



بروني دارالسلام

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

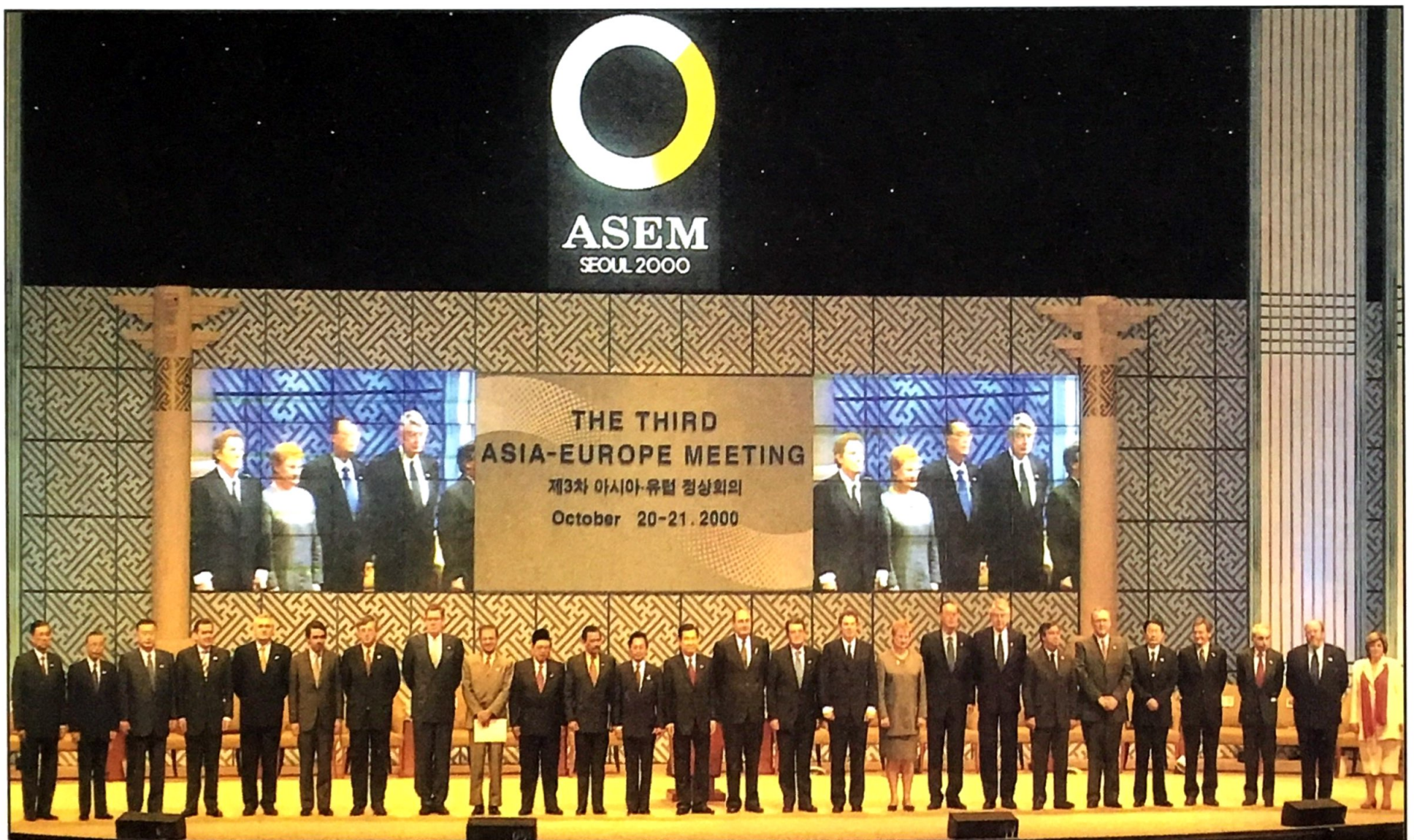
newsletter

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Towards full participation in the new global economy

Help developing countries overcome impact of globalisation and develop vital skills



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, 11th from left and leaders of ASEM in a group photo.

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has stressed the need to help the developing countries with the personal impact of globalisation and the importance to develop vital skills, so that the people

could fully participate in the new global economy.

His Majesty stressed the need in a titah (royal address) at the morning session of the Third Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit held at the auditorium of the Convention and Exhibition Centre in Seoul on 20 October.

