



Increase deeds of worship in the month of Ramadan

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 2 - It is a tradition for the holy month to be filled with the Sunat Tarawih Prayer, *tadarus* Al-Quran, *qiamullail*, and the attempt to seize the night of Lailatul Qadar.

InsyaaAllah, when all of these are done appropriately, an easy path will be provided by Allah the Almighty for us.

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam stated the matter in a *titah* (royal speech) welcoming Ramadan for the year 1443 Hijrah/2022 Masihi.

In addition to some of the acts of worship mentioned above, His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam extolled the benefits of *sedekah* (charity) which is encouraged during Ramadan. It does not just help those in need, but *sedekah* also repels calamities and treats illnesses.

"This is the glory of Islam, offering us various ways to perform good deeds. We prayed that with Ramadan's blessings, Allah the Almighty will accept our worship and repentance, forgive us and allow the country to attain blessings and protection from various disasters, especially during the pandemic," said His Majesty.

We are now destined to face two equally challenging situations, the demand to fast and the demand to deal with COVID-19.



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam delivering a *titah* (royal speech) welcoming the Ramadan for 1443 Hijrah/2022 Masihi at Istana Nurul Iman.

His Majesty hoped that we will be able to face these two situations with more perseverance and patience.

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Tackling water issues together

TOKYO, JAPAN, April 25 - Brunei Darussalam has been honoured with a meaningful opportunity to participate and share its endeavour on tackling water issues as well as learning through information sharing and experiences from other partner states at the 4th Asia-Pacific Water Summit held recently in Kumamoto City, Kumamoto.

Representing Brunei was Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Ir. Awang Haji Suhaimi bin Haji Gafar, Minister of Development.

The summit commenced with an Opening Ceremony and Summit-Level Meeting on April 23, which was officiated by His Majesty Emperor Naruhito.

His Majesty in a keynote address expressed his concern and vision for a resilient generation to

come through water actions and on the drive that the region can contribute especially how Japan can lead the world in addressing challenges associated with water.

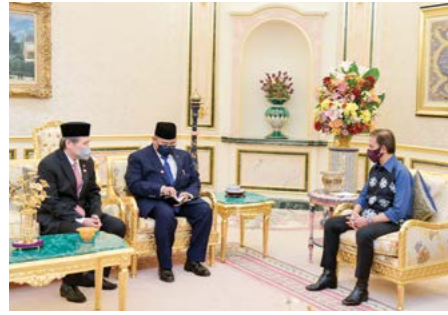
His Majesty also emphasised the role of each level of society with emphasis on the involvement of youths, where he was confident and supported their involvement as parties who play a key role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The emperor also encouraged mutual learning and sharing of experiences regardless of age or gender for the sustainability of future generations and called on Member States to support youth empowerment.

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LegCo members dissolved

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 12 - The Department of Councils of State announced that the appointed Legislative Council (LegCo) members have been dissolved starting March 6, in accordance with the Prorogation and Dissolution of the Legislative Council, Article 55(1) of the Brunei Constitution.



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His Majesty receives audience

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam received in audience His Excellency Dato Paduka Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary General of ASEAN, at Istana Nurul Iman on April 16.



His Majesty sends congratulatory message

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam consented to send a congratulatory message to His Excellency Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, following his recent appointment as the 23rd new President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on April 13.

News

Al-Quran - permanent asset to be harnessed

BERAKAS, April 18 - His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in a *titah* (royal speech) highlighted the benefits of reading and understanding the Al-Quran, and called on Muslims to make the holy book a lifelong companion to attain blessings in this world and in the hereafter.

Therefore, His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam stressed that this is why it is vital to read and understand the wisdom behind Al-Quran, and those who do will inevitably garner guidance and blessings from it.

His Majesty delivered the *titah* at the annual National Level Nuzul Al-Quran Celebration for 1443 Hijrah held at the International Convention Centre (ICC).

His Majesty added that blessings are not a trivial thing, but are great and special. Therefore, we are at a loss if we don't seize the opportunity.

