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BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

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Brunei Darussalam and Ghana should strive to establish strong partnership: HM Sultan

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, Her Majesty Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajjah Saleha and Her Royal Highness Pengiran Isteri Hajjah Mariam accorded a warm welcome for the President of Ghana, Lt. Jerry Rawlings and his wife, First Lady Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings at the Istana Nurul Iman on 21 March.

The President of the Republic of Ghana and First Lady Nana Konadu Agyeman were greeted at the Brunei

International airport by His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Her Royal Highness Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajjah Zariah. The Minister of Industry and Primary Resources, Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Setia Pahlawan Dato Seri Setia Hj Awang Abdul Rahman was also in there as Minister-in-attendance.

The Ghanaian first couple was on a three-day state visit. It was accompanied by a 21-member presidential delegation including

Foreign Minister James Victor Gbeho, Mines and Energy Minister Dr.J.F. Abu and Trade and Energy Minister Dan Abodakpi.

The audience preceded a guard of honour in front of the palace mounted by men of the security forces. The Ghanaian leader took the salute as the national anthems of the two countries were played, and inspected the honour guard shortly afterwards.

This was followed by His Excellency Rawlings being introduced to cabinet

** Continued on centre page*



His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam calling for close partnership between Brunei and Ghanaian public and private sectors, during a banquet at Istana Nurul Iman in honour of visiting Ghanaian President recently.

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YOUR TURN

The next issue of the Brunei Darussalam newsletter will appear on 30 April 2000. If there are events relating to our country you would like featured in this newsletter please call us on Tel: 02-383941 or better still, send us a report with a picture, if possible. All editorial rights reserved.

A national agenda for youths needed – HM Sultan

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has underscored the need to make a concerted effort towards establishing a national agenda for youths for the purpose of educating and giving them direction in the new millennium. In this way they would be highly mannered, ambitious and motivated, possessing the noble spirit towards upholding the national heritage.

His Majesty voiced this in a titah (royal address) at the prize presentation ceremony of the first Koran Reading Competition for South-East Asian Youths held at the Indoor Stadium of the Hassanal Bolkiah Sports Complex in Berakas, on 25 March.

The monarch said that challenges of the new millennium need not only youths with knowledge, but also vision, who are not tied up or shaped by local entity but are more opened and exposed to a broader global entity, all of which require character building among youths.

Although we are confident with our youths' ability to manage themselves, the existence of sophisticated information technology frequently expose youths to undesirable and unbeneficial elements, His Majesty pointed out.

"In this respect, our responsibility is to provide a safety net to monitor how far the presence of information technology affects the healthy

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His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam presenting prizes at the first Qur'an (Koran) Reading Competition for ASEAN Youths hosted by Brunei Darussalam late last month.



development of our youths, particularly in aspects of thinking, culture and more importantly, religion,” said the monarch.

His Majesty referred to a verse of the Koran, in which Allah the Almighty commanded that young men called ‘*Ashabul Kahfi*’, are those who are faithful to Allah the Almighty and He has given them God’s guidance.

“This is the obligatory objective aimed for by youths who read the Koran, not only worldly greatness but also that of the hereafter,” stressed His Majesty.

His Majesty further further underscored the need for youths who read the Koran to involve themselves in major activities, such as in the regional and international fora.

“We need youths to break from old tradition of merely using other people’s idea to new constructive ideas of their own, which are respected and appreciated internationally,” said His Majesty.

The time has come, stressed His Majesty, for youths in the region, especially those who read the Koran, to become leaders and exemplary figures, as advocated by the Koran which says; “*You (the followers of Prophet Muhammad), are the best ummahs born for the benefit of all mankind by virtue of your advocating good deeds and avoiding evil doings.*”

His Majesty further said that youths who read the Koran are not self-interest but put the wellbeing of followers of Prophet Muhammad, (peace be upon him) as priority in accordance with the teaching of Islam on brotherhood. Brotherhood in Islam is to plan and think of how to create a happy life without disturbing others to choose their own way.

“This is the noble teaching of the Koran, which should be strongly upheld by youths, and introduce the teaching to other people so that it would be understood,” said His Majesty.

The teachings of the Koran, among other things, therefore is the bringing about of tranquility, contrary to some quarters’ belief of it

as causing confusion and suffering,” His Majesty further said.

