the South East Asia to provide full colour service right from the start. Currently, RTB conducts two television channels, terrestrial and satellite.

RTB would be converting to a new transmission system from analog to digital. The trial would be carried out at the end of the year.



## Tampines Rovers FC wins AFF Club Championship 2005

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office attended the final of ASEAN Football Federation (AFF) Club Championship 2005 on July 31 at the Hassanal Bolkiah National Stadium in Berakas.

Tampines Rovers FC of Singapore emerged as the champion after defeating Pahang FC from Malaysia. The champion received AFF Club Championship Cup and US\$20,000 prize money.

Eight teams from ASEAN countries including one invitational team from Timor Leste took part in the 10-day championship opened on July 22.

The championship was organised and managed by the Football Association of Brunei Darussalam in collaboration with the ASEAN Football Federation.



His Royal Highness meets the players and team officials

## Brunei Immigration goes hi-tech

Brunei Darussalam Immigration and National Registration Department would go hi-tech in its progress to improve security against human trafficking across all checkpoints and control posts in the country.

This was informed in a signing ceremony between the department and ITPSS Sdn Bhd.

The \$4.6 million contract was signed between Zainal Abidin bin Dato Paduka Haji Ahmad, Acting Director of Immigration and National

Registration Department, and Shamsul Bahri Haji Kamis, CEO of Information Technology Protective Security Services (ITPSS) on July 6 at The Empire Hotel & Country Club in Jerudong.

The new project would involve all sections under the Immigration and National Registration Department to connect all systems at the department with the border control system at control posts as well as the Smart Identification Card System.

The print-on immigration endorsement would overcome the problem of fake immigration stamps as well as 'flying passport' activities that are now a global issue. It would also ensure a speedy sharing of information especially on the data entry aspect between the department and other sections.



New system to enhance immigration system

## Boost for Islamic banking

Islamic Financial Banking in the country received a boost with the announcement of a merger between two major Islamic banks.

The merger are between the Islamic Bank of Brunei Berhad (IBB) and Islamic Development Bank Brunei (IDBB).

This was announced by the Finance Ministry on July 7 in an effort to improve the local financial institution specifically banking sectors

and insurance companies towards a sustainable and competitive financial service provider.

According to the ministry, the move was made with the consent of His Majesty to merge both banks including its 'Takaful' companies.

The merging of both institutions is in line with the economic and banking reforms that are being implemented by regional countries and the Asian region.

Bank customers are also assured of more benefits from the move which would result in the establishment of a major financial institution based on total assets and deposits compared to seven other financial institutions in the country.

The move would also facilitate the bank to further develop its activities overseas and open up more job opportunities for Bruneians while benefiting customers through its enhanced cost efficiency progress.



## Singapore's OCBC initiates local establishment

Overseas Chinese Banking Corporation Ltd (OCBC), one of the major banking agencies in Singapore announced its success in obtaining a full Islamic banking license from the Brunei International Financial Centre (BIFC).

According to the announcement released in a media statement on July 8, the bank is also the first foreign bank to obtain a license from BIFC to provide International Islamic banking services in

the country.

In a statement, CEO of OCBC, Mr David Conner said, "We are pleased to be one of the pioneering banks to establish our presence under the license. Brunei's proximity to Singapore and existing economic ties makes the country a suitable location to set up our Islamic banking

branch".

Meanwhile, Mr Robert Miller, Head of Supervision of BIFC said, "BIFC has from the beginning addressed both Islamic and conventional markets and products and it has been our experience that the last five years has seen the greater need to deliver Islamic financial competence".

Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) and Kolej Universiti Islam Malaysia (KUIM) would further enhance its partnership in areas of administrative and academic developments.

This was announced in a signing ceremony between the two institutions at UBD on July 11.

UBD was represented by Vice Chancellor Dr Haji Ismail bin Haji Duraman and signing on behalf of KUIM was its Rector, Professor Dato' Dr Abdul Shukor Haji Husin.

KUIM's partnership with UBD in education and training was established on June 14, 2000. KUIM is the 12th public institution of higher education of Islamic education in Malaysia.

Under the agreement, both parties had agreed to enhance its cooperation towards the development of quality within different academic areas by facilitating the exchange of students, one year abroad programmes, development programmes and courses; as well as exchanging experiences between officers and staffs in the fields of coordinating and developing quality to assist the success within the academic fields.

## Brunei - Malaysia: Partnership enhanced in academic field



Vice Chancellor of UBD and Rector of KUIM at the signing ceremony

## Perm Sec: Enhance cooperation in ASEAN Agri-development

A call to enhance the present cooperative development of agriculture among all stakeholders in ASEAN member countries was underlined at the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Centre for Development of Agricultural Cooperative (ACEDAC) Board Meeting.

