



برونى دارالسلام

Brunei Darussalam

newsletter

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State Legislative Council

HM: Support Government diversify economy

BERAKAS, April 15 – His Majesty called for all sectors, the Government and private sectors to support the Government's effort in diversifying the nation-state's economy. Besides oil and gas, other sectors like agriculture also had called for further explorations.

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam made the *titah* at the official opening of the First Meeting for the Second Session of the State Legislative Council at the International Convention Centre (ICC).

Also present at the ceremony were His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The sovereign also stated that one of the main agenda of the session was the State Budget Allocation.

"For the first time in the session, the Council will discuss the state budget expenditure. This will be an opportunity for members to air their views. I am confident they are capable of carrying out their responsibilities. As members, they should not be afraid.

"Instead they should position themselves for the interest of the people and the nation. If they are able to do this, then it will be a big achievement for the nation and for the future of the Council, which we are hoping for.

"Hence, hopes are high on members, not only as good deliverers for the government and the people but also as exemplary thinkers for the society," said His Majesty.

His Majesty further added that, the State Legislative Council plays a role like any other council. It serves as an advisory body for His Majesty on matters related to the interest of the people and the nation. Views and opinions expressed by the members should be in constructive manner to achieve consensus.

Prior to the official opening, a swearing-in-ceremony of the members took place in front of Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Indera Mahkota Pengiran Anak (Dr.) Haji Kemaludin ibni Al-Marhum Pengiran Bendahara Pengiran Anak Mohd Yassin, the Speaker.

The first session of the State Legislative Council was held on September 25, 2004. On September 2, 2005, His Majesty announced the appointment of the new members of the council; which included five representatives from four districts.



His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at the Official Opening of the First Meeting for the Second Session of the State Legislative Council

* More pictures on centrepager



His Majesty greets His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein at the Brunei International Airport

King of Jordan visits Brunei

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 3 – His Majesty King Abdullah II Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, was in Brunei Darussalam for a three-day visit. He arrived in Bandar Seri Begawan on March 1 and was welcomed by His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at the Brunei International Airport.

While in Brunei, His Majesty King Abdullah II attended several private programmes including a dinner hosted by His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam.

On the second day of the visit, His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan and His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, Minister of Defence and Supreme Commander of Royal Brunei Armed Forces visited the Royal Brunei Armed Forces in Bolkiah Garrison. Their Majesties

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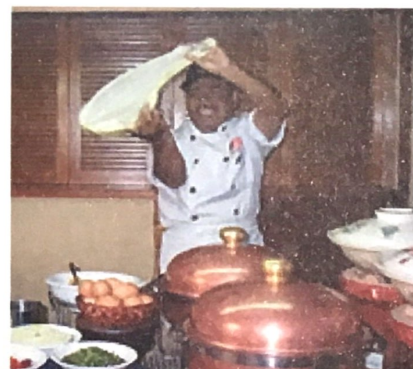
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Palace Newsround...



His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam on March 7 presented diplomatic accreditations at the Istana Nurul Iman for:

① His Excellency Pengiran Dato Paduka Haji Maidin bin Pengiran Haji Hashim, Brunei's newly-appointed High Commissioner to United Kingdom.

② His Excellency Pehin Datu Inderasugara Brigadier General (rtd) Dato Paduka Haji Mohammad Yusof bin Abu Bakar, Brunei's newly appointed Ambassador to the Union of Myanmar.

③ His Excellency Dr. Haji Emran Bahar, Brunei's Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

④ Her Excellency Pengiran Hajah Basmillah bin Pengiran Haji Abbas, Brunei's newly appointed Ambassador to Cambodia.

His Majesty also received diplomatic credentials at the Nurul Istana Iman on March 7 from:

⑤ His Excellency Joseph K H Koh, the newly appointed High Commissioner of Singapore to Brunei.

⑥ Her Excellency Dr. Ruth Penelope Adler, the newly appointed High Commissioner of Australia to Brunei.



Palace Newsround...



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

① Madam Mary Fallon, spouse of the Commander of the United States Pacific Command on March 1.

② Madam Nadira Hakim, spouse of the outgoing High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Brunei on March 7.

③ Madam Meas Vanna, spouse of the outgoing Ambassador of Cambodia to Brunei on March 7.

④ Madam Peifen P H Chu, spouse of the newly appointed Singapore's High Commissioner to Brunei on March 21.

⑤ From left: Datin Hajah Mastura binti Haji Mohsin, spouse of Brunei's Ambassador to Myanmar, Her Excellency Pengiran Hajah Basmillah bin Pengiran Haji Abbas, Brunei's Ambassador to Cambodia and Datin Hajah Sunah binti Abdul Hamid, spouse of Brunei's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom on March 21.

⑥ Datin Seri Masnah Muhammad, spouse of Malaysia's Minister of Culture, Arts and Heritage on March 25.

⑦ Ibu Silvia Agung Laksono, spouse of Chief of Indonesian People's Consultative Assembly on March 29.

⑧ Her Excellency Dr. Ruth Adlet, the newly appointed High Commissioner of Australia to Brunei on March 29.

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

① Admiral William J. Fallon, the Commander of United States Pacific Command on March 1.

② His Excellency M.A Hakim, the outgoing High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Brunei on March 4.

③ His Excellency ITH - Dettola, the outgoing Ambassador of Cambodia to Brunei on March 4.

④ Her Excellency Dr. Ruth Penelope Adler, the newly appointed High Commissioner of Australia to Brunei on March 13.

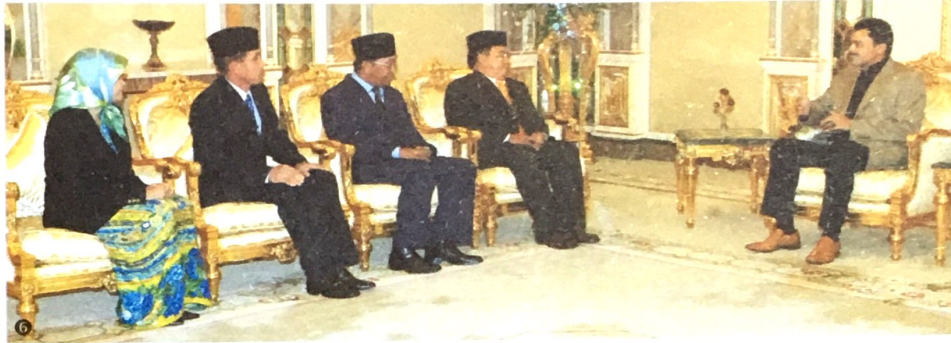
⑤ His Excellency Joseph K H Koh, the newly appointed High Commissioner of Singapore to Brunei on March 14.

⑥ From left: Her Excellency Pengiran Hajah Basmillah binti Pengiran Haji Abbas, Ambassador of Brunei to Cambodia, His Excellency Pehin Datu Inderasugara Brigadier General (rtd) Dato Paduka Haji Mohammad Yusof bin Abu Bakar, Ambassador of Brunei to the Union of Myanmar, His Excellency Dr. Haji Emran bin Bahar, Permanent Representative of Brunei to the United Nations in New York, His Excellency Pengiran Dato Haji Maidin bin Pengiran Haji Hashim, High Commissioner of Brunei to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Island on March 16.

* more pictures on page 5



* From page 4

Palace Newround...

King of Jordan visits Brunei

* From frontpage

also visited the Ulu Sungai Majiwan in Temburong District where Their Majesties witnessed a Special Combat Squadron (SCS) Demonstration.