His Majesty also emphasised that a way to seize blessings is none other than by reading and harnessing all contents of the Al-Quran.

This is the reason His Majesty unwaveringly encourages the study of the Al-Quran, which encompasses reading, memorising, and gaining deeper wisdom from it.

"The Al-Quran is a permanent asset to be harnessed in this world, and its blessings will carry forward to the hereafter.

This is what is great about the Al-Quran, a comprehensive constitution for all Muslims, that is not drafted by anyone, other than Allah the Almighty," said His Majesty.

In a *titah*, His Majesty also mentioned that those faithful must believe that by holding on to the Al-Quran through reading,



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam delivering a *titah* (royal speech) at the annual National Level Nuzul Al-Quran Celebration for 1443 Hijrah, held at the International Convention Centre (ICC).

understanding, appreciation, and practice, it will dispel any difficulties and bring light to the darkness.

His Majesty said that this is evident in a *firman* by Allah the Almighty in Surah An-Nisa, Verse 174, which translates to: "And We have sent down to you a brilliant light."

"The *firman*," His Majesty said, "signals that any form of difficulties or darkness can be dispelled and shined on with light by

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His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam; and His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office, His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen; His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah and His Royal Highness Prince Haji Jefri Bolkiah at the event.

the Al-Quran. If we consider the pandemic as a catastrophe that is dragging us into darkness, the Al-Quran is capable of taking us out of the darkness by continuously reading it.

Touching on the celebration's significance, His Majesty said that apart from commemorating the revelation of Al-Quran to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the celebration also emphasises the introduction and understanding of Al-Quran as our guiding light in this world, and thus Al-Quran is the ultimate guide, as well as a remedy and blessing for the believers.

Taking note of Ramadan, when the Al-Quran was revealed, His Majesty urged the daily practice of the Al-Quran reading, during the holy month or outside of it. By doing so, we will obtain many benefits in the form of peace of mind, health, joy, wisdom, guidance, as well as *inayah* and His protection.

While in the hereafter, the Al-Quran that we read in this world will appear to intercede for us, as described from a *hadis* narrated by Muslim, and also cited as a *hadis* by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) that translates to: "Read the Al-Quran, because it will come during the Judgement Day to bring intercession to its reader.

His Majesty hopes this *hadis* will be an effective motivation for us to keep the Al-Quran close until the end of life.

Also present were His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen; His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah and His Royal Highness Prince Haji Jefri Bolkiah.

The event saw the winners of this year's National Level Al-Quran Memorisation and its Understanding Competition for 1443 Hijrah/2022 Masihi announced by Haji Abdul Rajid bin Haji Mohd Salleh, Director of Islamic Da'wah Centre in his role as Chairman of the Judging Committee.

The first prize winner in Category A - memorising Juz 30, as well as its understanding, was Amal 'Azyiah binti Muhamad Saiful Ashren, with a score of 98.74 per cent, who received a \$1,500 cash prize. The runners-up were Nur Sofiyah Solehah binti Mohammad Fikri (98.49 per cent) who received a \$1,000 cash prize and Nur Hazierah Khalisah binti Haji Umardani (96.92 per cent) who received a \$750 cash prize.

Abdul Matin bin Zulnoren topped



Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Seri Maharaja Dato Paduka Seri Setia Doctor Ustaz Awang Haji Abdul Aziz bin Juned, State Mufti leading the recitation of *doa selamat*.

Category B - memorising selected surahs for those aged 14 years and above with a score of 98.56 per cent and received a \$2,000 cash prize. Ahmad Muhammad @ Munir bin Ibrahim (98.36 per cent) and Mohammad Firdaus bin Mohammad Salleh (98.31 per cent) claimed second and third places and received a \$1,500 and \$1,200 respectively.

Meanwhile, Category C - memorising Surah Al-Baqarah and Surah Al-Imran as

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Increase deeds of worship in the month of Ramadan (continued)

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In the month of Ramadan, His Majesty hopes that all of us are able to increase our deeds of worship to achieve the reward promised by Allah the Almighty.

