

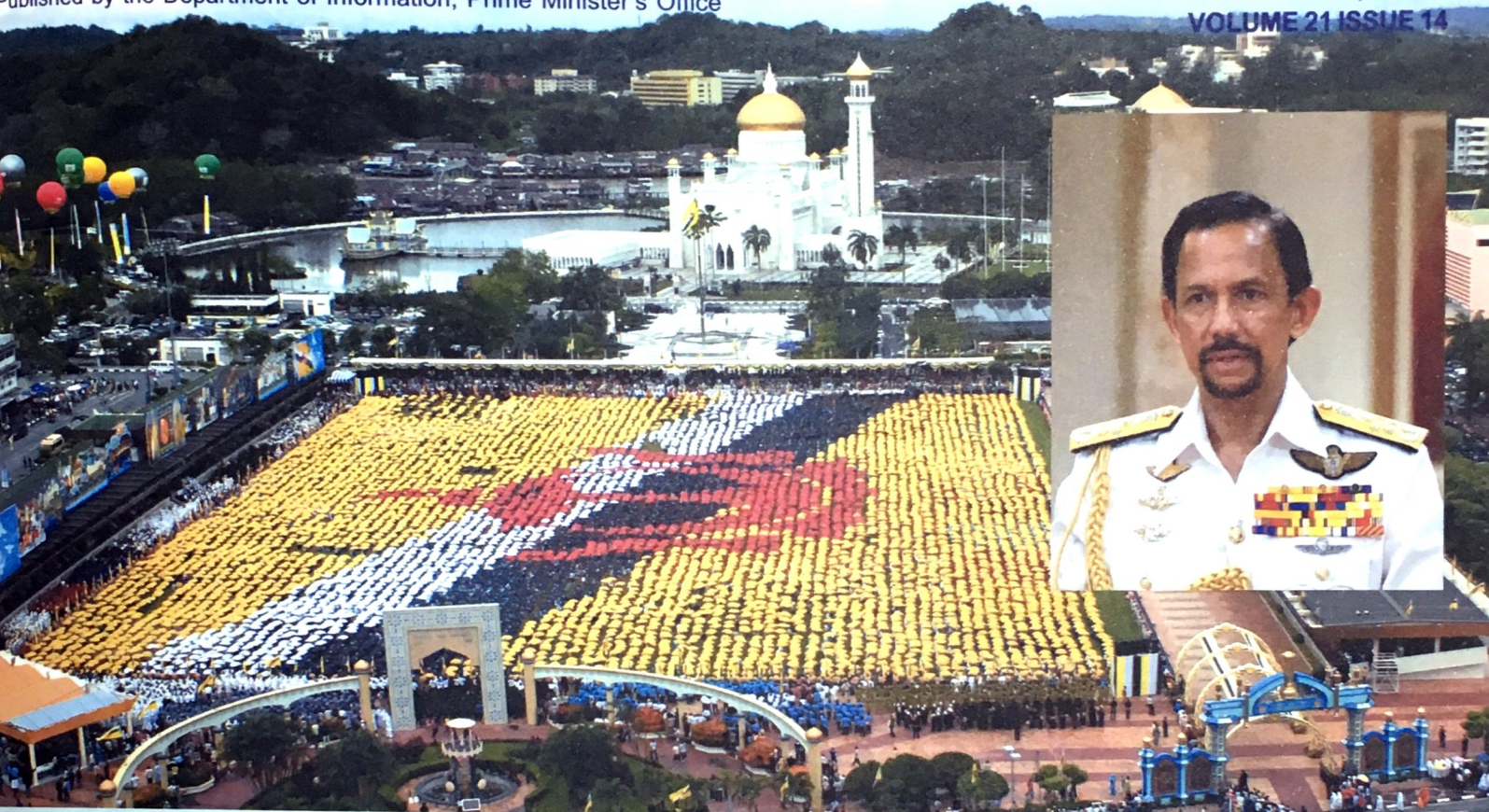


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Brunei Darussalam newsletter

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Brunei Darussalam celebrates 22nd National Day

HM: Late Sultan's effort to modernise nation unmatched

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 22 – The people and residents of Brunei were emphasised to remember the late Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien as a sovereign who cared about the well-being of the nation and state.

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam made the titah on the eve of the 22nd National Day of Brunei Darussalam.

The sovereign added that the late Sultan's efforts in modernising the nation and state were unmatched. The late Sultan was selfless in his pursuits and did so regardless of the pressure exerted by any quarters.

"We should continue our quest for long-lasting prosperity. It is not easy because it calls for the service of a formidable human capital and thinking that would put us in a position where we could overcome all forms of obstacles," said the sovereign.

One of the obstacles mentioned by His Majesty was the possibility of energy depletion as there will be time when the world will be confronted with energy shortage that threatens or jeopardises all quarters.

There is where the virtue of mutual assistance and understanding is at its height. This is why establishing a 'world body' constitutes a formidable idea as its main purpose is to enable the relations among states to become close and cohesive, not to spark conflicts or disintegration, said His Majesty.

His Majesty also expressed grateful that none of its people and the local media were involved in promoting the dispute regarding the act of insulting the Prophet, which produced no benefits.

"I wish to ask: which is more noble and more precious, the Prophet and Messenger who brought salvation and welfare to the whole world, or the mere freedom that is being defended. And where is the merit of this freedom if it is used to offend and spark global cord," said His Majesty.

His Majesty congratulated the nation-state and its people for upholding the civilised way of life.

His Majesty further stated that, Brunei will continue to play her role either regionally or internationally, by working together to produce benefits while at the same time work together to avoid calamity.

Brunei Darussalam's National Day falls every February 23. Mass gathering would be held to mark the celebration.