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam also consented to present the Special Combat Squadron (SCS) Honorary Badge and Beret to His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan.

His Majesty left Brunei on the March 3. His Majesty King Abdullah II last visited Brunei on February 2004.



His Majesty presents the SCS Honorary Badge and Beret to His Majesty King Abdullah II



Their Majesties at a banquet hosted by His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam



His Majesty King Abdullah II joins His Majesty and other members of the royal family for the Friday Prayer



His Majesty bids His Majesty King Abdullah II farewell



**His Majesty
meets the
students**



**The sovereign tours
the school's vicinity**



**His Majesty interacts
with one of the students**

HM visits schools

BERAKAS, March 9 – Two secondary schools received an unscheduled visit by His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam - Sayyidina Abu Bakar Secondary School and Berakas Sixth Form Centre.

First, His Majesty visited the Sayyidina Abu Bakar Secondary School based in Lambak Kanan. This school was opened on May 9, 1994 and formerly known as Lambak Kanan II Secondary School. On August 5, 1996 the school's name was officially changed to Sayyidina Abu Bakar Secondary School. In 1996, the school started to operate in two sessions, morning and afternoon.

The school was built in 1992 at a cost of about \$18 million. With 40 classrooms, the school is also equipped with modern facilities such as science laboratories, computer rooms, geography room, art and wood works rooms, prayer rooms, library, conference room and multi-purpose hall. Currently, the school accommodates 1,700 students from secondary one to five.

Later, His Majesty went to the Berakas Sixth Form Centre. This school is still at its early stages of operation as it was officially opened in November last year. To date, the sixth form centre has 81 teachers and more than 1,000 students including the new 800 lower sixth students who had registered on March 1.

The Berakas Sixth Form Centre which costs \$12 million, has 42 classrooms, 14 science labs, three arts studios, two computer labs, conference room, administration block and auditorium.

During the visit, His Majesty toured the school's vicinity and met the students and staff.

Two mega projects worth US\$4 billion

ONG SUM PING, March 23 – Two mega projects – Pulau Muara Besar and Sungai Liang are worth around US\$4 billion. These two projects would generate 7,000 job opportunities as well as opening up more business opportunities to local small-and-medium enterprises when the projects are completed.

This was disclosed during the work visit of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam to the Brunei Economic Development Board (BEDB). Accompanying His Majesty was His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

During the visit, His Majesty received briefings from the Acting Chairman of BEDB, Mr. Timothy Ong and BEDB's Chief Executive Officer, Mr. John A Perry. The sovereign also toured various division of the Board.

The main roles of the Board are to stimulate the growth, expansion and development of the economy by promoting Brunei as an investment destination. The Board is also responsible for implementing Government policies and preparing investment promotion plans, incentives and marketing strategies to attract foreign and local investments in advanced technology industries and skill-intensive services.

Other than that, the Board would also assist and facilitate industrial development as a whole, including supporting the development of small-and-medium enterprises (SME).

The Board established the SME Innovation Centre which is scheduled to be open in May, 2006. The centre would be equipped with various facilities and mentor training programme for 21 local companies. It would also have joint effort in information technology.

At present, the focus and priority of BEDB is to prepare, promote and develop industrial sites, and also strategic and competitive facilities for prioritised industries.

**His Majesty and His
Royal Highness during
the briefing**



**The sovereign is
briefed on the
development of
Pulau Muara Besar
Project**



His Majesty and His Royal Highness in group photo with BEDB's officials and staff members

HM visits *Mukim* Pekan Tutong

TUTONG, March 30 – His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was on a working visit to *Mukim* Pekan Tutong where he visited several commercial buildings, residences of head of village, schools, beach, hospital, police station, fire and rescue station, gas station, sports complex and community hall.

His Majesty began his visit at Kampong Penanjong Tutong by visiting PERDA Commercial Building. PERDA is the youth association of Kampong Penanjong.

The sovereign then visited the residence of head of village of Kampong Penanjong, Awang Haji Ahmad Juriah. With the population of 2,117 people, Kampong Penanjong is provided with sufficient basic amenities, two schools and a mosque.

The sovereign's next stop was the Coastal Beach Erosion Control Project in Kampong Penanjong. The project cost more than \$8 million and started in October 27, 2003. The objective of the project is to control the coastal erosion at Penanjong Beach.

His Majesty then proceeded to visit Muda Hashim Secondary School. Currently, there are 930 students studying at the school. The school which was built on 7.5 hectares of land had been used since 1966. The institution through Ministry of Education also provided transportation and hostel facilities.

Later, His Majesty went to Pengiran Muda Mahkota Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah Hospital; and toured the hospital's vicinity. The hospital was officially opened on August 11, 1998 by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah. It has more than 130 beds and is equipped with modern and sophisticated medical equipments.

Another school visited was Sufri Bolkiah Secondary School. The school was officially opened on July 29, 1972. Built on 20 hectares of land, the school currently has 978 students with 82 teachers. Transportation and hostel facilities are also provided to the students.

His Majesty also visited the residence of head of village of Kampong Panchor, Awang Haji Kepli bin Abang Sepawi. Kampong Panchor has a population of 1,200 people and well facilitated with electricity, water supply, roads, telephone lines and a mosque.

The sovereign also visited Tutong's Police Station and Fire and Rescue Station. The Police Station has been used since 1972 and currently has 60 police personnel. Meanwhile the Fire and Rescue Station has been used since 1969 and currently has 76 firemen.

Prior to that, His Majesty visited the *Tamu* and *Pasar Baru* Complex in Kampong Serampang. The complex was built in early march last year and expected to be completed in early June this year. With the costs of \$9 million, the complex is aimed to provide convenient places for carrying out business activities such as wet market, selling of vegetables and fruits and also food stall.

His Majesty also visited the Pakatan Tutong Filling Station. The gas station started its operation in December 1999; and became a model filling station for 2004-2005. Also visited was the OG Complex, a commercial building located in Tutong Town.

His Majesty's final stop was Tutong Sport Complex. The sport complex which costs more than \$6 million has been used since 1997. Among the facilities available are indoor courts for badminton, squash, volleyball and basketball; and open courts for football, netball and track.

His Majesty's itinerary ended at the Tutong Community Hall where a luncheon was held.



His Majesty greeted by officials upon arrival at Penanjong Primary School



His Majesty views an exhibition by the Fire and Rescue Department



His Majesty is briefed on the development of a project



The sovereign observes a science activity by the student

'TITIAN BUDAYA' a showcase of Brunei & Malaysian culture

GADONG, March 26 – A cultural showcase of Brunei and Malaysia known as 'Titian Budaya' was held from March 24 to 27.

One of the grand events was the 'Titian Budaya' Gala Night attended by 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. The Gala Performance was held at the Empire Theatre of the Empire Hotel & Country Club in Jerudong on March 24.

The Gala Night featured Brunei and Malaysia's cultural performances and also traditional clothes fashion show.

Another grand event held was the "Exclusive Expression on Malaysian Textile" a fashion show featuring latest Malaysian textiles designs. Attending the event was Her Majesty Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha. Also present were Yang Teramat Mulia Azrinaz Mazhar ; and Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah. The event took place on March 26 at Rizqun International Hotel at The Mall in Gadong.

The 'Titian Budaya' program is a joint cooperation program between Brunei's Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports; and Malaysia's Ministry of Culture, Art and Heritage. It was aimed to strengthen bilateral relations and cooperation through culture, arts and heritage and to promote the uniqueness of both cultures, arts and heritage to the international level. It also encouraged the exchange of information and experts in fields related to culture, arts and heritage.