The monarch who was the fourth speaker after the Republic of Korea and the Republic of France as the Co-Chairman, and Thailand as the coordinating country for Asian region, praised the European Union (EU) for its com-

**Continued on centrepage*

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Editorial Staff

Chief Editor
Mahari Haji Ismail

Editors
Aisah Haji Piee
Hajjah Zaianit Haji Noorkhan
Ak Jefferi Pg Duraman
Musa Mohidin
Adeline Goh

Layout/Design
Editorial Staff

Photographs
**Photography Unit of
The Department of Information**

YOUR TURN

The next issue of the Brunei Darussalam newsletter will appear on 15 November 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.

Unhealthy cultures must be stopped: HM The Sultan



His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam presents the 'Takmir Masjid' award to the imam of Mohammad Jamalul Alam mosque which won the category for main mosques. The presentation of award to mosques was the highlight of the celebration. There were altogether four categories and mosques were adjudged on such merits as their activities, maintenance etc.

Any unhealthy culture or influence regardless of its origin is a scourge that must be stopped, His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has said.

He urged the people, especially the relevant parties to realise this while pointing that if it were an epidemic of disease, it is feared and the people are wary, therefore, an unhealthy culture that can poison the souls and country should be similarly feared and scorned.

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was speaking at a gathering at the international Convention Centre near the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan, on 25 October to commemorate Israk and

Mikraj or the journey of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to heaven in the twelfth year of the Prophet's mission.

This is where the beauty of Islam lies, said the ruler, for while it places much emphasis on the safety of one's life, it also preserves the morality without which all the imperatives of life can be jeopardised including life itself, properties and even the security of the people and country.

His Majesty had earlier said it was apparent that globalisation has made the people adrift, some to the point of losing their direction especially the youths.

"Youths often fall victim to the influences of globalisation without realizing that once they fail, it is the

** Continued on page 3*



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, together with Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Prince Haji Sufri Bolkiah, Prince 'Abdul Malik and Prince 'Abdul Mateen sit in homage of the do'a read by the State Mufti.

* From page 2
(Israk Mikraj celebration)

country and people that bear the consequences", the ruler lamented.

His Majesty stressed that such unhealthy trends were causing much anxiety as the country needs a healthy and strong people.

He called on the people not to set a precedence in accepting any unhealthy culture because "if the youths are unable to resist negative influences, they cannot become strong".

His Majesty highlighted the importance for Muslims to understand

the teaching of Israk and Mikraj which call on them to be pious as preparations for life hereinafter.

"People who are fortunate are those who realise that apart from this life there is another hereinafter and accordingly prepare for it in advance."

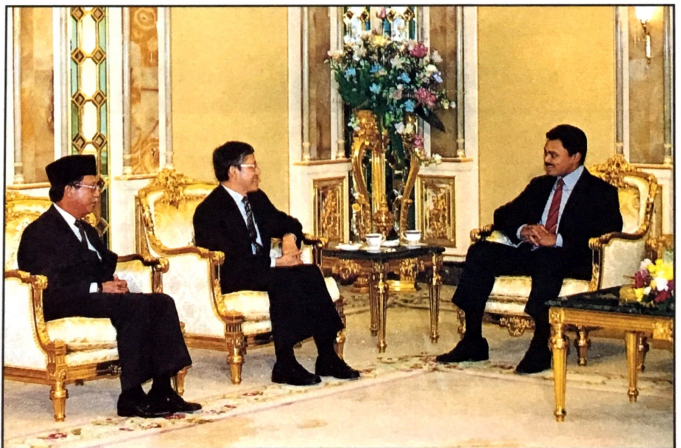
His Royal Highness Crown Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Deputy Sultan, received in audience the Singapore Minister of Information and the Arts, Mr Lee Yock Suan at the Istana Nurul Iman on October 7.

The Minister was in Bandar Seri Begawan to attend the Sukmairama RTB-STB 12, an exchange of television programme under the memorandum of understanding on broadcasting between the two countries.

During the audience, the Singapore Minister exchanged views on broadcasting cooperation between Brunei Darussalam and Republic of Singapore.