In the *titah*, His Majesty is grateful to Allah the Almighty for being able to once again welcome the blessed month of Ramadan.

His Majesty said that as the country marks the third year of Ramadan in pandemic times, Muslims must always accept Allah the Almighty's will and as faithful Muslims,

we need to be consistent in praying, reciting *zikir*, and reading the Al-Quran to ask for mercy from Allah the Almighty and His protection from the pandemic.

His Majesty believes that the blessings from our special *munajat* this Ramadan will not be in vain.

His Majesty also said that the holy month is not just the time for ummah to refrain from eating and drinking, but it is also a form of *jihad* (struggle and effort) to fight desires. In fact, it is considered a great *jihad* because fighting desires is challenging.



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam presenting a prize to Category A's winner, Amal 'Azyiah binti Muhamad Saiful Ashren (left), and Category D's winner, Dalili Bazilah binti Haji Jailani (right).



His Majesty presenting a prize to Abdul Matin bin Zulnoren, winner of Category B (left), and Dalili Faiqah binti Nasaruddin, winner of category E (right).



His Majesty presenting a prize to Ahmad Darwish bin Hamdan, winner of Category C.



His Majesty at the event.

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well as Understanding Surah Al-An'am and Surah Al-A'raf, which is open to all ages - the first place went to Ahmad Darwish bin Hamdan (97.8 per cent), who received a \$2,800. The first and second runners-up were Muhamad Faiz Najwan bin Muhamad Salleh (96.82 per cent) who received \$2,000 and Nur Izzy Aziah binti Ahmad (95.45 per cent) who received \$1,500.



Participants from each category delivering their presentation.

For Category D - memorising 15 Juz Al-Quran, from Juz 1 to Juz 15 as well as Understanding Surah Al-Furqan, Surah Asy-Syu'ara and Surah An-Naml, Dalili Bazilah binti Haji Jailani emerged as the winner with a score of 97.57 per cent and received \$3,500. Second place went to Ahmad Hamizan @ Ahmad Aliridha bin Haji Laidin (94.87 per cent) and received \$2,500, while Dayangku Nurfaiezah binti Pengiran Haji Kamaluddin (94.68 per cent) came in third place and received \$2,000.

For Category E - memorising 30 Juz Al-Quran and understanding Surah Adz-Dzariat, Surah At-Thur, Surah An-Najm, Surah Al-Qamar, Surah Ar-Rahman, Surah Al-Waqi'ah and Surah Al-Hadid - the winner was Dalili Faiqah binti Nasaruddin with a score of 96.48 per cent and received \$5,000 in cash prize. Second place went to Mohamed Sahmie bin Mohamed Shalahudden (95.91 per cent) with \$3,500 while third place was Awangku Muhammad Abdul Qadir bin Pengiran Haji Ibrahim (94.60 per cent) who received \$2,500.

Echo of Selawat Tafrijiyyah throughout the country

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 19 - His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam joined the congregants in the inaugural nationwide Selawat Tafrijiyyah Year 1443 Hijrah/2022 Masihi Recitation Ceremony at the focal point of Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Mosque.

Also in attendance were His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik, and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen.

The religious gathering began with Sunat Qabliah Zuhur Prayer followed by the mass Zuhur Prayer led by Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Seri Utama Dato Paduka Seri Setia Haji Awang Salim bin Haji Besar who also led the mass Sunat Hajat Prayer.

The event was then followed by a welcoming speech delivered by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Abdul Mokti bin Haji Mohd. Daud, Minister at PMO as the Co-Chairman of the Committee of the nationwide Selawat Tafrijiyyah Year 1443 Hijrah/2022 Masihi.

The Minister at PMO said the nationwide Selawat Tafrijiyyah event was organised by the PMO, Ministry of Religious Affairs, and State Mufti's Office as an effort to obtain a 'divine vaccine' against disasters, including COVID-19, by gaining blessings from Allah the Almighty.