The program was launched by Brunei's Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, Pehin Major General (Rtd) Dato Awang Haji Mohammad; and Minister of Culture, Arts and Heritage of Malaysia, His Excellency Datuk Seri Utama Dr. Rais Yatim on March 25.

The program which was held at the International Convention Centre (ICC) in Berakas also included craft exhibition, costumes show, drawings and film shows.



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 and other royal family at the 'Titian Budaya' gala night.

Her Majesty Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha and Yang Teramat Mulia Azrinaz Mazhar at the Exclusive Expression on Malaysian Textile



Crown Prince visits Ministry of Defence

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 8 – 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 Operations.



His Royal Highness receives briefing on the system at the Joint Operation Centre

Congratulatory messages

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

- His Excellency General Pervez Musharraf, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in conjunction with Pakistan Day on March 23.
- His Excellency Professor Iajuddin Ahmed, President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and his Prime Minister, Her Excellency Begum Khaleda Zia in conjunction with Bangladesh's Independence Day anniversary on March 26.

Crown Prince on official visit to Viet Nam

HANOI, March 22 – 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 concluded their three-day official visit to Viet Nam by visiting the Hanoi University of Foreign Studies in Thanh Xuan.

Their Royal Highnesses began their visit to Viet Nam on March 20; and accompanying throughout the visit was His Royal Highness Prince Abdul Qawi.

Their Royal Highnesses' itinerary began with attending the Official Welcoming Ceremony at the Presidential Palace. On arrival, Their Royal Highnesses were greeted by Vice President of Viet Nam, Her Excellency Truong My Hoa and spouse, Mr. Ha Van Hien.

His Royal Highness then proceeded for a bilateral meeting with Her Excellency Truong My Hoa. At the meeting, His Royal Highness and Her Excellency exchanged views on Brunei Darussalam-Viet Nam bilateral relations especially on cooperation in trade, defence, education and sports. Both expressed satisfaction with the progress of both countries bilateral cooperation.

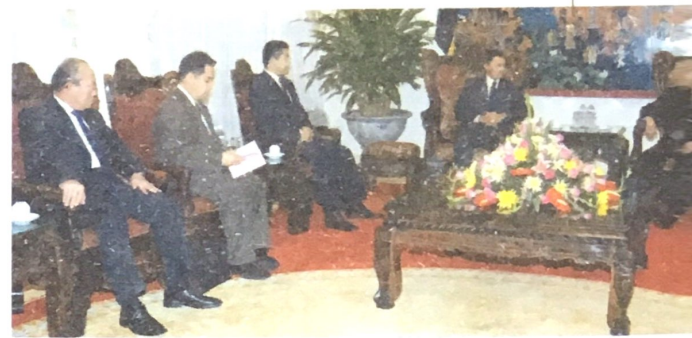
Both had agreed to call for the establishment of Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation in new areas.

Later, Their Royal Highnesses visited the Literature Centre that is Viet Nam's First University which is also the training and research centre.

In the evening, Their Royal



His Royal Highness The Crown Prince with His Excellency President Tran Duc Luong



His Royal Highness The Crown Prince during the courtesy call to His Excellency Prime Minister Phan Van Khai



Their Royal Highnesses and Her Excellency Truong My Hoa, Vice President of Viet Nam and spouse



Her Royal Highness at the Viet Nam's Women Museum

Highnesses attended a banquet hosted by Her Excellency the Vice President and spouse at the Government Guest House. At the banquet, His Royal Highness delivered a speech which touched on the excellent progress of Brunei-Viet Nam cooperation.

On March 21, Their Royal Highnesses had separate visit programmes. His Royal Highness visited the Army Special Forces Academy in Xuan Mai; while Her Royal Highness visited Viet Nam's Women Museum.

His Royal Highness also attended a courtesy call to the President of Viet Nam, His Excellency Tran Duc Luong; and Prime Minister, His Excellency Phan Van Khai at the Government's Office in Presidential Palace.

Later in the evening, Their Royal Highnesses attended a banquet hosted by Minister and Chairman of the Committee of Sports and Physical Culture, His Excellency Nguyen Danh Thai.

Prior to the banquet, Their Royal Highnesses with His Excellency Nguyen Danh Thai held a meeting and exchanged views on regional and international sports activities and competitions.

Brunei Darussalam and Viet Nam established diplomatic relations in 1992 after Viet Nam was officially accepted as the seventh member of ASEAN. Viet Nam set up its diplomatic mission in Bandar Seri Begawan in June, 1995. In December the same year, Brunei Darussalam established its mission in Hanoi.



His Royal Highness receives Lao state award 'Lian Kiattikhounh'



Their Highnesses on courtesy call to His Excellency President Khamtay Siphadone and spouse

Crown Prince on official visit to Laos

VIENTIANE, March 24 – 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 was in Laos for a three-day official visit.

Accompanying throughout the official visit was His Royal Highness Prince Abdul Qawi.

Their Royal Highnesses' visit programme commenced with the Official Welcoming Ceremony at the Ho Kam Presidential Palace; and followed by a courtesy call to His Excellency President Khamtay Siphadone and spouse, Madam Thongvanh Siphadone. At the meeting, His Royal Highness and His Excellency exchanged views on Brunei-Laos bilateral relations; where both expressed satisfaction on the progress of the existing



Her Royal Highness at the Silver Handicraft Fawattana Centre

State Legislative Council



Group photo of members of the State Legislative Council



His Majesty, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah proceeded to the Ceremonial Hall



The surrounding of the Ceremonial Hall during the opening of the State Legislative Council with a prayer to bless the event.

TAP announce new board members

COMMONWEALTH DRIVE, March 6 – Tabung Amanah Pekerja (TAP) or Employee Trust Fund announced her new members of the board. The appointment is for two years effective from February 21, 2006 to February 20, 2008, pursuant to Section 4(1) and (2) of Tabung Amanah Pekerja Act Chapter 167.

With the new appointment, the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports is the Chairman, and the Permanent Secretary at Prime Minister's Office is the Deputy.

The members are Permanent Secretary at Ministry of Finance; Permanent Secretary at Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources; Director General of the Civil Service; the Managing Director of Brunei Investment Agency; the Commissioner of Labour; and Solicitor General as Attorney General's Representative.

Also members are Deputy Managing Director of Brunei Shell Petroleum Company Limited and Chief Executive Officer, Royal Brunei Airlines Sendirian Berhad. Both are the Private Sector's Representative. Meanwhile the Managing Director of TAP is the Ex-Officio Member.

Crown Prince on official visits to Laos

* From page 9

bilateral cooperation.

Later, His Royal Highness received in audience Lao Minister of Defence, His Excellency Dounghay Phichit and Minister of Public Security, His Excellency Thongbanh Sengaphone at the State Guest House. At the audience, His Royal Highness and both Lao Ministers exchanged views on defence cooperation.

After the audiences, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince, His Royal Highness Prince Abdul Qawi and Their Excellencies proceeded to the Indoor Stadium Sports Club for a friendly badminton match.

In a separate visit programme, Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah visited two famous handicraft centres in Vientiane namely; Silver Handicraft Fawattana Centre and Nikone Lao Silk Textile.

In the evening, Their Royal Highnesses attended a banquet hosted by Vice President of Laos, His Excellency Choummaly Sayasone and spouse, Madam Keosaychay Sayasone at the Function Hall of State Guest House.

Prior to the banquet, His Royal Highness was conferred with one of Laos Highest State Decoration 'Lian Kiattikhounh' presented by Laos Vice President.