Meanwhile, in his inaugural speech, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah hoped that youths in the South east Asia region would have more ways to interact with each other to enable them contribute towards further strengthening friendship, cooperation and understanding.

“Differences in religion, language, culture and ancestry or even the forms of government are not obstacles to regional cooperation, and this has been proven by the well-maintained relations among countries in Southeast Asia,” said His Royal Highness.

His Royal Highness also called on youth in the country to always upgrade development activities for the benefit of their countries and people.

“The objective of creating a peaceful and prosperous country, and a harmonious Southeast Asia region should be a priority for youths,” said His Royal Highness.

The competition, the first of its kind being conducted, was aimed at upgrading the reading quality of the holy Koran among youths, as well as instilling and cultivating friendship among youths in the region.

Seven male readers representing Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Brunei Darussalam took part in the competition. Winner of the competition was from Thailand. Placed second and third were representatives from Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam respectively. The competition will in future be broadened to female readers’ participation.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah inaugurates the first ASEAN Youths Koran Reading Competition with a call for more interactions between the youths of the region. Below: A participant recites the holy book during the competition, which will be extended to include female readers’ participation in the future.



His Majesty grants audience to Chief Executive of Pakistan



The Brunei monarch and Pakistan's Chief Executive, His Excellency General Pervez Musharraf discussed bilateral matters as well as those pertaining to regional and international affairs when they met at Istana Nurul Iman.

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, Her Majesty Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajjah Saleha and Her Royal Highness Pengiran Isteri Hajjah Mariam granted an audience to the visiting Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, His Excellency General Pervez Musharraf and his wife, Begum Sheba Musharraf at Cheradi Lela Kencana of Istana Nurul Iman, on 1 April.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Her Royal Highness Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajjah Zariah, Her Royal Highness Princess Hajjah Masna, Her Royal Highness Princess Hajjah Nor'ain, Her Royal Highness Princess Hajjah Amal Umi Kalthum Al-Islam and other members of the royal family were also present

His Majesty and His Excellency General Pervez Musharraf later held a discussion on bilateral matters and regional and international affairs.

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, Her Majesty The Raja Isteri and Her Royal Highness The Pengiran Isteri also consented to entertain His Excellency and his wife at a



Above: His Majesty in conversation with His Excellency General Pervez Musharraf during a dinner at Istana Nurul Iman. Also present were Her Majesty The Raja Isteri, Her Royal Highness The Pengiran Isteri and Begum Sheba Musharraf. Picture right shows Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, Prince Mohamed Bolkiah and Prince 'Abdul Malik at an audience granted by His Majesty to the Pakistan's Chief Executive.



dinner, also at held at Istana Nurul Iman.

At a press conference on his departure at the end of the visit, His Excellency General Pervez Musharraf invited Brunei Darussalam's businessmen to invest in the republic's economic sector such as through the purchase of assets.

Pakistan is now privatizing its assets in order to enable it speed up its economic growth and handle its burden in taxes and deficit in expenditures and trade.

Pakistan is also giving due attention to major fields for economic recovery, namely agriculture, small and medium enterprises,

manpower and information technology, and textile industry.

While in the country, the Chief Executive of Pakistan also met the Education Minister and Pakistani nationals in Brunei Darussalam, many of whom are either engaged in businesses or employed by the Brunei government.

Diplomatic relations between Brunei Darussalam and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan was established in September 1984. At present, there are more than 500 nationals of the republic in the Sultanate.

Muslims need to learn from lessons of Hijrah

Muslims in the country need to truly understand the lessons of the history of 'Hijrah' (the flight of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, from Mecca to Medina in A.D. 622).

In a recent titah (royal address), His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam said: the history of Hijrah displayed bravery, loyalty, tolerance and completely having faith in Allah the Almighty. This was followed by miraculous assistance from Allah the Almighty, until the enemies were confused and lost self-esteem.

This is the greatness of the Almighty, and if this phenomenon can occur 1400 years ago, why can't it happen nowadays - because help came from Allah. Allah is ever-present and omnipotent.

The titah was telecast nationwide over radio and television on 5 April - the eve of the Muslim New Year of Hijrah 1421.