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EDITORIAL STAFF Editor Sastra Sarini Haji Julaini (sarini.julaini@information.gov.bn)

Reporters Hajah Noorhijrah Haji Idris (noorhijrah.idris@information.gov.bn)
Dk.Dewi Suzyante Pg.Hj.Kawlon (dewisuzzy@yahoo.com)

Layout Designer

Hajah Zaianit Haji Noorkhan (zaianit.noorkhan@information.gov.bn)

Photographs

Photography Division of Department of Information

General inquiries

(673) 2383 400/ext BDN Division

Fax (673) 2382 012

Information Department

<http://www.information.gov.bn>

Information Gallery

<http://www.infotelo.org.bn>

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Palace Newsround...



His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam received audiences at Istana Nurul Iman from:

- ① His Excellency Dr. Ng Eng Hen, Second Minister of Defence and Minister of Manpower of the Republic of Singapore on February 7.
- ② His Excellency Chief Marshal Kaleem Saadat, NI, Chief of Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force on February 18.



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

- ① Madam Ivy Lim Swee Lian, the spouse of the Second Minister of Defence and Minister of Manpower of Republic of Singapore on February 7.
- ② Madam Koesmoekamdarimah Herijanto, the spouse of Indonesian Ambassador to Brunei on February 7.
- ③ Madam Fauzia Jawed, the spouse of Pakistan's High Commissioner to Brunei on February 7.
- ④ Madam Rukhsana Kaleem, the spouse of Chief of Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force on February 18.

Palace Newsround...



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah received audience at the Istana Nurul Iman from His Excellency Dr. Ng Eng Hen, the Second Minister of Defence and Minister of Manpower of the Republic of Singapore on February 7.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah and Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah received audiences at the Istana Nurul Iman from:

① His Excellency Major General (R) Syed Haider Jawed, the High Commissioner of Pakistan to Brunei and spouse on February 4.

② His Excellency Herijanto Soeprapto, the Ambassador of Indonesia to Brunei and spouse on February 14.



Brunei – Samoa established diplomatic relations

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 8 – The Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam established diplomatic relations with the government of Independent State of Samoa effective February 8, 2006.

The signing of the joint communiqué that established the diplomatic relations between both countries was held at Brunei's High Commission Office in Canberra, Australia.

Brunei was represented by Her Excellency Pengiran Datin Paduka Hajah Masrainah binti Pengiran Haji Ahmad, Brunei's High Commissioner to Australia. Her counterpart was His Excellency Leiataua Cr. Kilifoti Eteueti, the High Commissioner of Independent State of Samoa to Australia.

Congratulatory messages

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

- His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadijenad, the President of Islamic Republic of Iran in conjunction with the republic's National Day on February 11.

- His Royal Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Emir of Kuwait and His Royal Highness Sheikh Nasser Mohammed Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Prime Minister of Kuwait in conjunction with Kuwait National Day on February 25.

Condolence message

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam on February 20, sent condolence message to Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, the President of the Philippines following the loss of lives caused by the recent landslide in eastern Philippines.

22nd National Day Congratulatory Messages

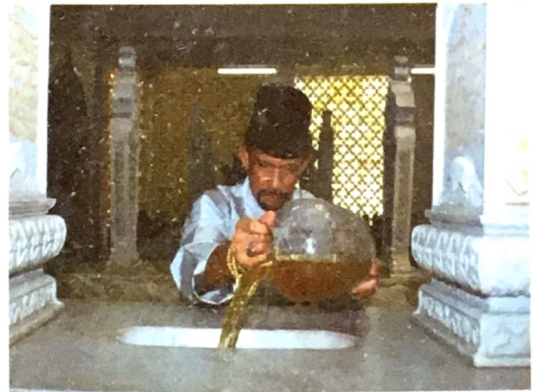
BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 23 - His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam received congratulatory messages from the heads of state and other foreign dignitaries in conjunction with the 22nd anniversary of Brunei Darussalam's National Day.

The messages were from Their Majesties Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin ibni Almarhum Tuanku Syed Putra Jamalullail, Yang Di-Pertuan Agung of Malaysia; King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand; King Abdullah II ibni Al-Hussein of Jordan; Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, King of Bahrain; Sultan Qaboos bin Said of Oman; Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the Emir of Qatar; King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden; King Albert II of Belgium; and King Harald V of Norway.

Also sending congratulatory messages were Their Excellencies President Dr. H. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia; President S.R. Nathan of Singapore; Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union Myanmar; President Khamtay Siphadone of the Lao People's Democratic Republic; President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of Philippines; Mr. Horst Kohler, President of Germany; President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia; Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, President of India; General Pervez Musharraf, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; Micheal Jeffery, Governor-General of Australia; President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan; and the Right Honourable Michaelle Jean, Governor General of Canada.

Their Excellencies President Stjepan Mesic of Croatia; President George W. Bush of the United States of America; President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom of Maldives; President Roh Moo-Hyun of Korea; Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Islamic Republic of Iran; Professor Dr. Iajuddin Ahmed of People's Republic of Bangladesh; President Hu Jintao of People's Republic of China; President Jacques Chirac of France; President Nursultan Nazabayev of Kazakhstan; Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of Tunisia; Mr. Viktor Yushchenko, President of Ukraine; President Mathieu Kerekou of Benin; Dr. Bingu Wa Mutharika, President of Malawi; His Royal Highness Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of United Arab Emirates and the Ruler of Abu Dhabi; President Tan Duc Luong of Socialist Republic of Vietnam; and the Right Honourable Dato' Seri Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi, Prime Minister of Malaysia.