Mr Lee Yock Suan also paid a courtesy call the Minister of Communications, Pehin Orang Kaya Amar Pahlawan Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Zakaria bin Datu Mahawangsa Haji Sulaiman, at the Ministry of Communication. The Singapore Minister also visited several places of interest, including the Museum in Jalan Kota Batu and the famous Water Village in the capital.

Crown Prince meets Singapore Minister



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah in conversation with the Singapore Minister of Information and the Arts, Mr. Lee Yock Suan, during the audience at Istana Nurul Iman.



Her Majesty Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajjah Saleha, Her Royal Highness Pengiran Isteri Hajjah Mariam and other members of the royal family listening to a talk by a guest speaker from Malaysia at this year's Israk Mikraj celebration, above, while below shows Her Majesty and Her Royal Highness consenting to receive greetings from those present at the gathering.

Israk Mikraj celebration

Her Majesty Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajjah Saleha and Her Royal Highness Pengiran Isteri Hajjah Mariam led the female members of the royal family to attend the Israk Mikraj celebration held at Istana Nurul Iman on 25 October.

The ceremony was preceded by the recital of verses of the Quran by Dayang Hajjah Masni binti Haji Abdul Manaf, and was followed by a talk on 'The Strengthening of the Ummah's (Muslim race) Self Identity' presented by Dato Dr. Hajjah Masitah binti Haji Ibrahim from the International Islamic University, Malaysia.

Also attending the ceremony were Their Royal Highnesses Princess Hajjah Muta-Wakillah Hayatul Bolkiah, Princess Hajjah Majeedah Nuurul Bolqiah, Princess Hajjah Hafizah Sururul Bolqiah, Princess Fadzilah Lubabul Bulqiah, Princess Hajjah Masna, Princess Hajjah Nor'ain, Princess Hajjah Amal Umi Kalthum Al-Islam and Princess Hajjah Noor Ehsani.

Wives of members of the Privy Council, cheterias, cabinet ministers, foreign diplomats and representatives from women's associations affiliated to the Brunei Darussalam's Women Council were also present.

Royalty watch

Toyota Classics 2000

Her Royal Highness Pengiran Isteri Hajjah Mariam has consented to watch the Toyota Classics 2000 concert of the Nagoya Philharmonic Orchestra, held at the International Convention Centre on 15 October.

Her Royal Highness was received on arrival at the Centre by the Managing Director of NBT (Brunei) Private Limited, Mr. Ninan Chacko and the organising committee members.

Also present were Her Royal Highness Princess Hajjah Masna, Her Royal Highness Princess Hajjah Nor'ain, Her Royal Highness Princess Hajjah Amal Umi Kalthum Al-Islam and Her Royal Highness Princess Hajjah Noor Ehsani.

The Toyota Classics, which began its annual tour of the region ten years ago and the eighth in Brunei Darussalam, was aimed at providing world-class musical entertainment to the less fortunate as well as to rally together for them as a responsible community.

Prior to the performance, a donations from proceeds of the concert, amounting to B\$80,000, were presented to the Paraplegic and Physically Handicapped Association (PAPDA) and the Special Education Unit of the Education Ministry.

Her Royal Highness Pengiran Isteri Hajjah Mariam and members of the royal family being welcomed by the organising committee of the Toyota Classics 2000 concert of the Nagoya Philharmonic Orchestra prior to the performance, right, while picture below shows the Director of NBT (Brunei) Sdn Bhd, Mr. Ninan Chacko presenting a cheque to the Association of the Paraplegics and Handicapped (PAPDA), amounting to B\$40 thousand (US \$25 thousand).



Brunei-Indonesia urged to identify new areas of cooperation in broadcasting and information

Brunei Darussalam and the Republic of Indonesia would identify new areas of cooperation in broadcasting and information, said the Permanent Secretary at the Prime Minister's Office, Dato Paduka Awang Haji Hazair.

The ninth meeting of the Joint Technical Committee of the Memorandum of Understanding in Broadcasting and Information, was therefore expected not only to implement previous decisions, but also formulate new approach for future cooperation, he said.

Speaking at the meeting of committee between the His Majesty's Government and the Government of the

Republic of Indonesia at the Information Department on 2 October, the official hoped that the meeting would discuss many areas, especially in the exchange of experience on strategies and measures undertaken in facing new challenges in broadcasting and information.