On the second day, His Royal Highness visited the National University in Dongdok; followed by a visit to Lao People's Army Museum. Later, in the afternoon, Their Royal Highnesses and His Royal Highness Prince Abdul Qawi attended a football match at the National Stadium.

Brunei Darussalam established diplomatic relations with the Laos People's Democratic Republic on July 27, 1993. On February 26, 1997, Brunei Darussalam formally set up its mission in Vientiane.



His Royal Highness presents medal to one of recipients

Crown Prince presents state medals

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 4 – More state medals were presented by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office.

Over 600 recipients received one of the medals namely *Pingat Bakti Laila Ikhlas* (P.B.L.I.), *Pingat Jasa Kebaktian* (P.J.K. – Meritorious Service Medal), *Pingat Indah Kerja Baik* (P.I.K.B.), and *Pingat Kerja Lama* (Long service Medal).

The presentation ceremony was held in conjunction with the 59th birthday anniversary of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam.

Brunei hosts 41st SEACEN Governor's Conference

JERUDONG, March 4 – In the context of supervision of the financial sector, a number of new laws will be introduced this year, while existing ones will be amended and updated.

Pehin Dato Paduka Haji Awang Abdul Rahman, Finance Minister II stated the matters during officiating the 41st Conference on the Governors of South East Asian (SEACEN) and the 25th Meeting of SEACEN Board of Directors at the Empire Hotel & Country Club.

He also mentioned that the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam is continuously enhancing her efforts in benchmarking its financial services against international standards.

He added that, in referring to the theme of the conference "Internationalisation of Financial Services – Implications and Challenges for Central Bank"; Internalisation stimulated competition, and in the global finance, created new market and products, which often required the fusion of different commercial practises, said the Minister.

This meant that regulatory authorities and central bankers need to add new skills to their human resources, and such skill required constant review and updating.

A total of 68 delegates attended the



Minister of Finance II, Pehin Dato Paduka Haji Awang Abdul Rahman delivers speech

conference which was held back-to-back with the SEACEN Board of Governors' Meeting on a rotational basis. This was the first time, Brunei's Ministry of Finance to host the event.

The 41st SEACEN Governor's Conference and the 25th Meeting of SEACEN Board of Governors was held from March 3 to 6.

Brunei's Ministry of Finance became a member of SEACEN since 2003. SEACEN Research and Training Centre was established in 1982 with eight founding members. Currently, SEACEN has a total of 14 member central banks and four observers.

Opening of Legal Year 2006:

More acts introduced and amended

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 28

– The legal system must continue to be relevant and able to promote proper administration of justice; therefore in 2005 and early this year, several new laws have been made.

The matters were stated by Dato Seri Paduka Haji Kifrawi, the Attorney General at the Opening of Legal Year 2006.

"I am pleased to announce that His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has consented to a new Children and Young Persons Order. This Order, once enforced, will establish juvenile courts as part of our legal system. The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports with His Majesty's approval would fix the date of commencement of the Order when the required infrastructure and trained manpower are ready," said the Attorney General.

While to protect and ensure the welfare of the children in the country, new legislation called the Child Care Centres Order, 2006 and the Child Care Centres Regulations, 2006 were introduced. This Order took effect on March 8, 2006. These legislations regulate the operation or management of a child care centre by licensing and deal with matters such as the period of its operation and daily programme schedule, medical care, nutrition and discipline, hygiene and environmental health and safety and emergency information.

He also highlighted the Evidence Act which was recently amended to allow for the use of live video or live television link in giving evidence in any proceedings before a court.

"Brunei Darussalam is also aware of its international obligation in combating crimes together with other countries. In this regard, the Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Order has come into effect as from January 1, 2006. This order allows Brunei Darussalam to extend cooperation in the investigation of criminal cases by foreign countries, in many instances even without any prior treaty arrangement," said the Attorney General.

He also announced that His Majesty had consented to the new Extradition Order, 2006. The Order had replaced the Extradition Act of 1915 and ensured that Brunei would never be a safe haven for criminals and fugitives from justice.

Also announced was His Majesty's consent to the amendment of the Legal Profession Act to allow for Barrister, Solicitor or Barrister and Solicitor of a Supreme Court of any Australian State or Territory to be recognised as qualified persons for the purposes of the Act.

Another new law to provide for effective disaster management for Brunei Darussalam had been passed by His Majesty is the Disaster Management Order, 2006. This Order established the National Disaster Council and the National Disaster Management Centre and provides the framework for the management of preventive measures, preparedness, response and recovery from any event including a terrorist attack.

Prior to that, he talked on the Law Society of Brunei Darussalam which had just formally been set up. The Attorney General also congratulated the President and the Council members on their election to the office; and reminded them that their election to office comes with heavy

responsibilities, both professionally and socially.

He also touched on the Right of Witnesses and Victim's of Crime. Witnesses and victims should have appropriate protection and assistance and should be given appropriate information on the investigation, prosecution and disposal of criminal cases.

The Attorney General also said that Judicial Officers have to be honest and possess high integrity. "It is also in the public interests for us to maintain well-experienced, honest and efficient officers in the Attorney General's Chambers.

"In our neighbouring countries there is a body referred as the Legal Service Commission (Singapore) or the Judicial and Legal Service Commission (Malaysia) which look after both the Judicial Officers from the Judiciary and the Legal Officers from the Attorney General's Chambers. There should therefore be a body to be referred as Judicial and Legal Services Commission looking after both the welfare of Officers from my Chambers and Judicial Officers from the courts," said the Attorney General.

The Opening of Legal Year 2006 were also attended by Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Muta-Wakillah Hayatul Bolkiah; and Chief Justice, Dato Seri Paduka Mohammad Saied.



Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Muta-Wakillah Hayatul Bolkiah (fifth from left) among guest attending the Opening of Legal Year 2006

Record shows lower crime rates

GADONG, March 8 – Brunei's crime rate for year 2005 was among the lowest in the region. Statistics showed a lower total crime rate for the year 2005 compared to 2004. Overall total of crime rate cases for 2005 were 4,552 cases while in 2004 there were 4,796 cases, a decrease by 5.1 per cent.

This was revealed by the Director of Criminal Intelligence Department at the Royal Brunei Police Force, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Sharifah Salmah at a press conference.

The press conference also listed road accident statistics where the figures shot up by five per cent, which were 2,771 cases in 2005 compared to 2,625 cases in 2004. Fortunately, accident cases that led to fatality dropped by 13 per cent that is 30 cases in 2005 and 34 cases in 2004.

FINANCE ORDERS & REGULATIONS 2006

COMMONWEALTH DRIVE, March 16 – Ministry of Finance announced that with the consent of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, five Orders and Regulations had been legislated and amended, that are the:

- Banking Order, 2006; and Banking Regulations, 2006;
- Insurance Order, 2006; and Insurance Regulations, 2006;
- Finance Companies Act (Amendment) Order, 2006
- Hire Purchase Order, 2006
- Customs Order, 2006; and Excise Order, 2006

All the above orders and regulations were effective from March 4, 2006.

Brunei Darussalam introduces Short-Term Sukuk Al-Ijarah

COMMONWEALTH DRIVE, March 14

- Brunei Darussalam launched its first Islamic bond, the Brunei Darussalam Government's Short-Term *Sukuk Al-Ijarah* Programme.

The programme was officially launched by the Minister of Finance II, Pehin Dato Paduka Awang Haji Abdul Rahman at the ministry's building.