Their Excellencies Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore; General Soe Win, Prime Minister of State Peace and Development Council of Union of Myanmar; Prime Minister Bounnhang Vorachith of Lao People's Democratic Republic; Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen of Cambodia; Prime Minister of Bahrain, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Al-Khalifa; Mr. Tony Blair, Prime Minister of Britain; Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia of People's Republic of Bangladesh; Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi of Tunisia; Prime Minister Phan Van Khai of Socialist Republic of Vietnam; Mr. Koizumi Junichiro, Prime Minister of Japan; and Kofi A. Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations.



His Majesty and His Royal Highness pouring the Ayeng Asah-asahan (above and below)



Tahlil in remembrance for late Sultan

JALAN TUTONG, February 2 - A *tahlil* ceremony was held in remembrance of the late Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, the 28th Sultan of Brunei Darussalam. The late Sultan passed away 20 years ago.

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam attended the ceremony and accompanied by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, His Royal Highness Prince Sufri Bolkiah, His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen.

A recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah and *tahlil* prayer was led by the State Mufti, Pehin Dato Ustaz Haji Abdul Aziz.

His Majesty then sprinkled the *Ayeng Asah-Asahan* (scented water) on the mausoleum of His Majesty's late parents, Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddien and Al-Marhumah Duli Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Damit followed by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, and other members of the royal families.

Meanwhile, another *tahlil* ceremony was held in the evening at the Istana Nurul Iman attended by state dignitaries, ministers, deputy ministers, permanent secretaries, senior government officers and distinguished guests.

Indonesian President on work visit to Brunei

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 27 - His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, Her Majesty Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha, and Yang Teramat Mulia Azrinaz Mazhar received in audiences the President of Republic of Indonesia, His Excellency Dr. Haji Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and consort, Ibu Hajah Ani Bambang Yudhoyono at the Istana Nurul Iman.

Also present were His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and other royal family members.



His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam with His Excellency Dr. Haji Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the President of Indonesia



(from left to right) His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, His Excellency Dr. Haji Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the President of Indonesia, Ibu Hajah Ani Bambang Yudhoyono, Her Majesty Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha and Yang Teramat Mulia Azrinaz Mazhar

Brunei - Indonesia shares close bilateral relationship

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 27 – Brunei Darussalam appreciate the close relationship and cooperation with Indonesia in the field of trade, investment, education and military; and hopes it could be further enhanced.

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam stated in his royal speech in conjunction with the state visit of the President of Republic of Indonesia to Brunei, His Excellency Dr. Haji Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

The sovereign highlighted that the relationship between both countries is more than normal ties and further strengthened with similar beliefs, culture and language. His Majesty also expressed gratitude to about 36,000 Indonesian residents working in the nation.

The Indonesian President in his speech highlighted on the close ties between both countries and hoped to strengthen the relationship further. He also appreciated Brunei humanitarian assistances to the Tsunami disaster's victims.

Indonesian President awarded honorary medal

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 27 - His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam awarded His Excellency Dr. Haji Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the President of Republic Indonesia with 'The Most Esteemed Family Order Laila Utama' which carries the title 'Dato Laila Utama'.

A bilateral meeting was later held where both leaders discussed on the bilateral relationship and regional matters that interests both countries.

Brunei and Indonesia established diplomatic relation on January 1984. Currently, there are about 36,000 Indonesian working in the nation.



Banquet hosted to celebrate the work visit of the President of Indonesia to Brunei Darussalam



His Majesty and His Excellency on a morning walk at the Empire Hotel & Country Club in Jerudong

Ibu Hajah Ani Bambang Yudhoyono on a boat cruise along Brunei River



HM & Indonesian President go on a morning walk

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 28 – His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and His Excellency Dr. Haji Bambang Susilo Yudhoyono, the President of Indonesia went for a morning recreational walk at the Empire Hotel and Country Club.

Later, His Excellency President Dr. Haji Bambang Susilo Yudhoyono had a meeting with Brunei's corporate figures and businessmen. At the meeting, His Excellency talked on investment opportunities in Indonesia.

On a separate occasion, Ibu Hajah Ani Bambang Yudhoyono went for boat cruise along the Brunei River.

His Excellency left Brunei to continue his state visit program to Myanmar. Present to bid farewell at the Brunei International Airport was His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah.



His Royal Highness bids His Excellency farewell at the Brunei International Airport

Royal visit to Kota Batu



The sovereign signs a commemorative inscription



His Majesty taking a closer look at the villages under Mukim Kota Batu



Group photo of the sovereign with citizens and residents of Mukim Kota Batu



His Majesty in a group photo with teachers of the Dato Ghandi Primary School



His Majesty steers the boat



Fishery activities in Mukim Kota Batu

KOTA BATU, February 9 – His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam visited several villages under Mukim Kota Batu near the capital.

At this visit, His Majesty visited the residence of head of village of Kampong Kota Batu, Awang Haji Damit bin Haji Ladin.

Kampong Kota Batu is one of the villages under Mukim Kota Batu with a population of 389 people. Then, His Majesty visited the residence of head of village of Kampong Dato Gandhi, Awang Haji Putih bin Jukin.

At this visit, His Majesty visited two schools based in Kota Batu. The first school visited was Dato Ghandi Primary School. This school currently has 175 students and 17 teachers. Later, His Majesty visited Riverside Primary School, a private school established since 1980. This primary school has shown an impressive passing record with 100 per cent of the students passing the PSR exam since 1989 to 2005.

Last stop of the visit was a visit to the residence of head of Mukim Kota Batu, Yang Berhormat Mejar (B) Awang Haji Abu Bakar bin Haji Ibrahim. He was appointed as Head of Mukim Kota Batu since 2001. Yang Berhormat is a member of the State Legislative Council.

Mukim Kota Batu has 13 villages; Kampong Pintu Malim, Kampong Kota Batu, Pelambayan, Sungai Matan, Dato Gandhi, Serdang, Sungai Belukut, Sungai Besar, Pulau Baru-Baru/Sungai Bunga Tanjung Kindana, Pudak, Mununggol, Subok and Belimbing.