The recitation of Selawat Tafrijiyyah was echoed around the mosque 11 times by officers and imams of Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Mosque, Islamic Studies Department, undergraduates of Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University (UNISSA), and Seri Begawan Religious Teachers University College (KUPU SB), students from Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Tahfiz (ITQSHHB), Mosque Takmir Committee members, Mosque Youth, Muslim Converts Association, and Youth Da'ie.

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His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam gracing the nationwide Selawat Tafrijiyyah recitation, accompanied by His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik; and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen.



The Mass Zuhur Prayer led by Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Seri Utama Dato Paduka Seri Setia Haji Awang Salim bin Haji Besar who also led the mass Sunat Hajat Prayer.



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and Their Royal Highnesses joining the congregation at the Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Mosque during the recitation of Selawat Tafrijiyyah.



Participants from each category delivering their presentation.

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The gathering ended with a special *doa* by Yang Berhormat Pehin Dato Seri Maharaja Dato Paduka Seri Setia (Dr.) Ustaz Haji Awang Abdul Aziz, the State Mufti.

Similar gatherings were also held simultaneously at Hassanal Bolkiah Mosque in National Housing Scheme Kampung Mentiri, Muhammad Jamalul Alam Mosque in Belait District, Hassanal Bolkiah Mosque in Tutong District, and Utama Mohammad Salleh Mosque in Temburong District.



Yang Berhormat Minister at Prime Minister's Office as the Co-Chairman of the Committee of the nationwide Selawat Tafrijiyyah Year 1443 Hijrah delivering his welcoming speech.



Among those present at the nationwide Selawat Tafrijiyyah Year 1443 Hijrah/2022 Masihi Recitation Ceremony (above and below).



Yang Berhormat the State Mufti reciting the special *doa* (above), and the mass recitation of Selawat Tafrijiyyah (below).



HRH attends Tahlil Ceremony



His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Chairman of the Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Committee of Governors attending the Tahlil Ceremony for Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddien; Al-Marhumah Duli Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Damit; and Al-Marhum His Royal Highness Prince Haji 'Abdul 'Azim at the Royal Mausoleum.

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 11 - Nearly 200 officers and staff of the Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah (YSHHB) delegation attended a Tahlil Ceremony for Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddien; Al-Marhumah Duli Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Damit; and Al-Marhum His Royal Highness Prince Haji 'Abdul 'Azim. The ceremony took place at the Royal Mausoleum.



His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Chairman of the YSHHB Committee of Governors attended the Tahlil Ceremony.



The ceremony began with the recitation of Surah Yasin followed by a *tahlil* led by Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Seri Utama Dato Paduka Seri Setia Haji Awang Salim bin Haji Besar.



During the ceremony, His Royal Highness poured the *ayeng asah-asahan* (scented water) on the tombs of Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddien; Al-Marhumah Duli Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Damit; and Al-Marhum His Royal Highness Prince Haji 'Abdul 'Azim.

Khatam Al-Quran Ceremony YSHHB



His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Chairman of the Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Committee of Governors at the Khatam Al-Quran Ceremony.

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 26 - His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Chairman of the Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah (YSHHB) Committee of Governors graced the YSHHB Khatam Al-Quran Ceremony which took place at Dewan An-Naura, Level 2, YSHHB Complex.



Upon arrival, His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik was greeted by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Abdul Mokti bin Haji Mohd. Daud, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office as member of the YSHHB Committee of Governors; Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd. Yusoff, Second Minister of Defence as Chairman of the YSHHB Board of Directors; Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Md. Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health as the Deputy Chairman of the Board of YSHHB; and Awang Ahmad Jefri bin Abdul Rahman Acting Managing Director of the Brunei Investment Agency, as Acting Managing Director of YSHHB.

His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik performing the mass Fardhu Maghrib Prayer led by Yang Dimulikan Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Setia Raja Dato Paduka Seri Setia Haji Awang Suhaili bin Haji Mohiddin.

Haji Shodiq, YSHHB Secondary School Teacher.



The event continued with a *doa khatam* and *doa selamat*, recited by Yang Dimulikan Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Setia Raja Dato Paduka Seri Setia Haji Awang Suhaili bin Haji Mohiddin.