The MOU in broadcasting and information between Brunei Darussalam and the Republic of Indonesia has led to the creation of several radio and television programmes, such as 'from station to station' and drama joint production. In the area of information, both countries conduct the exchange of information officers and journalists, and exchange printed materials.

Meanwhile, Mr. I. GK. Manila from Indonesia's National Information and Communication Agency hoped that the meeting would re-evaluate the MOU in Broadcasting and Information, which was signed between the two countries in Jakarta on 14 March 1989. He also hoped that the meeting would open up new cooperation in the Internet network.

The meeting discussed, among other things, report of the 8th Joint Committee Meeting and future cooperation in the exchange of visits and attachment, exchange of publication of print media, and the exchange of journalists and education.



Above: His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam being welcomed by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea, His Excellency Lee Han-Dong, at the reception for leaders attending the Third ASEM Summit, and being greeted on arrival at the Air Forces Airport in Seoul by the Ambassador-at-Large at the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Korea, His Excellency Mr. Kim Hang-Kyung while His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Brunei Darussalam's Minister of Foreign Affairs looks on, below.



His Majesty together with other leaders during the 2nd Session of the Closed Meeting held at COEX Convention Centre, above. They also held a discussion and exchanged views during a luncheon hosted by the President of Korea, below.



Above: His Majesty in discussion with His Excellency President Kim Dae-Jung of the Republic of Korea on efforts to upgrade bilateral relations between both countries and preparations for the forthcoming APEC Summit in Bandar Seri Begawan. The meeting was held at the COEX Convention Centre in Seoul. Below: His Majesty and leaders of the ASEAN countries enter the auditorium of the COEX Convention Centre for the opening ceremony of the ASEM Summit.



* From page one
(Third ASEM Summit)

mitments, such as its active role in supporting United Nation's (UN) efforts especially in arms control and peacekeeping, and emphasised the important role of the EU in assisting developing countries to come to terms with modern economic conditions.

His Majesty also congratulated President Kim Dae-Jung for being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and commended his efforts towards reconciliation among all Koreans.

The ASEM leaders met in closed-door sessions to exchange views on a wide range of issues. Prior to the session, His Majesty joined other ASEM leaders in the luncheon at a leading ho-

tel in Seoul.

His Majesty arrived in Korea on 18 October, and was received on arrival at the Kimpo International Airport by His Excellency Kim Hang-Kyung, Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea and the Commander of the Seoul Airbase. Also welcoming His Majesty were His Excellency Dato Paduka Haji Abdul Aziz bin Mohammad, Brunei Darussalam's Ambassador to the Republic of Korea and officials of Brunei Darussalam's Embassy in Seoul.

His Majesty began his official programme on 19 October by attending a meeting among Asian leaders, during which they exchanged views in matters related to the Third ASEM Summit, particularly the statements of the Chairman, the Asia-Europe 2000 coopera-

tion network and the Seoul Declaration for peace in the Korean Peninsula. The leaders later proceeded to a reception with their European counterparts given by the Prime Minister of Korea, His Excellency Lee Han-Dong.

In the evening, the Asian leaders attended an informal dinner hosted by His Excellency President Kim Dae-Jung of Korea at a leading hotel in Seoul.

The two-day Summit, which carries the theme 'Partnership for Prosperity and Stability in the New Millennium', discussed ways and means to further promote the Asia-Europe partnership and cooperation and would ensure common prosperity and stability in an era of information technology, globalisation and regional coop-

eration.

The Summit brought together 10 leaders from Asia and 16 from Europe. The First ASEM Summit was held in Bangkok in 1996 and the last was held in London in 1998.

While in Seoul, His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam held separate bilateral meetings with the Prime Minister of Japan, His Excellency Mr. Yoshiro Mori and His Excellency President Kim Dae-Jung of Korea.

His Majesty and the two leaders discussed efforts to upgrade bilateral relations and on preparation for the APEC Summit to be held in Brunei Darussalam in November.

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His Majesty being welcomed by His Excellency Mr. Kim Dae-jung during the dinner

** From centre page
(Third ASEM Summit)*

Present at the meetings were His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Brunei Darussalam's Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Special Adviser to His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at the Prime Minister's Office, Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Setia Bakti Diraja Dato Laila Utama Haji Awang Isa, the Minister of Industry and Primary Resources, Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Setia Pahlawan Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Abdul Rahman, the Permanent Secretary at the Prime Minister's Office, Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Utama Dato Seri Paduka Haji Awang Yahya and Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pehin Orang Kaya Pekerma Dewa Dato Seri Paduka Awang Lim Jock Seng.