Today, with the continuous effort of the government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam to ensure a comfortable livelihood, these villages are now efficiently equipped with basic facilities and infrastructure such as electricity, water supply, roads and telephone.



His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and entourage at the Chinese New Year 2006 Gathering

His Majesty attends Chinese New Year celebration

BERAKAS, February 6 – His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam attended the Chinese New Year 2006 Gathering at the International Convention Centre.

Also present were His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, and His Royal Highness Prince Haji Sufri Bolkiah.

Various activities were showcased at the gathering such as traditional Tionghoa's dances by the students of Chung Hwa Middle School and a colourful display of the lion dance.

His Majesty also visited exhibition displaying various types of businesses by private sectors from the four districts.

The Tionghoa community in this country celebrated the Chinese New Year on January 29 where open houses are usually held for families and friends.



Tionghoa community celebrates Chinese New Year on January 29



His Majesty tries a product on display



Students of the Chung Hwa Middle School showing traditional Tionghoa's dances



AIFA, a Brunei brand for electrical appliances



The sovereign and His Royal Highness warm up before the brisk walk at Bukit Shahbandar

HM joins brisk walk at Bukit Shahbandar

JERUDONG, February 19 – His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam joined the cabinet ministers and other senior officers for a brisk walk at the Bukit Shahbandar Recreational Park in Jerudong. Accompanying His Majesty was His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik.

The activity was jointly organised by Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, Ministry of Health and the Prime Minister's Office. About 1000 officials from 12 ministries and government departments joined the walk.

The 3.5 kilometres brisk walk was aimed to encourage government officials and staff ages 45 years and above to practise a healthy life style.

The same activity was also held on August 7, last year by the Ministry of Defence at the same venue. Bukit Shahbandar Recreational Park is one of popular spots for local and tourists who enjoy recreational activities.

Working visits to Ministry of Defence continues

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 2 – His Royal Highness Crown Prince General Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, Senior Minister at Prime Minister's Office continued his series of working visits to Ministry of Defence by visiting the Ministry of Defence Directorate of Intelligence.



The Deputy Minister of Defense gives a brief description on the daily operations



His Majesty waves to the crowd



The National flag and the 22nd National Day's logo and theme



Colourful performance at the capital



Young female students taking part in the 22nd National Day parade



An inspection of the guard-of-honour before the field performance



An aerial view of a huge National flag orchestrated by participants



Oath reader for the 22nd National Day celebration

A wide angle view of the performances



Choir group added to the multi-colored ambience



Citizens and residents of Brunei Darussalam celebrate the National Day with pride and joy





His Majesty and royal entourage at a thanksgiving prayer in conjunction with the 22nd National Day

National Day thanksgiving prayer

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 22 – His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam joined scores of Muslims for the thanksgiving prayer in conjunction with Brunei's 22nd National Day at the Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Mosque.

Also present were His Royal Highness The Crown Prince, His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen.



Their Royal Highnesses at the opening of the German Film Festival

German Film Festival for FIFA World Cup

JERUDONG, February 9 - A Film Festival was organised by the Embassy of the Federal Republic of German in Brunei Darussalam in conjunction with the upcoming FIFA World Cup to be held in German from June 9 to July 9 this year.

The German Film Festival in Brunei Darussalam was officially opened by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office. Accompanying His Royal Highness was Her Royal Highness Pengiran Anak Isteri Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Sarah and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik.

The premiering of the films took place at the Empire Cinema. Their Royal Highnesses also consented to view a mini exhibition on the FIFA World Cup 2006.

Thirty two teams will compete for the 18th FIFA World Cup in Germany. This will be the second time for the republic to host the biggest football event after 1974.

Crown Prince presents State Medals

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 22 – Seven hundred and ten people received their state medals in conjunction with His Majesty The Sultan's 59th birthday anniversary. While on February 21, 654 people had received their state medals. The state medals were presented by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office at the Balai Singgahsana Indera Kenchana of the Istana Nurul Iman. The medals awarded were presented *Pingat Jasa Kebaktian* (P.J.K – Meritorious Service Medal); *Pingat Indah Kerja Baik* (P.I.K.B); *Pingat Kerja Lama* (P.K.L – Long Service Medal); and *Pingat Kerja Lama Polis* (Police Long Service Medal).



Women recipients of the state medals presented by His Royal Highness

Receptions and gala dinner to celebrate Crown Prince's birthday

GADONG, February 18 - A series of receptions were held to commemorate the birthday of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, who is the General of Royal Brunei Armed Forces and the Deputy Inspector General of Police.

On January 17 in Muara, His Royal Highness attended a high tea reception hosted by the Ministry of Defense and Royal Armed Forces in conjunction with His Royal Highness' 32nd birthday. Accompanying His Royal Highness was Her Royal Highness Pengiran Anak Isteri Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Sarah and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik.

While on February 18, His Royal Highness attended a high-tea reception hosted by the Royal Brunei Police Force. Accompanying His Royal Highness was Her Royal Highness Pengiran Anak Isteri Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Sarah.

Also present were His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik and Her Royal Highness Princess Hajjah Masna, the Commandant of the Women Police.

Meanwhile in the evening, Their Royal Highnesses attended a gala dinner organised by DPMM Football Club at the Empire Hotel and Country Club.



Their Royal Highnesses in a group photo during a high tea reception hosted by the Royal Brunei Police Force



His Royal Highness cutting a cake at a ceremony to celebrate His Royal Highness' birthday hosted by the Royal Brunei Armed Forces



A token of appreciation from the DPMM Football Club for His Royal Highness

2nd Minister of Defense of Singapore to Brunei Darussalam

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 7 – Minister of Home Affairs, Pehin Dato Paduka Haji Awang Adanan received a courtesy call from His Excellency Dr Ng Eng Hen, the Second Minister for Defence and Minister for Manpower of the Republic of Singapore.