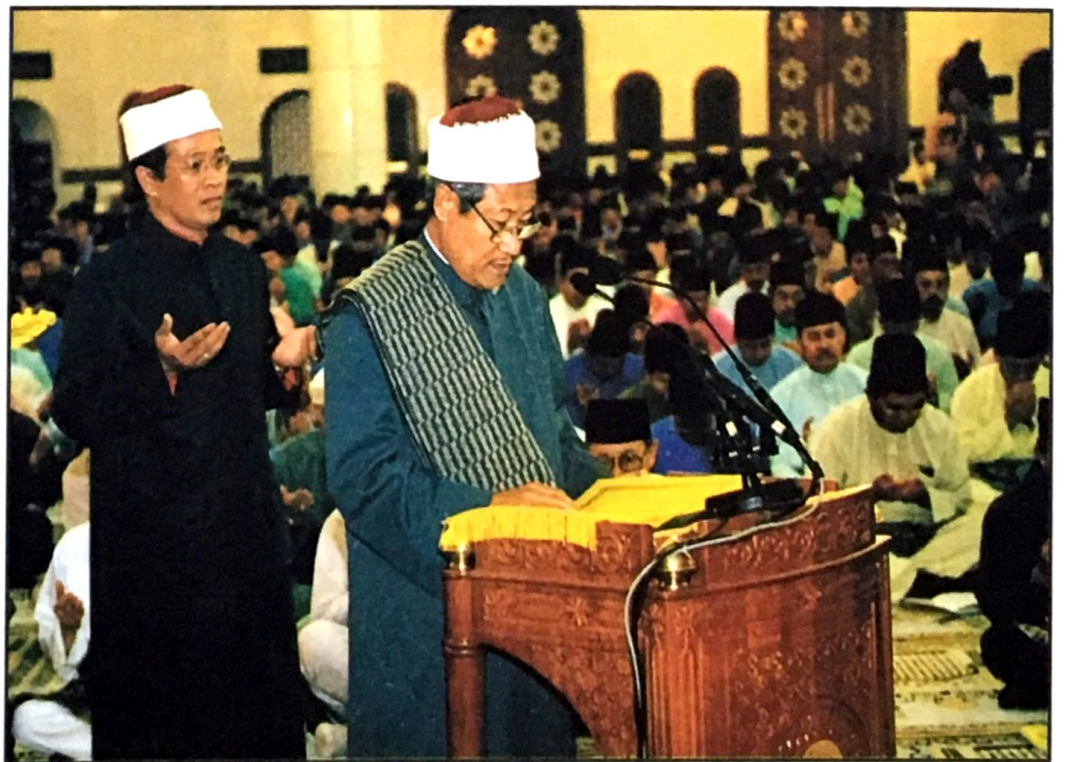
His Majesty advised Muslims to seek assistance, especially in the face of the economic crisis, to Allah the Almighty to seek His blessings by praying.

"Similarly with regards to other matters, we should commit and surrender ourselves at all times to Allah the Almighty, and should not turn our backs on Him. In my opinion, this is the way to success and is the safest way," said the ruler.

His Majesty earlier spoke at length on Hijrah, seen as the bridge towards success and life of piety. His Majesty said before Hijrah (also means transcending from evils to good doings), Muslims existed in restlessness and ever haunted by anxiety. With Hijrah Muslims felt contented and free.

The following day, His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam also consented to present the 'Hijrah Meritorious Award' to three religious figures, who had contributed to the development of Islam in Brunei Darussalam in a ceremony held at the Jame' 'Asr Hassanal Bolkiah mosque in

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam presenting meritorious award to one of three recipients who had contributed much to the development of Islam in Brunei Darussalam.



The State Mufti reads the Do'a (words of prayer) seeking blessing for the ceremony.

Kiulap, near the Brunei capital, on 6 April.

Awang Haji Abdul Hamid bin Perali, Pengiran Haji Yussof bin Pengiran Sabtu and Dato Paduka Awang Haji Abdul Wahab bin Mohammad each received \$10,000 cash, an honorary certificate, souvenirs

and free medical service in the first class ward of any government hospital in the country.

Present at the ceremony were His Royal Highness Crown Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen.