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam shakes hand with His Excellency Yashiro Mori, Japan's Prime Minister, prior to their bilateral meeting at the COEX Convention Centre in Seoul, right, while picture below, shows His Majesty and His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah (standing third and second from right front row respectively) pose for a photograph with His Excellency Kim Hang-Kyung, Ambassador-at-Large at the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Korea.



Brunei LNG is first shell's liquefaction facilities worldwide to receive ISO 14001 certificate

The Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam spares no effort in making sure that development programmes for improving the standard of living of the people are carried out without damaging the environment.

This was stated by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah in his speech at the presentation ceremony of ISO 14001 Environmental Management System certification to Brunei LNG at the Brunei LNG plant in Lumut, Belait district on October 17.

His Royal Highness The Crown Prince said that Brunei LNG's accreditation is indeed a defining moment for the country's gas industry and marks yet another milestone for the company.

"Both Brunei LNG and its sister company, Brunei Shell Petroleum, are leading players in the hydrocarbon industries in Brunei, that have helped shape the economic landscape and de-

velopment of our country", he said.

"From the certification, emphasis on continuous performance improvement of managing environmental matters, would not only increase the intrinsic value of Brunei LNG product and service, but will also contribute to the sustainable development of the country," he added.

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam on various occasions, The Crown Prince said, has stressed the importance of striking the right balance between economic development and environmental concerns.

"Both the public and private sectors need to ensure that due care and attention to the environment must always remain their top priority while executing development projects".

The Crown Prince further said, equally important too, is the role played by the public in general to maintain a healthy and pollution-free envi-

ronment.

"Inculcating the right attitude towards environmental protection through education, as well as proper resource utilisation, and minimising waste, is crucial for the country's efforts on sustainable development.

"These efforts are long-term in nature and their success would require full commitment and active participation of all concerned", he stressed.

HRH The Crown Prince also urged other industries and corporations in Brunei Darussalam to emulate the steps taken and efforts made by organisations such as Brunei LNG in attaining an environmental management system worthy of the world's best.

At the ceremony HRH The Crown Prince presented the ISO 14001 certificate to Brunei LNG Executive Director, Dato Paduka Haji Hamdillah bin Hj Abd Wahab, followed by with the launching of ISO 14001 Website by The Crown Prince.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah being briefed by Dato Paduka Awang Haji Hamdillah, the Executive Director of BLNG, soon after the presentation of certificate for ISO 14001 on Environmental Management System, pictures right and below.



An Islamic Centre responsible for establishing cooperation in areas of Quranic studies and Islamic propagation by drawing religious expertise from Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, collectively known as the MABIMS, was established in Brunei Darussalam with the launching of its first meeting on October 24 at the Islamic Propagation Centre (Pusat Dakwah Islamiah) in Kampong Pulaie, ten kilometres from the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan. The inaugural meeting was opened by Pehin Jawatan Luar Pekerma Raja Dato Seri Utama Dr. Ustaz Haji Awang Mohd. Zain bin Haji Serudin, Brunei Darussalam's Minister of Religious Affairs.

MABIMS is an acronym for the annual unofficial meeting of Religious Ministers of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore established in 1989 for the purpose of cooperation on matters concerning the Islamic religion.

As part of the Brunei Darussalam Religious Council, the Centre will become a primary institution specialising in meeting the Quranic knowledge needs of Muslim community in the MABIMS member countries and improving expertise in the field of Quranic studies and propagation. By promoting a reading culture through acknowledged methods of quality teaching, the Centre serves as a refer-

QURANIC TEACHINGS AND *HADITH* AS PANACEA FOR PREDICAMENTS: MABBIM

ence venue for Muslim community to delve into religious knowledge.

In his keynote address, the Honourable Minister of Religious Affairs said that the world today should never deny the negative materialistic impact brought by technological advances in human civilisation. The teachings of the Al-Quran and the hadith (the traditions of the Prophet) are remedy and lifeline for undesirable and self-destructive worldly predicaments, cautioned Pehin Dato Dr. Ustaz Haji Mohd. Zain.