The issuance of the *Sukuk Al-Ijarah*, said the Minister, is the first step in developing a Capital Market in Brunei. The introduction is hoped to enhance the nation's position in the growing regional and global Islamic Financial Community. It would also steer for the development of a wider range of Islamic financial instruments and products that complied with rigorous and strict *Syariah* principles.

"Additionally, with today's Programme as a model, it is hoped that both, domestic and international participants, particularly major corporations, will see the merits of using their own *Sukuk* as an alternative means of funding their business expansions, and hence, consider Brunei's financial market place as their alternative funding avenue," said the Minister.

He also touched on the total outstanding *Sukuk* issued worldwide; the sum of approximately US\$9 billion remains a small fraction of the sizeable global debt market.

The Minister further stated that as the global demand for *Sukuk* issuances remains hugely unsatisfied. He believed that Brunei is placed in an ideal position to capitalise on this huge potential Islamic market space.

The issuance of the *Sukuk Al-Ijarah* is the product of a strong collaboration between the Brunei Government through the Ministry of Finance and the private sector.

He further said that the Ministry aims to uphold the commitment and will continue to work closely with other government agencies and partners in the banking sectors in ensuring the continuous success of the programme as well as to initiative wider Capital Market.

For the issuance of the *Sukuk*, the Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam through Ministry of Finance had established two companies; namely Sukuk Holding Properties Inc and Sukuk (Brunei) Inc as the facilitators for the government in implementing the programme.

The Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam through Land Department, Ministry of Development had registered several government's assets to Sukuk

Holding Properties Inc which will then be selling the beneficial rights of those assets to Sukuk (Brunei) Inc.

Sukuk (Brunei) Inc will lease back the assets to the government; which will also be paying rent charges throughout the leasing period. The rent revenue will be used to pay the dividends to the investors under the *Sukuk* programme.

The ceremony also witnessed the signing of three agreements; Sukuk Holding Properties Inc and Sukuk (Brunei) Inc; Sukuk (Brunei) Inc with Ministry of Finance; and Sukuk (Brunei) Inc with primary dealers that are representatives from Baiduri Bank, Citibank, HSBC, Islamic Bank of Brunei and Standard Chartered Bank.

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in the *titah* during last *Hari Raya Aidil Fitri* had consented for the issuance of the short-term Government *Sukuk Al-Ijarah* Programme.

Among main objectives of the issuance of the *Sukuk* was to provide the Islamic investment instrument to the public financial institutions; and also as early steps in developing the nation's capital market. The issuance of the *Sukuk Al-Ijarah* will also contribute to the development of the nation's Islamic finance besides strengthening Brunei Darussalam's monetary policy.

Brunei celebrates World Meteorological Day

BERAKAS, March 23 – The Government had allocated more than \$1.8 million under the Eight National Development Plan (NDP) to create the System of Lightning Data Acquisition, Monitoring and Tracking (SLAMAT) commencing November 2004.

The system was built in five lightning stations that could track, collect, monitor and analyse all lightning information throughout the country.

The Minister of Communications, Pehin Dato Haji Awang Abu Bakar stated the matters at the celebration of World Meteorological Day 2006 at the new building of Meteorological Services in Anggerek Desa.

"Other than that, the Eight NDP also had allocated more than \$2.5 million for Automatic Meteorological Data Acquisition System (AMEDAS) that is an equipment for real-time observation on weather throughout the country," said the Minister.

Currently there are 14 automatic weather stations in the nation; four in Brunei Muara District, three in Tutong District, four in Belait District and three in Temburong District.

"The equipments are hoped to assist in enhancing the ability of meteorological services in our country and also in the same time providing information to public," said the Minister.

He further added that in reality, even though we could not prevent natural disaster but we could make efforts to reduce the serious effects on people.

At the ceremony, the Minister also officiated the Meteorological Services new building and also launched SLAMAT and AMEDAS.



Deputy Minister of Development presents award to representative from Tasek Water Refinery as the winner of Best Water Plant Treatment

99.99% Brunei's population receive clean water

BERAKAS, March 22 – About 99.99 per cent of Brunei's population are supplied with clean water. Whereas, an average person in Brunei consumes over 420 liters of water per day which means each person uses more than 240 liters of water per day. About 77 per cent of the water source is used for domestic and commercial purposes, and 18 per cent is used for the oil and gas industry.

This year's celebration also saw the Best Water Treatment Plant award for Tasek Water Refinery. While the Operation and Maintenance Section of the Water Services Department received an ISO 9001 2000.

Brunei celebrates World Water Day this year with the theme 'Water and Culture'. Present to launch the event was Dato Dr. Haji Mat Suny, the Deputy Minister of Development.

Art exhibition to promote Brunei

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 11 – Twenty local artists had the opportunity to promote their paintings at an art works exhibition held at Horticulture Business Centre.

The paintings displayed were meant to promote Brunei's tourism industry which included paintings by ASEAN award winners.

A caricaturist, Mohd Arif bin Haji Abd Hamid said they are planning to arrange another exhibition and workshop on

drawings, portraits, *batik* painting and caricature. This is hoped to attract tourists from other countries to Brunei.

The exhibition was officially opened by Deputy Minister of Industry and Primary Resources, Dato Hamdillah bin Haji Abd Wahab.

The exhibition is open to the public on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 9 am till 6 am.



The Permanent Secretary at the Prime Minister's Office (centre) witness the signing of Mou between RBA and Garuda

More routes & MOU with counterpart

BERAKAS, March 31 – Effective March 26, 2006, Royal Brunei Airlines (RBA) will be introducing additional flights to Perth, Australia from three to five times weekly.

A special introductory fare for travel from Bandar Seri Begawan to Perth on these two days starts from low as \$599 for adults and \$499 for child. These fares are valid for 14 days only and outgoing travel must be either be on Thursday or Sunday flights only. Bookings can be made immediately until April 30, 2006 for travel from March 26 to May 30, 2006.

On February 28, RBA announced that it will be adding Ho Chi Minh to its international network commencing May 11.

There will be three flights to Ho Chi Minh City departing Bandar Seri Begawan every Monday, Thursday and Sunday. While return flights from Ho Chi Minh to Bandar Seri Begawan will be every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday.

"Apart from targeting the traffic movement between Australia (Sydney) and Vietnam, we also see Ho Chi Minh as an alternative shopping and sightseeing destination for Bruneians and other potential markets," said Rozman Junaidi, RBA's Acting Head of Corporate Communications.

While on February 27, RBA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for a joint cooperation with PT Garuda Indonesia (Garuda). RBA was represented by the Acting Chief Executive Officer, Pengiran Mohd Yusof bin Pengiran Haji Jeludin while his counterpart was President and Chief Executive Officer of Garuda, Emirsyah Satar. Present to witness the signing was Pengiran Dato Paduka Haji Abdul Hamid bin Pengiran Haji Mohd Yassin, the Permanent Secretary at the Prime Minister's Office.

The commercially viable cooperation is meant to benefit both parties. The scopes of the joint cooperation include training, maintenance, information and distribution, technologies, ground handling and catering.

More information can be obtained from the airlines website at www.brunelair.com.

Heart of Borneo launched

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 27 - Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia and Malaysia announced their support and commitment in the area of natural habitat and forest conservation during the launch of the 'Heart of Borneo'.

The Heart of Borneo is a protected area that harbors up to six per cent of the world's total biodiversity. It is the source of 14 of the island's 20 major rivers with some 361 new species discovered in the last 10 years.

"WWF considers the 'Heart of Borneo' as one of the most important centres in the world's biological diversity and it is vital for WWF to assist the three governments with financial and technical support to conserve approximately 220, 000 sq km of equatorial rainforest and numerous wildlife species," said WWF International's Director General, Mr James Leape.