His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and Ghanaian President Lt. Rawlings, members of the royal family and those of accompanying Ghanaian delegation stand in homage of the nations' anthems of Brunei Darussalam and Republic of Ghana, which preceded a banquet at Istana Nurul Iman given by the Brunei monarch in honour of the Ghanaian Head of State and first lady, left.

His Majesty and the President of Ghana exchange gifts while other members of the royal family and Ghanaian delegation members look on, above and below opposite page.

* From page one
(Ghana president)

ministers, other dignitaries, diplomats and senior officials. His Majesty, Her Majesty and Her Royal Highness then granted audience to the visitors. His Majesty and Lt. Rawlings later proceeded to another audience hall for a bilateral meeting.

Also present at the audience were His Royal Highness Crown Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkihah, Her Royal Highness Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Zariah and His Royal Highness Prince Haji Sufri Bolkihah and other members of the royal family.

On his first day visit in the country, His Excellency Lt. Rawlings and delegation visited the Royal Regalia Building in Bandar Seri Begawan and the Brunei Museum, accompanied by his 21-member entourage. At both venues the Ghanaian leader was greeted by the Minister of Culture Youth And Sports, Pehin Dato Hj Awang Hussein. The Ghanaian leader had the opportunity to see items, such as the carriage used by His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam during the procession marking the Silver Jubilee of his ascension to the throne, the Coronation, and historic pictures dating back several decades.

The Ghanaian afterwards proceeded to the Museum at Kota Batu. The museum is famous for its exhibition of artifacts from a Chinese shipwreck, found off Brunei's coast. They also visited the Islamic heritage artifact section to learn more about Islam's history and teachings.

The Ghanaian president also took an interest in the Brunei soccer team, the 'Wasps', taking a closer look at the museum display of the victory photos and the Malaysia Cup trophy. One of the Wasps star players, Patron Rafeal Akakpo is half-Ghanaian and Togolese. The visit ended with the Ghanaian president signing the guest book. Taking His Excellency Lt. Rawlings and his delegation on the tour of both buildings was the Director of Museums.

The visiting of President of Ghana and First Lady Nana Konadu Agyemman Rawlings also visited Brunei's famous, the Kampong Ayer (Water Village).

Left: The Ghanaian President accompanied by His Majesty inspects a guard of honour in front of Istana Nurul Iman as gesture of his official welcome to Brunei Darussalam for a 3-day state visit.



Left: The Ghanaian first couple enjoying a session of local Bruneian kueh (traditional cakes and delicacies) making demonstration during visits to various communities.

The couple took a cruise on the luxury boat, Tanjong Bekarang, and stopped at the house of the head of Mukim Tamoi cum the Ketua Kampong of Tamoi Ujong (villages).

They were greeted with the beat of the traditional Hadrah and lilting tunes of string music. The couple also viewed a cultural show which included the making of traditional kueh or delicacies, arts and handicraft, martial arts and "Berdondang" and "Bermukun" (Dances and songs).

The couple wound up their three-day state tour on March 23, with a tour of the newly-introduced housing scheme called Expo 99 in Lambak Kanan, Kuala Balai and future development projects in Kg. Madang.

There the President and the First Lady viewed some traditional handicrafts made from wood and viewed a demonstration on local "Kueh" or delicacies and "Bunga manik" or flowers making from ornaments.

They also viewed an exhibition on the various Housing Development projects in the country namely at Pandan in the Belait district, Kg Rataie in the Temburong, Bukit Beruang in Tutong, Lambak Kanan, Rimba, Mentiri and Sersa in the Brunei Muara District.

The government of His Majesty plans to build some 15,767 houses that will accommodate up to 103,740 people including in the areas mentioned above as well as in Kg Sungai Liang, Lorong Tengah, Mengkabau and Kg Meragang and Tanah Jambu, all of which are spread over all the four districts of the country.

His Majesty, Her Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajjah Saleha and Her Royal Highness Pengiran Isteri Hajjah Mariam consented to host a banquet in honour of the visiting Ghanaian first couple.