The Centre's purpose should serve as an adequate response for Muslims visioning towards the era of globalisation and modernisation.

In his remarks, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Deputy Chairman for the committee of the Centre, Pengiran Dato Paduka Haji Mohd Yusof said the establishment of the Brunei-based MABIMS Quranic Studies and Propagation Centre was the result of agreement made during the annual unofficial meeting of religious ministers of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia

and Singapore in 1994, held at the island of Langkawi, Malaysia.

A committee serving for three years until May 31, 2002, appointed with the consent of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzadin Waddaulah, the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was set up to coordinate and observe the Centre's main goals and operation.

The Centre's committee comprises of a Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Secretary with members that include the State Mufti, the Chief Kadhi, three other members following the recommendation of the Religious Minister and one member from each MABIMS member country, said the Permanent Secretary.

Three members from the MABIMS member countries are Dr. H. Moch Roem Rowi from Indonesia's Religious Department; Ustaz Haji Muhammad Shahir bin Haji Abdullah, Director of Family/Social Development and Mosque Development from Malaysia's Department of Islamic Understanding, JAKIM; and Ustaz Haji Ahmad Sonhadji bin Mohamed from Singapore's Islamic Council.

Firms receive standardisation certificates

One hundred and twenty five firms and organizations in the country have received the ISO 9000 recognition certificate and two have received ISO 14000 Certificate, while many more are still in the process of getting the ISO 14000 series of certificate, said the Minister of Development.

Having the ISO 14000 and ISO 9000 certificate means that the organizations have been able to produce an internationally recognised quality management system, thus giving them the higher opportunity to compete.

In a speech to mark World Standard Day at the Ministry of Develop-

ment on 14 October, Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Indera Wijaya Pengiran Dr. Haji Ismail said that other than introducing the two ISO certifications, His Majesty's government through the ministry has also legislated and introduced 27 standards, 17 guidelines and eight specifications in order to set up a quality construction industry in the country.

These standards, guidelines and specifications cover aspects such as work on concrete, timber, brick manufacturing, metal, building development, safety of workers and work site.

The legislation of the standards was

aimed to create an assured and high quality work production, thus upgrading the image of the country's trade, enabling it to step on foreign market, he said.

"However, the standardisation alone could not assure quality, without well trained and committed workers, who were capable of handling relevant technological facilities," said the minister.

This was because the standard was only conditional, while those who were responsible to achieve the conditions were the workers, he said, while add-

** Continued on page 11*

Second Internet Service Provider (ISP) called Simpur.net offered by DST Multimedia Sdn. Bhd.

Bruneians now have an alternative to surf the Internet, thanks to Simpur.net, the second Internet Service Provider (ISP) offered by DST Multimedia Sdn Bhd. The big plus for this second service provider is that it offers value-added services such e-mail, personal homepage and international roaming.

The Minister of Communications, Yang Berhormat Pehin Dato Awang Haji Zakaria launched the second ISP on October 26. The Deputy Minister of Education cum Chairman of DST, Dato Seri Paduka Dr. Awg Haji Ahmad, the Managing Director of DST, Pg. Mohd Zin as well as other senior government officials attended.

Another interesting services that Simpur. Net offers is called e-Alert whereby customers who subscribe to this service will be informed about their e-mails through a system called Short Message Service (SMS). DST Multimedia invested about \$10 million for such a service.

The new ISP has introduced four types of subscription plans namely e-Explorer, e-Home and e-Office. While e-Scholars costs \$7.99 that includes one e-mail address with up to 10mb POP and web mail disk space, 15 hours of free surfing and five mb space for web hosting.

e-Explorer costs \$14.99 and includes one e-mail address with up to 10mb POP and web mail disk space, 20 hours of free surfing and 10mb space for web hosting.

e-home costs \$44.99 and includes two e-mail addresses with up to 10mb POP and web mail disk space for each



The Communications Minister, Yang Berhormat Pehin Dato Awang Haji Zakaria launches the 'Simpur.net', another Internet service provided by Data Stream Technology (DST).

address, 60 hours of free surfing and 15 mb space for web hosting.

The fourth and final offer, e-office, costs \$89.99 which includes five e-mail addresses with up to 10mb POP and web mail disk space for each address, 140 hours of free surfing, 20 mb of web hosting and global roaming services.