The meeting which took place at the Secretariat Building was aimed to strengthen relations, co-operation, to enhance common understanding, share information on bilateral issues between both nations.

Earlier that day, His Excellency paid a visit to the Ministry of Defense, Bolkiah Garrison in Berakas. His Excellency was greeted by Deputy Minister of Defence Pehin Datu Singamantari Colonel (Rtd) Dato Paduka Haji Awang Mohammad Yasmin and the Permanent Secretary as well as the Deputy Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Defense.

A bilateral meeting was held between His Excellency and Pehin Dato Singamantari Colonel (Rtd) Dato Paduka Haji Mohammad Yasmin.



Minister of Home Affairs, Pehin Dato Paduka Haji Awang Adanan receives a courtesy call from His Excellency Dr Ng Eng Hen, the Second Minister for Defence and Minister for Manpower of the Republic of Singapore



Pelita Brunei celebrates Golden Jubilee

BERAKAS, February 18 – With the increase of internet media which has no boundaries, media practitioners and news providers should increase the feeling of responsibilities and concern. Therefore, it is required for media practitioners to ensure the accuracy of reports to avoid public confusion over the inaccurate one.

Pehin Dato Paduka Awang Haji Yahya, Minister of Energy at the Prime Minister's Office stated the matter during the launching of the Golden Jubilee of government's newspaper 'Pelita Brunei' at the Information Department.

He also urged the government agencies to be more forthcoming in their relations with media; as the media friendly environment can assist in enhancing the accuracy of reporting and coverage.

He further added that as the main source of information for the government, respective agencies need to utilise the mass media as a tool to spread the information and providing explanation to the public.

Few activities were also held in conjunction with the Pelita Brunei's golden jubilee. On February 14, a thanksgiving and *tahlil* ceremony was held at the Information Department.

While on February 15, a *tahlil* ceremony took place at the royal mausoleum of His Majesty's late parents in Jalan Tutong. Upcoming activities for the Pelita Brunei golden jubilee include roadshows and futsal tournaments.

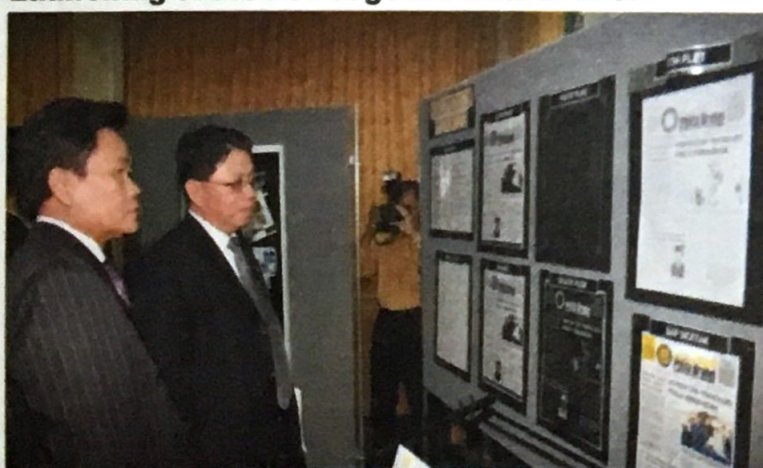
The first edition of Pelita Brunei was published on February 15, 1956; with 19 pages, and number of circulations was 300 copies. Currently, it is published every Wednesday with circulation of 25,000 copies. The paper is also available on-line at www.brunet.bn/news/pelita/pelita1.htm.



Launching of the new logo of Pelita Brunei



Minister of Energy, Pehin Dato Paduka Awang Haji Yahya delivers a speech at the 50th Golden Jubilee of Pelita Brunei



Chief guest taking a closer look at the exhibition displayed



VIP guests including former directors of Information Department at the celebration



Guests including former officers and staff members of Information Department at the celebration



Signing of commemorative inscription



The winning logo designer receives his prize

MoU to enhance ITB's network

TUNGKU, February 4 – Brunei's sole institute of technology (ITB) has signed a contract with Qasya Technologies Sdn Bhd that would greatly improved the networking infrastructure of the institution.

The Chairman of Qasya Technologies, Haji Awang. Mohd Hanafi said that the facilities provided under the MoU would include the latest IT networking technologies for teaching demonstration, experimentation, research and software development. The contract consists of the supply, delivery, installation, testing, commissioning and training of network engineering education resource implementation at the ITB Campus.

This is one of the continuous efforts of the Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam to improve the education in Brunei by facilitating schools and institutions with various resources of books and latest networking technologies.



Minister of Finance II, Pehin Dato Paduka Haji Awang Abdul Rahman at the launching of the Ministry's strategic plan

MOF strategic plan restructured

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 7- Plans for the restructuring process for the Ministry of Finance strategic plans will involve executive managerial level comprising permanent secretaries and deputy permanent secretaries as well as all departmental and divisional heads.

This was stated by the Minister of Finance II, Pehin Dato Paduka Haji Awang Abdul Rahman at the launching ceremony of the Ministry's strategic plan.

The Minister in his speech also said that the formulation of the ministry's strategic plan is to make sure the long term plan is in line with His Majesty's titah which says, "In this new era, we want Brunei Darussalam that is peaceful and prosperous and always receive blessings of Allah Subahanahu Wata'ala".

In order to fulfill the public aspiration and realise the mission, vision and corporate values of the ministry, each department and division has been asked to restructure specific programmes that will assist the strategic planning of the ministry.