The remarks were made by the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, Dato Paduka Haji Abdul Hamid bin Haji Mohammad Jaafar during the official opening of the ACEDAC Board Meeting on July 18 at the Orchid Garden Hotel in Berakas.

Strong cooperation among countries and development in human resource and information exchange facilitation in the areas of agriculture are the main assets of improving the quality and effectiveness of ASEAN agricultural cooperatives, he said.

Over 30 delegates from ASEAN member countries attended the event to discuss issues to initiate the synchronisation of various agricultural cooperatives. It was also to enhance existing ties between the countries to reach the underlined ASEAN Vision 2020 objectives.

The event also saw the 7<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Agricultural Cooperative (ASWGAC) meeting in progress.

Issues on strategic plan of actions of ACEDAC Board and ASWGAC including the exchange of visits of cooperatives personnel, training programmes to enhance capacity building and strategic alliance projects were also discussed.



Minister of Health officially opens the 1st International Anesthesia, Critical Care Medicine and Pain Conference

## Better Medical and Health Services for all

The Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam through Ministry of Health is preparing herself from possible cases of infectious diseases and natural disasters by continuously upgrading her health and medical services.

Various steps had been taken by the Ministry of Health such as adding seven new operating theaters. This is to cut down the waiting period of surgical patients. In the area of anaesthesia, the Ministry now has two local specialists. The Ministry also has one local who is currently completing his higher specialist training in Critical Care Medicine. Critical Care Department is currently undergoing a renovation where it would increase the number of beds. Accident and Emergency Department is also undergoing a renovation where it promised to ease congestion and increase facilities such as resuscitation rooms.

These were stated by the Minister of Health, Pehin Dato Paduka Haji Suyoi at the opening of the 1<sup>st</sup> International Anesthesia, Critical Care Medicine and Pain Conference at the Royal Berkshire of Jerudong Park Polo Club. The conference ran from July 30 to 31.



## Brunei Darussalam Daily Diary launched



Guests taking a closer look at the Brunei Darussalam Daily Diary

Brunei Darussalam has reached a milestone in its e-government system by launching a calendar of events through 'Brunei Darussalam Daily Diary'.

Brunei Darussalam Daily Diary is an electronic diary where it catalogues events happening throughout the nation-state.

The diary is under the supervision and administered by the Information Department of the Prime Minister's Office.

Events catalogued in the diary are divided according to categories namely; districts, official events, religious, cultural, leisure, seminars, workshop, health, exhibition, trade fairs, launchings and others.

Present to launch the website was the Permanent Secretary at the Prime Minister's Office, Pengiran Dato Paduka Haji Abdul Hamid. He is also the Chairman of the e-Government Programme Executive Committee. The launching took place on July 26 at the Centrepont Hotel in Gadong.

"This is a positive outcome which could benefit members of the public, either to those who wants to know current or future events. It is also beneficial for entrepreneurs who seeks for commercial opportunities and activities which happens any time," said the Permanent Secretary.

He also said that the diary enables the public to organise their daily activities. Members of the public are also welcomed to submit their events. Submissions of events are free of charge.

The domain of the website is <http://www.bruneidaily.info>

## His Majesty's royal speech Commended

His Majesty's recent call on financial reorganisation including cutting red tape and insurance amendments, Banking, Financial Companies and Pawn Broking Acts were well received by prominent business men and finance institutions in the country.

A great example of good governance to his loyal subjects, His Majesty's priorities are to nurture local entrepreneurship while emphasising on intensifying industrial activities and focus on expanding opportunities for foreign investments, said Razali Johari, President of National Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Among those applauding the move include HSBC bank that agreed on new moves to strengthen regulations relating to finance.

According to them, the positive move for financial institutions in the country would ensure its

competitiveness and conformity to International standards.

The insurance industry could now be regulated efficiently including its capital adequacy and liquidity, sound corporate governance, transparent rules and guidelines as well as consumer protection, mentions a business man.

With the appropriate global insurance act in place, global insurance brokers would be encouraged to come in and start their business in the country in line with the country's objective to encourage foreign direct investment.

His Majesty said the amendment would enable the authorities to control its supervision to financial institutions similar to those of the developed countries and that it will operate in line with the demands of international standards.

## Frequent Travelers Card to enhance ties

Increased cooperation in trade and commerce between Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia as well as BIMP-EAGA would be further enhanced with the launch of the 'Frequent Travelers Card'.