What the simpur.net calls "ala carte menu", subscribers have to pay \$3.99 for each additional e-mail address with up to 10mb POP, \$2.99 monthly for additional five mb e-mail disk space, \$2.99 monthly for SMS notification for incoming e-mail, appointment and events.

Those exceeding the stipulated free hours of surfing will be charged at five cents a minute. According to DST Multimedia Sdn Bhd, the Government of

His Majesty through the setting-up of Information Technology Council endorses the significance of information and communication technology in nation building.

DST Multimedia also said that the Internet access service is a gateway for other services including e-commerce, e-learning and e-government. The main challenge that DST Multimedia faces is to provide optimum infrastructure network to ensure that the service expands without burdening the customers.

In view of this, DST Multimedia has taken steps by providing a portal service (www.simpur.net) that allowed simpur.net and DST Com services to be obtained through the Internet.

** From page 10
(Standardisation certificates)*

ing that in this respect, the workers involved would need provision and encouragement to upgrade their skill.

The minister further stressed that a fair international standard could create a fair trading atmosphere, which could reduce the gap of poverty and

difference between the developed and developing countries.

Standardisation can also help to produce quality products, service and work production. At the same time a country needs committed, trained, skilled and creative workers, who are capable of using relevant and sophisti-

cated technology.

The minister later presented the ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 certificate to eight companies, and heard a talk on Mutual Recognition Agreement, Practice Concerning Standards, Conformity Assessment in Brunei Darussalam and Introduction to ISO 9000 : 2000, and Beyond ISO 9000 – TQM.

The Earl and Countess of Wessex on three-day visit



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in conversation with His Royal Highness Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex, while Her Majesty Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajjah Saleha and Her Royal Highness Pengiran Isteri Hajjah Mariam converse with his wife, Her Royal Highness Princess Sophie, The Countess of Wessex, during an audience at Istana Nurul Iman.

Their Royal Highnesses Prince Edward and Princess Sophie, the Earl and Countess of Wessex began a three-day visit to Brunei Darussalam on 25 October.

Present at the airport to greet the British royal entourage were Her Royal Highness Princess Hajjah Masna, Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and her husband, Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Lela Cheteria

Sahibun Najabah Pengiran Anak Haji Abdul Aziz.

The following day, His Majesty 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 the British royal couple an audience at Istana Nurul Iman.

Present at the audience were His Royal Highness Crown Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah and the British High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam, His Excellency Mr. Stuart Laing, and his wife. His Royal Highness Prince Edward is the third son of Queen Elizabeth II.

The Earl and Countess of Wessex toured Brunei by first visiting the Royal Regalia building and Bumbungan 12 in the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan.

Greeting them on arrival at the Royal Regalia building was the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Culture Youth and Sports, Datin Paduka Hajjah Azizah.

The Royal visitors were then briefed by the acting Director of Museum on the royal carriages that His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam used during his coronation in 1968 and during the Silver Jubilee celebrations in 1992.

This was later followed by a closer look at an exhibition of photographs

of His Majesty's early life and Brunei's Constitutional history gallery. Their Royal Highnesses were also briefed on the many accessories used in royal ceremonies such as spears, shields and swords.

Their Royal Highnesses later visited Bumbungan 12 near the capital for a get-together with British High Commissioner and British Council Officials.

Her Royal Highness Princess Hajjah Masna, Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted a dinner for the royal visitors.

The function took place at Jerudong Polo Club. Present at the dinner was Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Lela Cheteria Sahibun Najabah Pengiran Anak Haji Abdul Aziz as well as senior government officials.

Their Royal Highnesses also travelled the heart of the Brunei rainforests in Temburong district including the Ulu Temburong National Park, followed by a visit to the Raleigh Venturer's campsite at Sungai Apon, taking a temuai (long boat) ride from the National Park.

Prince Edward and Princess Sophie also spent time observing the suspension bridge erected near the campsite.

The British Royal couple also toured the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT) Education Services Sdn Bhd at the heart of Bangar town, also in Temburong district.

BRUNEI IN BRIEF

Capital : Bandar Seri Begawan

Land size : 5765 sq. km.

Population : 336,376 (July 2000 est.)

Official Language : Malay

Official Religion : Islam

September rainfall : 348.3 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.

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