He said ideas and propositions from every stage have been collected, coordinated and finalised with the objective to enhance prosperity and harmony, enjoyed not only by the present generation but future generations as well.

The ministry's theme – 'Strong and Dynamic Financial System' is part of the continuing efforts of the ministry in strengthening the fundamental economy of the nation through effective and efficient fiscal and monetary policies, based on best international practices.

The restructuring plans also aimed to enhance public's trust, including foreign investors, on the country's financial system, and contribute towards positive surrounding for sustainable economic development.

The strategic plans within the ten-year period will be assessed from time to time, taking into account changes to the surrounding factors while focusing its attention on several main factors, including target setting and result oriented, integration and teamwork, capacity building and service oriented, as well as business oriented and conducive working environment.



Signing ceremony to enhance the network infrastructure of ITB

BLNG awards CSA to Nuovo Pignone

KUALA BELAIT, February 8 - Brunei LNG Sdn Bhd (BLNG) awarded a Contractual Services Agreement (CSA) for Turbine and Compressor Packages to Nuovo Pignone S.P.A.

The contract signing ceremony held at Brunei LNG Sdn Bhd (BLNG) was represented by BLNG Managing Director Mr Fred Smeenk while Country Executive for Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam, Dr. Mohd Pahmi Mokhtar signed on behalf of Nuovo Pignone.

The contract which extends over a period of 20 years covers three maintenance cycles which is estimated at over B\$100 million.

Nuovo Pignone will also provide their expertise to guarantee equipment availability, which includes scheduled and unscheduled maintenance, spare parts management, supervision and emergency service.

The CSA that emphasizes a savings system over a purely transactional scheme will also cover the long-term maintenance services for the gas turbine generators at the Onshore Compression Plant located at the Brunei LNG Plant.

Local staff development in this specialist field will also be implemented while local subcontractors will also provide a number of specific services for the project.

ASEAN Varsities Muslim Student Leaders Conference 2006



Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs, Pehin Dato Paduka Haji Awang Badaruddin at the closing ceremony of ASEAN Varsities Muslim Student Leaders Conference 2006

TUNGKU, February 27 – International relations in the era of globalisation requires continuous understanding and respect from all parties toward each other; and this can be achieved through more dialogue and interaction.

Pehin Dato Paduka Ustaz Haji Awang Badaruddin, Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs stated the matters during the closing ceremony of ASEAN Varsities Muslim Student Leaders Conference 2006 at the Chancellor Hall of University of Brunei Darussalam (UBD).

He further added that, the conference had helped to strengthen cooperation and understanding of the participants particularly after the controversy on the publication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wassalam.

The conference carried a theme 'Empowering the Professionalism of University Muslim Student Leaders in the Era of Globalisation'. Among the conference objectives was to empower Muslim Student Leaders throughout ASEAN universities as valuable assets of the university and the country as a whole.

The three-day conference was opened on February 25 by Pehin Dato Paduka Haji Awang Abdul Aziz, the State Mufti. In his speech, the State Mufti emphasised that leaders of Muslim graduates must read the Al-Quran as part of their daily routine.

He also revealed the reason behind UBD's replacing of its metal rod used during special official functions with the 'Mushaf Al-Quran' was not only the logo element but that UBD wants her "undergraduates to be courageous as a product of Allah".

Organised by the University of Brunei Darussalam's Students Affairs Section and Students Representative Council, the conference was attended by undergraduates of universities from ASEAN countries.



Students from ASEAN member countries at the conference



Pehin Dato Paduka Haji Awang Abdul Aziz, State Mufti, at the opening of the conference

Two Brunei Islamic Banks Merged

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, January 31 – Brunei Darussalam has her largest financial institution with the merger of two Islamic banks, the Islamic Bank of Brunei Limited (IBB) and Islamic Development Bank of Brunei Limited (IDBB).

The Ministry of Finance announced that by the command of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam; the merging process between IBB and IDBB have been implemented accordance with the process of the law and obtained sanction from the high court. The merging process will be carried out in stages to ensure the continuity and smooth running of the banks' operation and transaction.

Following the merger, His Majesty had also consented to the formation of a new Islamic Bank known as the Islamic Bank of Brunei Darussalam Berhad (IBBD). The Board of Directors, Syarie Advisory Committee and the Managing Director of the new Islamic Bank also had been appointed.

The merging of both Islamic banks was announced in July last year. With the merger, the new Islamic bank hopefully would provide bigger contributions towards enhancing the nation's economy particularly in the financial sector and Islamic banking.

Education Twinning Programme for Brunei And Singapore

SINGAPORE, February 14 - Brunei Darussalam's education has developed a step further with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Singapore on the education field.

Minister of Education, Pehin Dato Seri Setia Haji Abdul Rahman was in Singapore to sign the MoU.

The collaborations covered in the MoU include twinning of schools, joint student activities, teacher training and attachments, as well as university linkages. It is a comprehensive framework for cooperation which spans from school to university levels. Five schools from respective countries will be linked up with the twinning programme that will include two primary schools, two secondary schools and one Junior College from each country.

The partnering schools will conduct joint activities like camps, projects and exchange of visits. Friendly sports competitions and adventure camps involving students from both countries will also be organised.

The Brunei and Singapore universities will work as a team in exchanging knowledge and exploring areas of mutual interest. While teachers and School Leaders will also attend training programmes.

Pehin Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Abdul Rahman was in Singapore for a three-day working visit where the Minister visited Singapore's Ministry of Education, National Institute of Education, School and Sports Schools

Brunei win award in APICTA 2005

THAILAND, February 19 – Teleconsult Sendirian Berhad of Brunei with the project 'eTHOR' had won the Special Mention Award in Communications Applications category in Asia Pacific ICT Awards (APICTA) 2005 Competition.