"Today's announcement by the three governments shows vision and leadership and three countries sharing one conservation vision provides hope to one of the most important areas for biodiversity in the world," added Mr Leape.

Meanwhile Brunei's representative, Mahmud Yussof, hoped a tri-country Declaration for the Heart of Borneo would be signed at the 14th Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, next May in New York.

Also present on behalf of Indonesia was Arman Mallolongan, Director-General, Forest Protection and Nature Conservation of the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry.

According to Mallolongan, such vision gives hope to bio-diversification and conserving the Heart of Borneo would not only save hundreds or even thousands of species but also provide water security and cultural survival for the people of Borneo.

Dato Suboh, Secretary General of the Malaysian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, said this was a historic event which would pave the way towards expanding conservation of biodiversity. He further added that such trans-boundary cooperation milestone would enhance existing collaboration between the three countries to protect vital resources and reduce poverty.

The Heart of Borneo covers the highlands and adjacent foothills along the borders of the three countries and connected in places with rich lowland forests.

The three Borneo governments also announced that Brunei has established two conservation areas.

Meanwhile, Malaysia would protect over 200,000 hectares of key forest habitat in Sabah for orangutans, elephants and rhinos, while Indonesia has proposed a new national park of 800,000 hectares.

Temporary ban on imported birds

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 2 – The Department of Agriculture had announced a temporary ban on the importation of all types of birds and its related products from West Malaysia following the outbreak of bird flu in West Malaysia particularly in few villages in Selangor on February 20.

According to the press release, the action was taken as an effort to prevent outspread of the virus to our country. The Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources through Agriculture Department had tightened the inspection at all entrance control posts to eradicate smuggling activity.

Although at present there is no outbreak of bird flu in Brunei; the Agriculture Department asked public assistance to:

- Prevent and monitor the smuggling activities of particularly chickens, ducks, birds and its products into the country by reporting it to the Department.
- To report and register the activity of backyard rearing of

chickens, birds or ducks.

- Suspected deaths of any kinds of bird should also be reported.
- Taking precautions by keeping personal hygiene and clean environment especially for those involved in rearing and breeding any kinds of bird.
- Keeping alert on the current situation and give cooperation for preventing the influenza.

Public are advised not to panic with the situation and not to doubt when purchasing any chicken products available in local market. Agriculture Department would continue monitor and conduct the sero-survilans (taking sample for lab test) programme to poultry farms and also activate surveillance to backyards and immigrant birds.

The prevention efforts for avoiding the pandemic from spreading into the country would continuously be enhanced with cooperation from other government agencies.

Medicine products banned

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 4 – The Ministry of Health of Brunei Darussalam called for the public to surrender a type of traditional medicine known as ‘Oyster Plus Capsules’ to the Pharmacy Enforcement Section of the ministry. The announcement was made based on the report from the Drug Control Authority, Ministry of Health Malaysia. Oyster Plus Capsules is a traditional medicine manufactured by Naning Waygo Health Products in the People’s Republic of China.

The medicine traditionally used for general health was found to contain ‘Tadalafil’, a drug used in the treatment of impotency that could be harmful. This drug could interact with other medicine resulting in serious adverse effects such as the lowering of blood pressure, if used together with some anti-hypertensive drugs.

In Brunei, selling of any product containing a substance controlled under the Poisons Act is an offence under Poison Act 1956 and the penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$8000 or imprisonment of six months.

Last month, the ministry also had advised the public to stop consuming and selling five types of traditional medicines which contained control substances under the poison acts.

HFMD in Brunei under Control

BERAKAS, March 27 – Three hundred and sixty cases of Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD) had been reported in Brunei since March 1; and only one fatality recorded. The cases amounts were considered under control as the infection trend began to decrease since last March 17. But members of the public are still called to practise good hygiene.

The government through its ministries and departments had taken various preventive measures such as closing children day care centres, nursery, kindergarten and primary schools throughout the country. Cleaning campaign was also conducted at various schools.

In order to give awareness on the outbreak of HFMD and to call public for good hygiene practise, promotions were aired on television and radios. Brochures and posters were also distributed to public. Talks on HFMD were also held for teachers and schools staff.

As a precaution, public swimming pools are also closed; and the public are advised not to bring their children to contaminated areas.

Specialised care for stroke patients

JERUDONG, March 19 – The Ministry of Health has taken various steps to provide specialised care for patients suffering from strokes as well as measures to reduce its risk factors.

Pehin Dato Paduka Haji Awang Suyoi, the Minister of Health said these at the opening of the Symposium on Stroke held at the Indera Kayangan Ballroom at the Empire Hotel & Country Club.



Minister of Health, Pehin Dato Paduka Haji Awang Suyoi delivers a speech

The vascular diseases, stroke, said the Minister, is one of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in Brunei as well as the rest of the world. In the sultanate itself, over 200 cases of stroke were admitted in 2005. Out of the 200 cases; 70 per cent were ischaemic stroke cases and 30 per cent due to haemorrhage.

He further added that majority of patients know the symptoms of a heart attack, but few are aware of the signs and symptoms of a stroke. Therefore, the Minister urged neurologists, doctors and staff members of the health services to learn and understand further the signs of and how to cure this disease.

The one-day symposium was organised by the Division of Neurology, Department of Internal Medicine of Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha (RIPAS) Hospital. It was held in collaboration with the ASEAN Neurological Association (ASNA). Over 250 participants from various medical related fields around the nation attended the symposium. The speakers were from ASEAN countries such as Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.



Minister of Industry and Primary Resources joins the paddy harvesting

Paddy Harvesting Fiesta 2006

TEMBURONG, March 5 – Paddy production for 2005 had shown an increase by five per cent compared to last five years; that is from 299 tonnes to 851 tonnes. The productivity of paddy planted per hectare also increased from 0.27 tonnes per hectare in 1998 to 0.87 tonnes per hectare in 2005.

The Minister of Industry and Primary Resources, Pehin Dato Dr. Haji Awang Ahmad stated the matters at the Temburong's Paddy Harvesting Fiesta 2006 at the Perdayan Paddy Area in the Temburong district.

According to the Minister, there are still several matters to consider in enhancing the high quality of local paddy production (rice) that can attract local consumer compared to imported rice.

Therefore, the Agriculture Department would continuously increase the effort to align with the target in achieving 10 per cent self-sufficiency in next 10 to 15 years. The Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam through Agriculture Department in the 8th National Development Plan also had undertaken few projects related to paddy production such as supplying the seeds and providing infrastructures.

The Perdayan Paddy Area had produced 399 metric tonnes of paddy in 2005; which represented 47 per cent of the county's paddy production. It was the largest contributors compared to other local paddy producers.

The Perdayan Agricultural Development Project was developed in April 1987 by a private company. It was later taken over by the Agriculture Department and known as Perdayan Station. With an area of 23.4 hectares, 16.2 hectares of the station had been developed with various agricultural projects

Brunei hosts workshop on agriculture

GADONG, March 28 – A workshop was held as part of the ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Programme – the Quality Assurance System for Asean Fruit and Vegetable Project.

The workshop was entitled 'Sanitary and Phytosanitary and Post-Harvest Requirement for Export'. Twenty members from all ASEAN countries participated in the three-day workshop.

The workshop's objectives were to learn about and familiarise with the necessary protocol stipulated under the World Trade Organisation – SPS Agreement, pertaining to the export of agricultural products.

The Agriculture Department hosted the workshop which was a jointly funded by the Australian government through AUSAID and ASEAN, and managed by RM1T International.