It took place at the Istana Nurul Iman. Also present were Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, Prince Mohamed Bolkihah, Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Zariah, Prince Haji Sufri Bolkihah, Prince 'Abdul Malik, Princess Hajjah Rashidah Sa'adatull Bolkihah, Princess Hajjah Mute-Wakillah Hayatul Bolkihah, Princess Hajjah Majeedah Nuurul Bolqiah, Princess Hajjah Hafizah Sururul Bolqiah, Princess 'Azemah Ni'matul Bulkiah, Princess Fadzilah

Lubabul Bulqiah, Princess Hajjah Masna, Princess Hajjah Nor'ain and Princess Hajjah Amal Umi Kalthum Al-Islam.

The ceremony began with the reading of the do'a (words of prayer) by the State Mufti, Yang Dimuliakan Lagi Dihormati Pehin Datu Seri Maharaja Dato Paduka Seri Setia Ustaz Haji Awang Abdul Aziz bin Juned.

Earlier His Majesty, Her Majesty and Her Royal Highness granted an audience to the President and the First Lady, followed by an exchange of gifts, in which His Majesty presented a traditional intricately designed sarong (woven cloth) of gold threads called "Jong Sarat" and handicrafts to President Lt. Jerry Rawlings.

Prior to the banquet, His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkihah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in his titah said that Brunei Darussalam and the Republic of Ghana should strive to establish strong partnership between their public and private sectors as they face a similar challenge in developing their economy and diversifying its base.

His Majesty added, as developing nations, we face the challenge of economic modernisation and development.

"Your emphasis on economic diversification mirrors our own, he said.

In view of this, His Majesty said he was pleased that both countries were exploring the possibility of setting up a body to oversee bilateral cooperation between them.

His Majesty also said the visit by President Rawlings was testimony to the good links between the two countries and offered an opportunity to further strengthen the ties of friendship and cooperation between the two nations.

His Majesty also praised the leadership of President Rawlings, the country's first civilian president since its independence, adding that under his leadership Ghana has become a most peaceful and stable country in Africa with an annual growth rate of about five percent.

His Majesty said President Rawlings' championing of the efforts of developing countries to achieve lasting progress for its people had won

* Continued on page 8

him much acclaim and respect in Africa.

In his speech, His Majesty also touched on the common ideals shared by the two countries, both of which are members of the Commonwealth of Nations.

In addition His Majesty also said that both countries were also committed to promoting free trade and economic cooperation in their respective regions- Brunei through the Asean Free Trade Area (AFTA) and Ghana through the creation of a free-trade area that the country has proposed to its West African neighbours.

"We both desire working and cooperating closely with our neighbours to safeguard peace and prosperity in our respective regions", said His Majesty.

In his reply, Lt. Rawlings said there were many opportunities available for increased cooperation between the

public and private sectors of the two countries.

"Little has been said about the development of the African continent which has achieved successes in the areas of education, health, agriculture and infrastructure development."

But in spite of this, President Rawlings said that the continent has experienced economic decline of about one per cent per annum for the past decade that has resulted in the decline in the value of national currencies by 65 per cent.

President Rawlings said it was fashionable for various organisations to offer ways to bring about changes to the nations, but that is not what is needed. He also invited Bruneians to do business in Ghana.

President Lt Jerry Rawlings also made a visit to the Champion Seven-oil platform which is Brunei Shell Petroleum's largest offshore complex. At the complex, His Excellency Lt. Rawlings

was given a briefing on BSP's business overview by the company's Corporate Affairs Director, Dato Paduka Haji Mat Suny bin Hj Mohd Hussein.

The President and his entourage was also taken on a tour of the facility's control room and part of the complex, followed by a tour of the Brunei Liquefied Natural Gas plant in Lumut.

President Rawlings was first briefed on the operations of the plant by BLNG's Executive Director, Dato Paduka Hj Hamdillah bin Hj Abdul Wahab. After the briefing, His Excellency President Rawlings was also taken on a tour of the plant.

The President of Ghana, First Lady Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings and delegation left the country on March 23. His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Her Royal Highness Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Zariah were at the airport to bid them farewell.

MIPR to explore the biotechnology industry

The Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources (MIPR) plans to explore the biotechnology industry based on the biodiversity of the tropical rainforest flora. This was revealed by Permanent Secretary at Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, Dato Paduka Haji Danial bin Hj Hanafiah at the official opening ceremony of the Brunei National Herbarium (BRUN) of the Brunei Forestry Centre at Sungai Liang on March 21. The celebration was also held in conjunction with the World Forestry Day 2000 with the theme this year, Forest; Opportunities for Eco-Tourism.