This was stated by Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Home Affairs, Dato Paduka Haji Idris bin Haji Belaman, who represented Brunei Darussalam during the launch of the pilot project at the Sungai Tujoh Control Post in Kuala Belait and Miri on June 30.

Also present to jointly officiate the

event was Secretary-General at the Ministry of Home Affairs of Malaysia, Tan Sri Aseh bin Che Mat who represented Malaysia.

According to Tan Sri Aseh, the project could be the beginning of many cooperative projects in the area of travel between the two neighbouring countries. It would strengthen the friendship and goodwill between them and the success in turn would lead to similar developments with other ASEAN countries.

The launching of the pilot

implementation of FTC was a follow up of the bilateral meeting between both countries. It was agreed that the implementation would facilitate and automate immigration clearance for Malaysia and Brunei citizens who frequently cross the border.

Brunei has already issued 200 cards to her citizens while Malaysia has issued 275 for the pilot project that would run for a period of six months.

The pilot project is open to all Bruneian and Malaysian citizens with a condition of at least a minimum of five entries and exits per month.



# SME BRUNEI'S ECONOMY

## OVERVIEW

Brunei's commercial and shopping area initially developed in the capital city of Bandar Seri Begawan in the early 1970's.

Rapid growth of retail industry and increase in population in the developing nation has resulted in the establishments of shopping centres, fine restaurants and other business outlets.

Today, the developing economy has also seen the spread of Small-and-Medium Enterprises (SME) all over the country specifically in bustling commercial areas such as Gadong and Kiulap.

## ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

Brunei Darussalam's Government recognises the strategic role of SMEs in the country's economic development as it mainly relies on the Oil and Gas industry.

In light of this matter, assistance from government and financial institutions play a strategic role in the provision of financial and infrastructure assistance, entrepreneurship training, industrial incentive, technology improvement and other services and facilities.

His Majesty's recent call to implement measures to nurture local entrepreneurship, intensify industrial activities and expand opportunities for foreign investment into the country has been well received by the country.

With that move, measures to remove bureaucracy in enterprise and business operations were also taken into perspective in His Majesty's call.

Efforts to strengthen the nation's economy have remained a main objective in the country's mission to compete in the platform of industrial globalisation.

## STATISTICS

Small-and-Medium Enterprises constitute more than 98 per cent of all business establishments in the country.

The growth has also contributed to the availability of job employments where 92 per cent of total employments in the country are supplied by SMEs.

Business establishments in the SME category include 39 per cent in manufacturing and construction, 32 per cent in the services sector, 23.5 per cent in trading and wholesale activities while the remaining consist of primary production activities.

From a recent statistic, SME has a little over 66 per cent of GDP in the non-oil sector of the economy.

## GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

A majority of SMEs in the country have not reached the optimum business goals where some are confronted with problems relating to Financial issues, Skills, Marketing Strategies, Information and Technology.

Assistance or provisions are given by the Government of Brunei Darussalam in its commitment to encourage local entrepreneurs to be more competitive in the domestic and international market.

These provisions in setting up local businesses include Administrative Support, Investment and Trading Opportunities, Technical Assistance, Financial Assistance and other Incentives.

SMEs have been identified as the major players in the Industrial Development in Brunei Darussalam and have the potential in contributing towards the diversification of the

economy.

The government expects that the SMEs would continue to play a fundamental role in the country's economic development in this new millennium.

## OTHER INITIATIVES

LIVE WIRE is a programme developed by Shell to support youth development and specifically to help young people to become interested in setting up a business and to contribute to the nation's economy.

Live WIRE was initially launched in the United Kingdom in 1982 is one of Shell's flagship Community Investment programmes with global rollout aims to contribute towards a more optimistic economy and a community of more fulfilled individuals.

The Live WIRE programme that is launched in the country is one of the efforts by Brunei Shell Petroleum to support the Brunei Darussalam's economy. It is one of the key elements of ensuring a long term sustainable economic development of Brunei Darussalam.

At the same time, Live WIRE has also encouraged unemployed youths to be more productive.

Live WIRE Brunei is managed by a non-profit organisation called Live WIRE Sdn Bhd which has been setup specifically for this purpose.

An Advisory Board of has also been set up to advise, assist and recommend on the running of the programme.

The scope of advice covers all aspects of the programme, including setting policies and strategies to be followed while monitoring the programme's effectiveness in achieving its stated objectives.





## Snippets...

### MFA to change name

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs would be changing its name to 'Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade' commencing August 2005.

The announcement came in a press release issued by the Prime Minister's Office on July 8.

The move followed after the recent announcement on the transfer of International Relations and Trade Development Sections of the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by His Majesty's consent.