Teachers attend seminar on ICT

LUMAPAS, March 22 – About 30 teachers from primary and secondary schools of Mukim Lumapas participated a two-day seminar programme on ICT.

The programme focused on the usage of ICT as a teaching tool for English teachers, and to promote awareness on the importance of English Language Skills.

The two-day seminar was hosted by Sayyidina Umar Al-Khattab Secondary School based in Lumapas.

INFORAMA 2006

KILANAS, March 30 – The Ministry of Education launched the 11th Inforama 2006 at the Sayyidina Hasan Secondary School. It was launched by Awang Shahbudin bin Haji Musa, Head of Marketing Unit, Brunei Shell Petroleum (BSP) Company Sendirian Berhad.

This year's theme is ICT for Innovation, Competence and Triumph.

Inforama is a project by the Ministry of Education to boost the information and communications technology (ICT) in the nation. The main objective of Inforama is to create awareness among student and publics on the importance of ICT in everyday life in the era of globalisation. The project is one of the partnerships between the Ministry of Education and BSP with the support from University of Brunei Darussalam (UBD) and higher learning institutions in the nation.

According to the Principal of Sayyidina Hasan Secondary School, Haji Jumaat bin Salleh; the school as host had planned various activities such as seminars, workshop, ICT showcase in line with the objectives of the project.

Inforama 2006 would also include Inforama Competition which had four levels. Level 1 is opened for primary school students to compete in drawing using paint, typing and editing skills, working with Excel and presentation using PowerPoint. Level 2 is for lower secondary students to compete in fun with multimedia, website creation and internet activities.

Level 3 is for upper secondary students (Form 4 and Form 5) where students would be competing through computerised quizzes. Level 4 is opened for tertiary and higher institutions where contestants would compete in software creation and hardware development.

The Level 2 Competition also took place after the launching ceremony where 32 schools took part.

Brunei hosts OIC Meeting on Capacity Building

JERUDONG, March 29 - Brunei Darussalam attended the Fourth Senior Officials' Meeting of the Steering Committee on Capacity Building Programme for OIC countries hosted by the Islamic Development Bank of Jeddah.

The Government of His Majesty and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in collaboration with the Malaysian government became the Chairman in this meeting.

In the conference, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade stated that the OIC members need to further progress and work together on the welfare of its people. With this, capacity building is important which will make up a critical component in the development strategies.

The two-day meeting of the OIC members concentrated on lessening the world's poverty through economic opportunities and better capacities in the least developed countries.

Places To Dine In Brunei

Whether it is fast food, Al-Fresco or exclusive dining that you are seeking for, Brunei Darussalam offers a wide variety of food choices to satisfy almost any picky eater.

There are several hot spots for fine dining in Brunei particularly in bustling areas of Kiulap, Gadong, and Bandar Seri Begawan.

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN

The capital of Brunei Darussalam offer several hot spots for a relaxing dining atmosphere. With two popular places offering a hawker-style restaurant outlets, you are offered a cheap and satisfying menu.

These food joints are situated at a parking lot near the Sheraton Utama Hotel and a place along Brunei River in Subok. These food joints offer the same quality as those found in the Gadong hawker-style foodstalls. In Subok, you are not only served with tasty and delicious food, but you are also able to enjoy the night breathtaking scenery of the Brunei's famed Water Village or fondly known as Kampong Ayer.

Alternatively, those who wish to enjoy the scenery along Brunei River may opt to dine at the Damuan Recreational Park in Jalan Tutong where specialties include steam boats and satay.

KIULAP

Kiulap is situated at the outskirts of Bandar Seri Begawan, blooming into one of the major commercial areas in the Brunei-Muara district. Popular spot for shopping and conveniently a place where it offers more than 90 dining restaurant outlets ranging from Brunei's traditional food, Thai, Mediterranean and Arabic, Malay, Indonesian, Indian, European, Japanese and a number of fast food eateries.

GADONG

Just a few minutes away from Kiulap, Gadong is another hot spot for dining restaurants where cafes are mushrooming serving for both the young and adults. Most cafes in this area offer a free wireless access, one of the business strategies to attracts customers. With a high speed internet access, patrons are not only given a place to surf but they are able to dine and hang out with their friends, families and colleagues in a relax and soothing environment.

Gadong is also a place where international franchised restaurants are mostly set up. From Dome, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, Sanur Restaurant, Swensens Restaurant, Mc Donalds, KFC, Sugar Bun, you are guaranteed not only excellent services but affordable yet tasty foods.

Young adults are often seen hanging out in popular cafes around areas of Gadong especially on Saturday nights.

Students especially those in college and university as well as young employees are likely hang out and relax in various cafes which offer these unlimited wireless access whether to log on the web for school assignments or internet gaming and chatting.

The restaurants or cafés normally operate from 10am to 10pm daily.

For a simple, easy and fast getaways, you do not have to wait any longer as there are hawker-style stalls set up in this area too. In Gadong, the parking lot of the Gadong Wet Market by 5pm everyday, are neatly transformed into hawker-style food stalls. The food stalls offer a variety of foodstuffs including fried noodles, rice, burgers, fritters, barbequed chicken as well as Satay. You do not have to worry of the price as the food comes as cheap as a \$1 per packet of fried noodles.

FINE DINING

Asian delicacies which are almost alike with the local foods are commonly available in most Malay restaurants found in the city so do not be surprised if you can still get the best Thai Tom Yam soup or Indonesia's famed Tempe in most common local restaurants in the country.

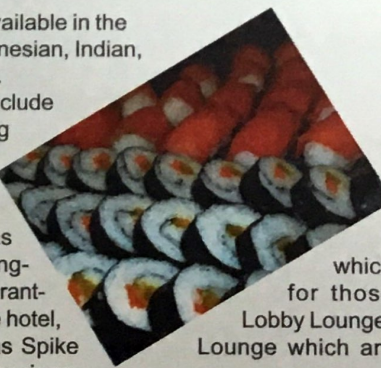
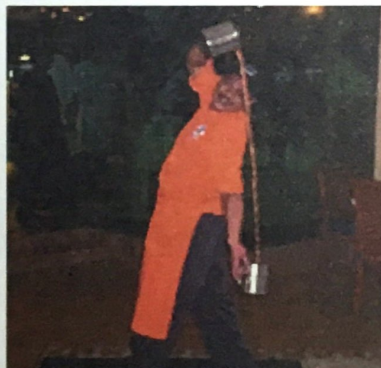
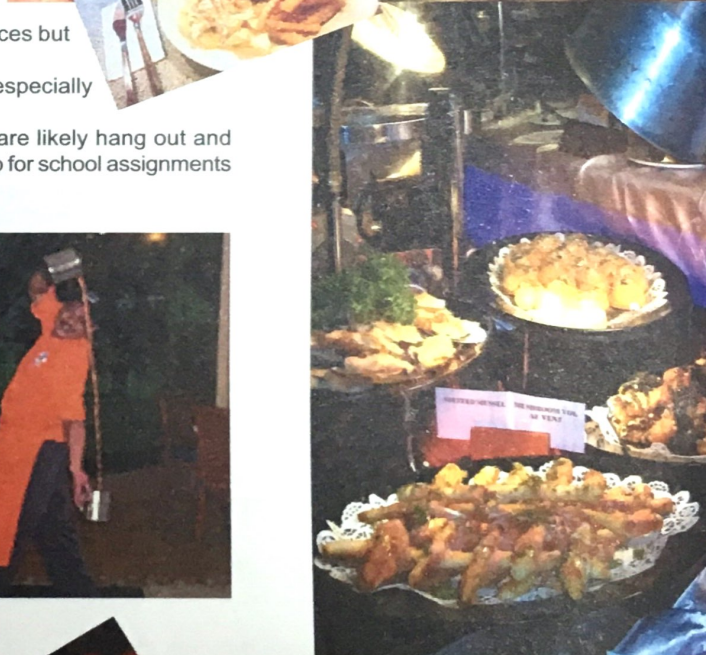
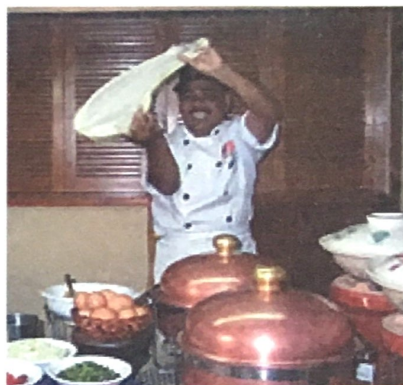
However specialty eateries that serve particular cuisines are still available in the Gadong or Kiulap commercial areas including Chinese, Lebanese, Indonesian, Indian, Thai, Japanese, Italian, Filipino, Mediterranean as well as Nonya foods.