Dato Paduka Haji Danial stated, 'The collection of 20,000 specimens of the tropical rainforest flora that is stored in BRUN has its own appeal that will place Brunei as an excellent tropical rainforest centre especially in the conservation of forest biodiversity in this region and believed that BRUN will help the development of the biotechnology industry.

"Despite the significant forest issues arising from modernisation, Brunei has been able to sustain the forest as a catalyst for balance and harmony", he added.

"The 21st century poses more challenges and more environmental issues will be associated with the explosion of Information Technology and globalisation process and stressed that the World Forestry Day celebration should highlight the significance of the forests in social, economic and environmental matters," he said.

"It should not only be celebrated to create public awareness but also help generate economic opportunities in line with the nation's aspirations to diversify the economy through contributions from the forestry sector."

"Tourism is one of the strategies to

mobilise the country's economic development with eco-tourism as one of its attractions in this regard, our ministry is responsible for tourism development and promotion," he continued.

"The tropical rainforest has unique natural appeal to tourists." He added, "Brunei will be under the world limelight when it hosts conferences prior to APEC Summit in November this year. The year 2001 has also been declared Visit Brunei Year and we will become a major platform for sellers and buyers of ASEAN tourism packages".

He said, "The private sector should have systematic planning and seize the

** Continued on page 10*



The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, Dato Paduka Haji Danial at the official opening of the Brunei National Herbarium (BRUN).



Their Excellencies the Ambassador of Greece, Mr. Constantin Drakakis, above, Ambassador of Norway, Mr. Fred Herald Nomme (above right) and High Commissioner of Sri Lanka, Mdm Chitranganee Wagiswara (right) presenting their credentials to His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at Istana Nurul Iman on their appointments to Brunei Darussalam.

New diplomats to the Sultanate

Three more foreign diplomats to Brunei Darussalam presented their credentials to His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, during a ceremony at Istana Nurul Iman, on 27 March.

The first to present his credential was the new Ambassador of Greece, His Excellency Mr Constantin Drakakis. His Excellency, based in Jakarta, is a plenipotentiary minister in Greece and has been with the foreign services since 1977.

Also presenting his credential to His Majesty was the Ambassador of Norway, His Excellency Mr Fred Herald Nomme. His Excellency, 54, is based in Kuala Lumpur.

This was followed by the presentation of credential by the non-resident High Commissioner of the Socialist Democratic Republic of Sri Lanka, Her Excellency Madam Chitranganee Wagiswara.

Her Excellency, aged 45, is a graduate of Diplomatic Programme Study from the Institute of International Study in Geneva, Switzerland. Her Excellency was previously the First Secretary /Councillor of the Sri Lankan High Commission in Ottawa, Canada.

His Majesty later granted a separate audience to each of the new diplomats.

On the same day, the new diplomats made courtesy calls separately on His Royal Highness Prince Haji Mohamed Bolkiah, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the Balai Penghadapan, Bukit Kayangan.



Brunei – Lesotho establish diplomatic relations

The Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and the Government of Lesotho have agreed to establish diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level with effect from 30 March 2000.

The signing ceremony of a joint communique for the diplomatic relations was held at the Brunei Darussalam's Embassy in Beijing in the People's Republic of China.

Signing on behalf of His Majesty's Government was His Excellency Pehin Colonel (R) Dato Haji Awang Mahdini bin Dato Paduka Haji Basir, Brunei Darussalam's ambassador to the People's Republic of China, while His Excellency Mr Lefa Joseph Mokotjo, the ambassador to Lesotho to the People's Republic of China signed on behalf of his country.

Brunei Darussalam makes voice heard at NAM Meeting

Brunei Darussalam has made its voice heard at the 13th Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), held in the South American Republic of Colombia on 8 – 9 April.

The Sultanate was represented by Her Royal Highness Princess Hajjah Masna, Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Addressing the gathering in the Colombian city of Cartagena de Indias of representatives from more than 100 NAM member countries, Her Royal Highness, among other things, outlined the approaches adopted by South-East Asia in facing the challenges of globalisation.