### HRH graces torch run closing event

Her Royal Highness Princess 'Azeemah Ni'matul Bolkiah and Her Royal Highness Princess Fadilah Lubabul Bulqiah consented to attend the closing event for the Sponsored Torch Run event.

The event that was held at the Taman Sir Omar Ali Saifuddin in Bandar Seri Begawan on July 31 was highlighted with the presentation of the official torch to Her Royal Highness Princess 'Azeemah Ni'matul Bolkiah, Patron for the Brunei Darussalam Special Olympics who handed it over to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, Awang Haji Jemat bin Haji Ampal.

According to Haji Mahrub bin Murni, Chairperson of the Torch Run Organising committee, the participation of the special athletes in the torch run were a significant contribution for the nation and is proof of the willpower and strength of the special individuals to contribute in the Special Olympics Arena.

The event that was held from July 29 to 31 by the Brunei Darussalam Special Olympics Committee aimed to collect proceeds for the upcoming Special Olympics Bocce Asia Pacific held in

Brunei Darussalam in August.

The 120km run that was held for three days from Kuala Belait District to Brunei Muara District was participated by over 200 special athletes, Royal Brunei Armed Forces as well as other volunteers.

Over 150 Special athletes from Brunei Darussalam, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines are expected to participate in the prestigious event from August 12 to 15.

### Brunei set for September trade events

Brunei Darussalam's Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources announced on July 18 that the country would play host to a line up of business opportunities. These include the BIMP-EAGA Trade and Tourism Expo as well as the East ASEAN Business Summit.

According to the press statement, both events held in September is expected to attract over 500 of the region's trade and leaders from Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines and others.

These events would be held in line with the BIMP-EAGA Senior Officials and Ministers Meeting. They are seen as ideal venues for realising business opportunities and discussing key trade and business issues in the region.

There would be two segments to the business meetings that would be held concurrently from September 19 to 23.

Meanwhile, the Trade and Tourism Expo would feature over 200 booths showcasing products from local businesses. It would provide an ideal platform to place local products amongst the global market while enhancing business and trade networks between local and regional corporations.

### BSP hands over services to Brunei Gas Carriers Sdn Bhd

Brunei Gas Carriers as of June 1 is now managing the services

which were formerly handled by the Brunei Shell Petroleum. Those services are human resources, payroll, financial services, and corporate and legal services.

This was stated by the Managing Director of Brunei Shell Tankers Sendirian Berhad, Marcel Luitjen at the appreciation dinner for handing over of services from Brunei Shell Petroleum to Brunei Gas Carriers Sdn Bhd. The dinner was held on July 10 at the Empire Hotel & Country Club in Jerudong.

Brunei Gas Carriers Sdn Bhd is a sister company to Brunei Shell Tankers. Eighty per cent of the company's share is owned by the Prime Minister Corporation, a statutory body of the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam. While the rest are divided equally between Shell Gas B.V and Diamond Gas Carriers B.V.

### High revenue for auto sales

Automotive retail industry in the country have reached an impressive mark with car sales rising about 14 per cent in the first half of this year.

In a report by the Brunei Automobile Traders Association (BATA) on July 18, market statistics revealed that a number of 7,442 units were sold from January to June this year compared to just 6,388 units in the same period last year.

However, the month of March revealed the most number of units sold this year recording up to 1,407 units, a 19 per cent increase in sales from that of March last year.

On average, 40 cars are sold per day in the country by over 20 automotive distributors representing over 30 car manufacturers.

There are about 150 car models available in the country where small and SUV segments remain popular.

According to car analysts, auto sales are expected to reach 20,000 units in 2010 with an annual turnover of \$0.7 billion.

## Brunei In Brief

**Official name:** Negara Brunei Darussalam

**Capital:** Bandar Seri Begawan

**Land size:** 5765 sq. km

**Geographical Position:** North-west of Borneo Island in Southeast Asia

**Population:** 349,600 (2003 estimate)

**National Carrier:** Royal Brunei Airlines

**Official Language:** Malay

**Official Religion:** Islam

**Official Website:** [www.brunei.gov.bn](http://www.brunei.gov.bn)

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



# His Majesty's 59<sup>th</sup> Birthday: Meet-The-People Session

His Majesty's 59<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary's itinerary also included meet-the-people sessions in each district where members of the public had the opportunity to personally greet His Majesty in conjunction with the sovereign's 59th birthday anniversary:

- Brunei Muara District at the Taman Jubli Perak on July 17.
- Tutong District at the Muda Hashim Primary School Field on July 19.
- Temburong District at Temburong Civic Hall on July 21.
- Belait District at Kuala Belait Municipal Field on July 23.