Some of the popular Chinese fine dining restaurants in the country include the Emperor's Court and Szechuan Dynasty restaurant found in Gadong and Delima area.

For a touch of class, visitors can drop by to The Empire Hotel & Country Club which offers tourists the premier fine dining restaurant available in the country with over seven top-notch restaurants such as Spaghettini-which serves Italian and Mediterranean specialties, Li Gong-is a popular venue for families to enjoy Chinese Specialties, Pantai Restaurant-who love sea food while enjoying the beautiful beaches that surround the hotel, for afternoon tea and cakes and Bunker Café, Atrium Café as well as Spike popular venues for lunch meeting and even breaks in between golfing sessions.

Most major hotels offer a variety of fine dining restaurants including Brunei's International hotel- Sheraton Utama hotel which offers high quality nouvelle cuisine at Deals Restaurant located on the ground floor of the hotel.

Fast foods which are popular eateries for big families and young adults are abundant in almost every corner of the city.



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Snippets...

Brunei host showcase of ASEAN talents

BERAKAS, March 6 - Brunei Darussalam will be hosting the Sixth Asean Skills competition this September. Around 138 participants from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam will be participating in the competition.

The first technical committee meeting was officiated by Haji Mohd Daud, the Deputy Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Education at the International Convention Centre (ICC). He said, "The Asean Skills Competition is a showcase of young talents in our region in the areas of technical and vocational skills. These are the people who can give the competitive edge of their country's economic development."

Twelve categories will be competed during the Asean Skills Competition namely; automobile technology; bricklaying; CADD; cabinet making; commercial wiring; cookery; electronic; applications; IT; dressmaking, plumbing; restaurant service; and welding.

Brunei hosts Under-15 FOBISSEA Games

JERUDONG, March 8 – Brunei Darussalam hosted the Federation of British International Schools in South-East Asia (FOBISSEA) Games 2006 for Under-15. It was officially opened by His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik at the Empire Theatre of Empire Hotel & Country Club.

At the ceremony, His Royal Highness also presented trophy to the Captain of participating schools.

The Under-15 FOBISSEA Games 2006 was organised by the Jerudong International School (JIS) from March 8 to 12. The Games involved some 400 participants from as many as 16 schools from seven different countries in South-East Asia. The participants comprised of students from Year 9, 10 and 11 and competed in four games namely swimming, athletics, soccer and basketball.

FOBISSEA was established in 1988 and its overall aim is to promote educational excellence in British-style schools, and to provide opportunities for inter-school competitions and enrichment programmes. The FOBISSEA Games is held annually across the region.

New name for Brunei Fire Services Department

BERAKAS, March 9 – Brunei's Fire Services Department is now known as Fire and Rescue Department. The change of name was officiated by the Minister of Home Affairs, Pehin Dato Paduka Haji Awang Adanan.

According to the Minister, the change of name was made to align with the requirements of the Amendment of Fire Services Act (2000), where among others it clarified that the department responsibility are those more likely to be of rescuing tasks.

At present, Fire and Rescue Department has 1,460 personnel from various ranks including male and female, and civilians. The Department has 17 modern fire stations strategically located around the country in which its operations cover both land and water.

Brunei's State Dignitary Passed Away

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 10 – His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam attended the funeral ceremony of the late Pengiran Setia Jaya Cikgu Pengiran Haji Abd Momin bin Pengiran Othman, one of Brunei's state dignitary. The late PSJ Pengiran Haji Abd Momin was a member of Privy Council. He passed away at the aged of 83.

First National Triathlon

BERAKAS, February 16 – Brunei will hold First National Triathlon on August 13. The three-in-one sports event is organised by the Youth and Sports Department of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports. A total sum of \$24, 400 have been allocated for the prizes.

The event will include 500 metres of swimming; 42 kilometres of cycling and 10 kilometres of running; and will begin and end at the Water Sports Complex in Serasa. Six categories are opened for participations from citizen holding Brunei identity cards (yellow, red/purple and green).

JTB corporatised to TelBru

BERAKAS, March () - Jabatan Telekom Brunei (JTB) will be corporatised to Telekom Brunei Berhad (TelBru) on April 1, 2006.

The corporatisation of JTB is part of the government's efforts to implement the privatisation programme under the National Development Plan. The corporatisation of Jabatan Telekom Brunei will be enforced through three legislations namely; Authority for Info-Communication Technology Industry of Brunei Darussalam Order 2001; Telecommunication Successor Company Order 2001; and Telecommunication Order 2001.

Authority for Info Communication Technology (AiTi) will be responsible in the info-communication technology industry technology and promotion functions as soon as the corporatisation of JTB. With the corporatisation of JTB, public is assured that there will not disruption the provision and delivery of telecommunications and other customer-related services.

New power station generate more electricity

TUTONG, March 23 - Brunei Darussalam will have its first new "Combined cycle" power station located in Kampong Bukit Panggal. The new power station will manage to fulfill the usage of electricity in the country.

Present as guest-of-honour at the foundation laying ceremony was Minister of Energy at the Prime Minister's Office, Pehin Dato Paduka Haji Awang Yahya.

In Phase 1, the power station would generate a net output power of 116MW with a 47 per cent of overall plant efficiency, whereas the new combined cycle power station is expected to be 500MW. The estimated value of the project is B\$161 million and scheduled to be ready in July 2007. The project is undertaken to ensure that a solid generation capacity is guaranteed and stable for coming years.

Commonwealth Games 2006

MELBOURNE, March 26 – Brunei took part in the 18th Commonwealth Games in Melbourne, Australia from March 15 until 26. Present to witness the grand opening ceremony of the games was Pehin Major General (Rtd) Dato Haji Awang Mohammad, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports.

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

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

Traditional delicacies for you to taste

Brunei Darussalam offers varieties of delicacies; ranging from local food (makanan Brunei) to Japanese and western types. Makanan Brunei is a must to taste if you visit the Sultanate. Ranging from dry types such as Kuih Cincin and Kuripit, the oily type likes Penyaram and juicy likes Tapai; it would sting your taste buds with different nice taste that you could not forget and each usually cost \$1. Some of the foods have become a trademark for some districts in the country, like Wajid Temburong which is from Temburong District and Pulut Panggang from Tutong District. Common place to look for makanan Brunei is the Kianggeh Market in the capital but some of the foods particularly the dry types are also sold in various supermarkets.



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