In a nutshell, these are accepting globalisation as an inevitable phenomenon; working closely with regional neighbours and partners from the international community, especially from the developed world; and upholding the vital role of governments as being the ultimate safeguard of the people's interest.

"For this reason, therefore, we believe that governments in the developing world received one very important gift from the last century. This was the opportunity afforded to movements such as ours to work closely together in friendship and cooperation".

Her Royal Highness noted that a new world order has indeed emerged with the ending of the cold war, and this has brought with it an unprecedented explosion of information and knowledge, the impact



Her Royal Highness Princess Hajjah Masna, the Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, attending the 13th Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) held at the Cartagena Conference Centre in Colombia.

of which has affected every society worldwide.

According to Her Royal Highness, there are also economic and social problems, which have affected many aspects of the people's security and international market forces at work, which continuously shape and reshape economies and government policies.

"This is not the new era we expected to be entering ten years ago. Yet we cannot reject it", Her Royal Highness said, while adding that the new order presents more advantages than disadvantages.

Her Royal Highness stressed that what is important is for the new exciting prospects the world offers to be within reach of the ordinary people, otherwise the gap between the North and South will be widened.

Her Royal Highness pointed out that in this respect the challenge for NAM is to ensure that it can help its people benefit from the new

opportunities on fair terms.

The meeting was held, among others, with the aim of looking into NAM's interests at the South Summit, due to be held in Havana, Cuba from 12 April to 14 April, and the Millennium Summit in New York in September 2000.

It also reviewed the state of world economy and politics, as well as the roles of NAM in world affairs.

The 13th NAM Ministerial Meeting was preceded by a Senior Officials Meeting on 7 April.

While in Colombia, Her Royal Highness Princess Hajjah Masna received courtesy calls by the heads of delegation of Bangladesh, Cambodia, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Bahrain, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Ghana during which discussions centred on bilateral issues between Brunei Darussalam and each of those countries.

Brunei Darussalam became a member of NAM on 28 August 1992.

** From page 8*

(Biotechnology industry)

opportunities available from APEC, Visit Brunei Year and ASEAN Tourism Forum."

"The Forestry Department of MIPR as a facilitator in developing tourism particularly eco-tourism has implemented programmes to ensure eco-tourism facilities will cater to the visitors' needs and make Brunei a unique destination and in accordance with this move, some recreation parks in the country will be upgraded in terms of facilities and more provisions of recreational amenities", he added.

He also said that, "This is not only for tourism activities but also to create

business and employment opportunities for the private sector."

He disclosed that soon MIPR would offer selected tour agencies the chance to manage the commercial complex at Sungai Baki and Sungai Apan at the Ulu Temburong National Park.

Dato Paduka Hj Danial also planted Royal Palm during the ceremony, beside toured the double-storey building that was completed in 1998, where he visited the eco-tourism and herbarium exhibition and launched the CD-ROM "Rattan of Brunei Darussalam". This CD-ROM on rattan is the first of its kind produced in this region.

"It was built under the Sixth

National Development Plan (NDP) 1996-2000 and cost about \$1.7 million after its completion in 1998. We had several delays due to several technical matters and the project took off towards the end of the Sixth National Development Plan."

"This building will carry out all the herbarium activities starting from the preparation of specimens to arranging them inside the compactory system after cataloguing and storing database."

BRUN has become an important reference centre in the country mainly visited by researchers from around the world particularly those who are attached with the UBD. It also has a wide selection of slide photographs of plant species.

Efforts still needed to ensure sustainable growth

Closer cooperation and stronger commitment among ASEAN member countries is still needed for continued success in economic recovery.

These remarks were made by this year's incoming Chairman of the Fourth ASEAN Finance Minister's Meeting, (AFMM) held in the Brunei capital, Bandar Seri Begawan on 25-26 March. The meeting commenced with the handing over of the chairmanship from Vietnam to Brunei Darussalam. On behalf of the government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, the incoming Chairman of the Fourth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, Yang Berhormat Pehin Dato Haji Awang Abdul Aziz welcomed finance ministers of ASEAN member countries, Asean Secretary General and fellow delegates. He thanked the outgoing A.F.M.M Chairman, His Excellency Mr. Hung Sinh Nguyen, Minister of Finance of Vietnam for the outstanding services rendered to the ASEAN Finance Ministers body during the course of his chairmanship.