Project 'eTHOR' is a horizontal multi-media communications software solution, wholly developed in Brunei Darussalam, which can be used for a multitude of communications applications in e-Society and e-Government.

Teleconsult Sdn Bhd is an ICT consulting firm that previously won two Brunei Darussalam ICT Award (BICTA), two 'Special Mention' Awards in the BICTA 2004/2005, and a 'Special Mention' Award in the APICTA 2004 in Hong Kong, China.

The event was held in Chiang Mai, Thailand from February 16-19. Brunei was represented by winners of Brunei ICT Awards (BICTA) 2005 and competed in eight categories.

The Asia Pacific ICT Awards (APICTA) 2005 is an international awards programme aimed to increase ICT awareness in the community and assist in bridging the Digital Divide in the region.

Participants of the Award Program are members of the APICTA Network comprising 14 member-economies including Australia, Brunei, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Korea, Macau, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.



Photo courtesy of Ministry of Communications

Brunei contingent won the Special Mention Award in Communications Applications in Bangkok, Thailand

Consumer Price Index for December 2005

The Consumer Price Index for December 2005 has increased by 0.1 per cent from the previous month with an Index of 103.1.

Since Brunei now has lower price of fresh beef (cattle), fresh & frozen chicken, fresh prawns, eggs, fruits, cordial syrups, sauces and snacks, there has been a decrease in cost of food and non-alcoholic beverages by 0.1 per cent.

Cost of clothing and footwear has increased by 2.1 per cent due to high price of ready-made clothing & accessories, materials for male and female, and footwear.

The price of furniture had dropped by 0.6 per cent caused by the decline of the cost of household goods, services and operation.

The cost of communication has fell by 0.4 per cent due to lower prices of selected mobile phones and accessories.

Cost of medical and health fell by 0.1 per cent as a result from lower prices of selected medicines.

A higher cost of miscellaneous goods and services has caused to higher prices of personal care products which has increased by 0.8 per cent.

The CPI for December 2005 has increased by 0.7 per cent compared to the same month in 2004.

Brunei's Beautiful Underwater World

Brunei Darussalam, a kingdom situated in the island of Borneo is abundant with its exotic rainforests as well as other natural habitat has more to offer than what meets the eye.

With the recent launch of Scuba Tech International at The Empire Hotel & Country Club, the first such center to offer a wholesome range of water activities including scuba diving is the latest tourism product to enter the market.

With a wide range of PADI Scuba diving packages to choose from, tourists can now explore the secrets of the deep blue including beautiful corals as well as ship wreck adventures available in Brunei's beautiful oceans.

There is no experience more exhilarating than exploring mystical creatures in their natural habitat. And Scuba Tech International, Brunei's very first centre for water activities, has just the tools for such excursion.

For anyone over 12, there is an opportunity to enjoy beautiful coral reefs off the coast of Brunei as well as shipwrecks across the waters.

Ranging from beginner's courses to professional programmes, they are catered to all walks of life, providing a safe, enjoyable introduction to the adventure that is diving.

Various recreational courses available include the Padi Discover Scuba Diving Experience, Padi Scuba Diver Course, Padi Open Water Diver Course, Padi Adventures in Diving Programme, Padi Rescue Diver Course, Padi Enriched Air Diver Course, and Padi Specialty Diver Course.

Beginners are required to go through various scuba fundamentals before they get to experience the open water sessions with an experienced diving instructor.

Class meetings with an instructor as well as independent study session with a Padi Open Water CD-ROM and Padi Go Dive manual are essential before progressing towards water diving sessions.

Participants will also go through at least five confined dives at the Empire Hotel and Country Club's marine pool deck before experiencing open water dives.

An open water dive, which is the first step to getting participants comfortable with the ocean, is a performance based course where participants are required to undergo three programmes before becoming fully certified divers.

These programmes include the Padi Open Water Diver Programme, which covers the Padi Discover Scuba Diving on the first day. Participants usually become certified scuba divers by the end of the second day.

By the third day, participants will have met the requirements to be certified open water divers.

Another exciting course offered by Scuba Tech International is the Padi Adventures in Diving Programme, which comprises two aspects - adventure diving and advanced open water diving.

This course allows certified divers to move on to the next level and gain some confidence, skills and experience to fully benefit from diving.

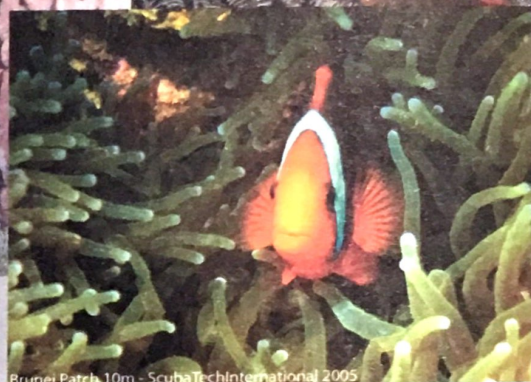
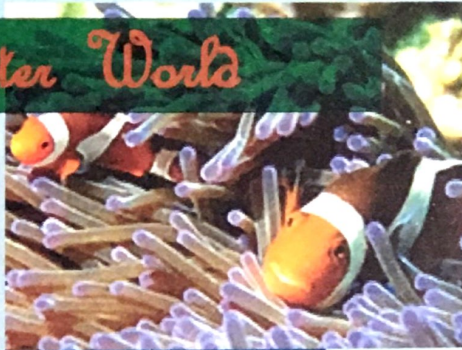
There are a number of fields that participants can choose from: Aware-fish ID, search and recovery, boat, underwater naturalist, deep underwater navigation, multilevel-computer, peak performance buoyancy (PPB), night, wreck and enriched air.