Yang Dimulikan Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Setia Raja Dato Paduka Seri Setia Haji Awang Suhaili bin Haji Mohiddin reciting the *doa khatam* and *doa selamat*.

The ceremony began with the *takhtim* Al-Quran by 30 YSHHB officers and staff led by Dr. Haji Samsul Muawan bin

The ceremony continued with the mass Fardhu Maghrib Prayer.



Among those who participated in the Khatam Al-Quran Ceremony.

Tahlil ceremonies at Royal Mausoleum

The *tahlil* ceremonies for the late parents and son of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam: Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien; Al-Marhumah Duli Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Damit and Al-Marhum His Royal Highness Prince Haji 'Abdul 'Azim were held by:



The Ministry of Home Affairs and the departments under it as well as the Mukim and Village Consultative Councils on April 7. Leading the delegation was Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Kerna Dato Seri Setia (Dr.) Haji Awang Abu Bakar bin Haji Apong, Minister of Home Affairs.



The Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism as well as its departments on April 9. Leading the delegation was Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Ali bin Apong, Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism.



The Ministry of Defence and the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) on April 8. In attendance was Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja (Rtd) Major General Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd. Yussof, Second Minister of Defence.



Perbadanan Tabung Amanah Islam Brunei (Perbadanan TAIB) and its subsidiaries on April 12. Present at the ceremony was Yang Berhormat Second Minister of Defence as Chairman of Perbadanan TAIB Board of Directors.



The Ministry of Health and its departments on April 18. Leading the delegation was Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Haji Awang Mohammad Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health.



The Ministry of Finance and Economy and its departments on April 6. Present at the ceremony was Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy.



The Prime Minister's Office and its departments on April 5. Among those present were Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Abdul Mokti bin Haji Mohd. Daud, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office; Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew bin Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy; and Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Seri Maharaja Dato Paduka Seri Setia (Dr.) Ustaz Haji Awang Abdul Aziz bin Juned, the State Mufti.



Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam (BIBD) and its group of companies on April 25. Present at the ceremony was Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy as the Chairman of the Board of BIBD.



The Ministry of Education as well as its departments through the Examination Department, National Education Council Secretariat and the Brunei Technology Centre, on April 23. Leading the delegation was Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Hamzah bin Haji Sulaiman, Minister of Education.



The Ministry of Development and its departments on April 7. Leading the delegation was Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Ir. Awang Haji Suhaimi bin Haji Gafar, Minister of Development.



The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports and its departments on April 11. Leading the delegation was Yang Berhormat (Rtd) Major General Dato Paduka Seri Awang Haji Aminuddin Ihsan bin Pehin Orang Kaya Saiful Mulok Dato Seri Paduka Haji Abidin, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports.



The Ministry of Transport and Infocommunications as well as its departments and Authority Agencies on April 20. Present at the ceremony was Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Abdul Mutalib bin Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Setia Dato Paduka Haji Mohammad Yusof, Minister of Transport and Infocommunications.



The Employees Trust Fund (TAP) on April 18. Present at the ceremony was Yang Berhormat Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports as Chairman of the TAP Board.



The Ministry of Energy and the departments as well as its Statutory Bodies on April 9. Leading the delegation was Dato Seri Paduka Awang Haji Matsatejo bin Sokiaw, Deputy Minister of Energy.

First day of Ramadan falls on April 3

BERAKAS, April 1 - By command of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, the Brunei Islamic Religious Council (MUIB) has announced that the first day of Ramadan for 1443 Hijrah falls on April 3 following the failure to sight the *Hilal* (crescent).

The result of the moon sighting was relayed to Yang Berhormat Pehin Udana Khatib Dato Paduka Seri Setia Ustaz Haji Awang Badaruddin bin Pengarah Dato Paduka Haji Awang Othman, Minister of Religious Affairs as President of MUIB during a meeting at the MuRA premises together with the presence of members of MUIB comprising Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Kerna Dato Seri Setia (Dr.) Haji Awang Abu Bakar bin Haji Apong, Minister of Home Affairs; Yang Berhormat Dato Seri



Yang Berhormat Minister of Home Affairs, Yang Berhormat Minister of Religious Affairs, Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office, Yang Berhormat Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports; and Yang Berhormat Chief Syar'ie Judge at the meeting.