The Fourth AFMM focused mainly on the financial situation in

the region and reviewed the of the ASEAN nations' in coping with fiscal management efforts on the agenda of the meeting were the development of capital markets, promotion of regional trade and currency, liberalisation of financial sector in the member nations and working on a common standard for insurance and customs sector among the member's nations.

During the two-day meeting the Asean Finance Ministers spelt out their strategy to sustain the grouping's economic recovery.

The action includes shifting of the improvement in domestic demand to self-sustaining growth, stimulating private investment and enhancing regional resilience to external shock.

The Chairman of the Fourth Asean Finance Ministers Meeting, stated that notwithstanding the improved performance in the region, efforts were still needed to ensure sustainable growth.

Further support of economic recovery, progress made in various areas of financial cooperation including the development of capital markets in Asean and approaches to strengthen East Asian financial co-operation with China, Japan, and the

Republic of Korea were also discussed at the meeting.

"We have increased our efforts to revitalise domestic demand through retraining programmes for the unemployed, the enhancement of social safety net and acceleration of bank and corporate restructuring," said AFMM Chairman Pehin Dato Haji Abdul Aziz.

He added, while the number of successful debt restructuring exercises has increased and non-performing loans continue their downward trend, the current level of progress can be further improved. Efforts to sustain the economic recovery of ASEAN are being made in the various regional financial co-operation activities. The Chairman expressed confidence that the region is poised for sustainable recovery given the economic fundamentals and ASEAN's commitment to pursue the necessary structural reforms.

Aside from ASEAN's Finance Ministers, the fourth AFMM was also attended by representatives of international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Development Bank (ADB).

Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Wijaya Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Abdul Aziz during a joint ministerial media conference held at International Convention Centre.





Finance Ministers of ASEAN's member nations and the ASEAN Secretary-General in a group photo with His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam when the ruler granted them an audience at Istana Nurul Iman.

ASEAN Finance Ministers in audience

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has consented to grant an audience to ASEAN Finance Ministers and ASEAN Secretary General attending the Fourth ASEAN Finance Ministerial Meeting (AFMM) in Bandar Seri Begawan. The audience took place at Istana Nurul Iman on 25 March.

During the audience, His Majesty expressed his appreciation on the progress of ASEAN in the recovery from the economic crisis, and satisfaction on the progress in the implementation of various proposals made in the ASEAN Informal Summit, held in Manila in November 1991.

The Brunei ruler was convinced that the 4th AFMM in Brunei Darussalam would discuss various mandates, which could maintain the economic recovery.

Members of the delegation included the Chairman of the Fourth AFMM, Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Wijaya Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Abdul Aziz, Senior Minister at the Ministry of Economy and Finance of Cambodia, His Excellency Keat Chhon, Indonesian Finance Minister, His Excellency Bambang Sudibyo, Finance Vice-Minister of Laos, His Excellency Liane Thykeo and Malaysian Deputy Minister of Finance, His Excellency Dato Dr Shafie bin Mohd. Salleh.

Also in the delegation were the Deputy Minister of Finance and

Production of Myanmar, His Excellency Brigadier General Than Tun; Financial Secretary of the Republic of the Philippines, His Excellency Jose Trinidad Pardo; Singapore's Finance Minister, His Excellency Richard Hu Tsu; Finance Minister of Thailand, His Excellency Tarrin Nimmanahaeminda; Finance Minister of Vietnam, His Excellency Nguyen Sinh Hung and the Secretary General of ASEAN, His Excellency Rodolfo Certeza Severino Jr.

His Majesty's Special Adviser at the Prime Minister's Office who is also the Home Affairs' Minister, Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Setia Laila Bakti Diraja Dato Laila Utama Haji Awang Isa was also present at the audience.

Brunei in Brief

Capital : Bandar Seri Begawan

Land size : 5765 sq. km.

Population : 314,400 (1997)

Official Language : Malay

Official Religion : Islam

March rainfall : 149.6 mm

**THE TRAFFICKING IN AND THE ILLEGAL IMPORTATION OF
CONTROLLED DRUGS ARE VERY SERIOUS OFFENCES IN
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM AND THE PENALTY
FOR SUCH OFFENCES IS DEATH.**