To make any diving programme a rewarding experience, the Padi Rescue Diver Programme is a specialty training to help divers handle emergency situations including anticipating, preventing and managing diving accidents.

Another supplementary programme is the Padi Emergency First Response (EFR) Programme, which turns divers into qualified first responders in CPR and first aid.

All divers benefit from extended diving periods. By enrolling in the Padi Enriched Air Diver Course, the one-day course provides recreational divers with the knowledge required to safely plan and conduct recreational dives with enriched air (Nitrox).

For more information on diving courses, contact Scuba Tech International at 241 8888 or 241 8686 (fax) or e-mail at scubatechintl@yahoo.com.



Brunei Patch 10m - ScubaTechInternational 2005



Snippets...

Cyber Crime Investigation Course

GADONG, February 14 – Law enforcement officers must continuously look for new trends in crime. Law enforcers also should share information, techniques, and resources to anticipate, outthink and stop cyber criminals.

Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Hajah Sharifah Salmah who is also the Director of Criminal Intelligent of Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF) stated the matter at the closing ceremony of Cyber Crime Investigation Course.

She added that although Brunei does not have an alarming number of cyber crime cases, being part of the global community, we are not exempted from becoming a target of the cyber criminals.

The two-day course was facilitated by Lieutenant Eric Fradin, who is based in the Embassy of France to Singapore and is well-versed in cyber crime investigation. Among the topics touched were categories of legal ground for cyber crime which includes offences to information technology (IT), offences in relation to IT and offences facilitated by the use of IT.

The course was held at Police Continues Learning Centre in Beribi and attended by 23 participants; 17 officers from RBPF; three from Attorneys General's Chambers; and three from Internal Security Department. This is the third time International Technical Service of Cooperation of Police from the Embassy of France to Singapore had extended its support and expertise in conducting course relating to white collar crime. Before, they had conducted anti-money laundering courses.



Participants of the Cyber Crime Investigation Course

251 receive Citizenship

BERAKAS, February 18 – More permanent residents received their citizenship at the 19th Citizenship Certificate Presentation. The ceremony witnessed 251 recipients receiving their certificates presented by the Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Pehin Dato Paduka Haji Awang Dani bin Haji Ibrahim.

All the recipients were registered under various sections in National Status Act; 85 recipients registered under Section 5(1), 154 under Section 5(6) and 12 under Section 8(1).



A recipient of the Brunei citizenship receiving his certificate(right) from chief guest(left)



Reading of the oath

Brunei Book Fair 2006

BERAKAS, February 26 - Forty-two participants comprising of publishers, book retailers from domestic and neighbouring countries, and government agencies took part in the annual Brunei Book Fair 2006.

The fair as part of the National Day celebration was officially opened by the the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, Pehin Major General (R) Dato Seri Awang Haji Mohammad at the Indoor Stadium Hassanal Bolkiah Sports Complex.

The fair was held for ten days from February 26 to March 6 with the theme "Book Empower the Nation".



Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports at the opening of the Book Fair 2006

22nd National Day celebration

Brunei Darussalam celebrated her 22nd National Day anniversary on February 23. The mass gathering was held at the Taman Haji Sir Muda Omar 'Ali Saifuddin in Bandar Seri Begawan. About 15,000 people from government and private agencies were involved in the colourful field performances.

The theme for the 22nd National Day is "Mempertingkatkan Daya Saing Bangsa" (Enhancing the Nation's Competitiveness).

The national day celebration's itinerary began with the hoisting of giant national flag on February 5 at the capital. This was followed by the hoisting of the national flag in each district. On February 22, thanksgiving prayers were held at the mosques all over the country with the Jame' Asr Hassanil Bolkiah Mosque in Kiarong as the focal point.

Many activities were also organised in conjunction with the national day celebration. Among others, Brunei for the first time baked the biggest ever National Day cake. Other activities include the distribution of 25,000 pieces of national mini flags throughout the nation, book fair, exhibition and international sales, singing competition "Kristal Kid Idol 2006", computer fair, charity football match and chess tournaments.

The nation especially in Bandar Seri Begawan was decorated with banners, arches and fancy neon lights during the month for the celebration.



The members of the National Day celebration committee cutting the biggest ever National Day cake



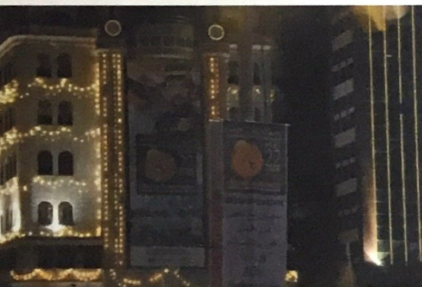
Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports puts a mini flag on a vehicle



Raising of huge National flag in Bandar Seri Begawan



Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports hands over the flag to army personnel to be raised at the capital



Tall buildings around Bandar Seri Begawan coloured with huge colourful banners adding the joyful mood



The building of Tabung Amanah Islam Brunei (TAIB) lit with vibrant colours



Media conference held in conjunction with the 22nd National Day of Brunei Darussalam



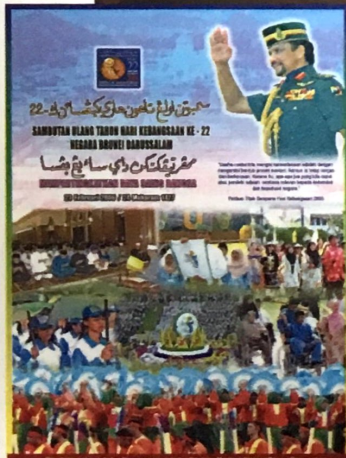
Huge clock at the centre of the capital illuminated with neon lights



Rehearsals weeks before the celebration



Posters to commemorate the 22nd National Day



Musical band members in a rehearsal



Participants of the 22nd National Day