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A religious event was held at the Ministry of Religious Affairs while waiting for the outcome of the moon sighting.

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Setia Haji Awang Abdul Mokti bin Haji Mohd. Daud, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office; Yang Berhormat Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Aminuddin Ihsan bin Pehin Orang Kaya Saiful Mulok Dato Seri Paduka Haji Abidin, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports; Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Seri Utama Dato Paduka Seri Setia Haji Awang Salim bin Haji Besar, Chief Syarie Judge; and Yang Mulia Pengiran Dato Seri Paduka Haji Bahrom bin Pengiran Haji Bahar, Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs as MUIB Vice-President.

This year, four places were earmarked for the moon sighting, namely Bukit Agok in Jerudong, Tanjung Batu in Pekan Muara, Bukit Ambog in Tutong District and Bukit Lumut in Belait District.

Earlier, while waiting for the outcome of the moon sighting, a religious event was held at the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which saw the recitation of Al-Quran verses by Year 11 student of Sayyidina Husain Secondary School, Ahmad Hasanuddin bin Murni, who was the third-place winner of the Al-Quran reading

competition in Youth Al-Quran Reading Scheme.

It was followed by the recitation of *tahlil* and *doa arwah* and mass Maghrib Prayer.



Yang Berhormat Minister of Development conducting the moon sighting at Tanjung Batu Recreational Park.

National COVID-19 vaccination for children commences



Yang Berhormat Minister of Health during his visit to the Indoor Stadium Vaccination Centre.

BERAKAS, April 2 – The National COVID-19 Vaccination Programme for children aged 5 to 11 began simultaneously at all vaccination centres nationwide.

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohammad Isham bin Haji Jaafar, the Minister of Health visited the Indoor Stadium Vaccination Centre in support of the programme.



Yang Berhormat Minister of Education during his visit to the Dewan Seri Kenangan, Tutong District.

During the visit, the Minister of Health witnessed the workflow for children's vaccination starting from the registration process to vaccination, and post-vaccination observation until they leave the vaccination centre.

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The Minister explained that the programme is voluntary. However, completing the COVID-19 vaccine will not be a requirement for children to attend school.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has procured 100,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine for children, which are more than sufficient for all children aged 5 to 11 in the Sultanate.

Parents and guardians are welcomed to bring their children to get immunised at vaccination centres by booking a slot through the BruHealth application.

Parents and guardians are also reminded to complete the authentication process for their children's accounts on the application in preparation for vaccination.

Meanwhile in the Tutong District, the programme was held at Dewan Seri Kenangan. Present to observe the process was Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Hamzah bin Haji Sulaiman, Minister of Education.



One of the children receiving his first dose.

Committed in keeping the environment clean

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 7 - To mark the establishment of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1948, World Health Day is celebrated every April 7 worldwide with different themes to draw the public's attention to current global health issues.

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohammad Isham bin Haji Jaafar, the Minister of Health, said in his message in conjunction with World Health Day 2022, the theme of this year's celebration is "Our Planet, Our Earth", which aims to provide a reminder that fresh air, clean water, and safe food are very important for the health as well as the well-being of the world population.

When the world is struggling with the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of diseases such as cancer, asthma, and heart diseases, the Minister of Health said WHO has called on nations to remain committed and not neglect their responsibilities in ensuring a clean environment to guarantee the health and well-being of the entire community.

"WHO estimates that over 13 million deaths across the globe have occurred each year due to environmental pollution, including climate change, the biggest threat faced by the world population at this time," said the Minister.

The Minister added, "*Alhamdulillah*, Brunei Darussalam has an average clean air index, and residents have access to clean water and safe food. Nonetheless, COVID-19 has a more serious

impact on vulnerable groups, especially those who are living in areas with polluted air and have no access to clean water as well as healthy and safe food."

"In fact," said the Minister, "this not only has an adverse effect on health but also the economy and social stability."

The Minister then added that most of the causes of the climate change crisis are due to human activities themselves, with over 90 per cent of air pollution caused by the burning of fossil fuels. An increase in the earth's surface temperature can lead to an increase in the breeding of mosquitoes that carry diseases such as dengue and malaria.

The Minister also noted that extreme weather conditions and excessive development can also cause loss of life and communities can also lose their homes and sources of income.

"We have also seen that pollution is not only limited to land surface but also occurs to marine life, such as the widespread dumping of plastic," said the Minister.

The Minister said that the Ministry of Health would like to call on the public, as we are actively involved in the recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, to work together in ensuring a more sustainable life so that the well-being of citizens and residents in Brunei Darussalam and the global population is always guaranteed.

Immunisation saves lives, ensures health

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 25 - This year, Brunei Darussalam joined World Health Organization (WHO) member countries in celebrating World Immunisation Week on April 24-30.

The celebration aims to raise awareness on the importance of vaccines, which can protect every age group from diseases and

provide an opportunity to lead a healthy and meaningful life.

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohammad Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health, stated the matter in a message in conjunction with World Immunisation Week.

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Every year, World Immunization Week has a different theme that serves as the main platform to attract the attention of the world's population on issues related to immunisation.

This year's theme said the Minister of Health 'Long Life for All' was chosen with the aim of uniting all walks of life that vaccines enable us to pursue dreams, protect loved ones and live a long and healthy life.

The Minister said vaccination is one of the most important and cost-effective public health interventions in the prevention of diseases, which in turn addresses global health issues.

"This year's campaign comes at a very critical time as the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted vital health services, including routine immunisations.

"In the past two decades, over 1.1 billion children have been immunised, saving four to five million lives each year, while halving child deaths worldwide," added the Minister.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of people have lost the benefits of a life-saving vaccine. WHO reported that global vaccination coverage declined from 86 per cent in 2019 to 83 per cent in 2020.

The Minister shared that some 23 million children under the age of one did not receive the basic vaccine, the highest number since 2009.

In 2020, the number of fully unvaccinated children increased by 3.4 million. In addition, 1.6 million girls will not be fully protected from human papillomavirus (HPV) by 2020.

"Therefore," said the Minister, it is important for those who missed this to get the vaccine immediately."

According to the Minister, a systematic immunisation programme is one of the most important components in health care that should be given to every individual from the beginning of their age during infancy to adulthood.

"*Alhamdulillah*, we are fortunate as citizens and residents of Brunei to receive free vaccination services from the Government of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam through the Ministry of Health (MoH).

The National Children Immunisation Programme (children aged zero to five) is one of the programmes available at clinics and health centres nationwide. This is a step forward in expanding access to immunisation, especially among infants and children, in addition to achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 2030 and Universal Health Coverage," said the Minister.

With the National Children Immunisation Programme, Brunei Darussalam has achieved and maintained the rate of child immunisation at a level exceeding 95 per cent each year. Statistics of immunisation coverage rates among these children achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 2030 target.

"However," said the Minister, "the Ministry of Health (MoH) will continue to strive to improve the existing services so that this achievement can be maintained and also improved."

The Minister said, "among the very significant health impacts said the Minister is that giving vaccines to children can prevent

diseases, disabilities, and deaths such as Hepatitis B, Measles, Mumps, Polio, and Tetanus.

Meanwhile, according to the Minister, the provision of vaccines for those at high risks, such as those suffering from various chronic diseases, food handlers and health workers (frontliners) can provide protection from various life-threatening diseases, such as influenza and meningitis which are commonly contracted at an early age."

"According to a WHO study, the administration of HPV vaccine specifically for girls in Year 7 has been shown to prevent or reduce the risk of cervical cancer as they grow into adulthood. In short, an appropriate immunisation programme has been proven to save lives and provide a higher quality of life, as well as ensure brighter future health for each individual," said the Minister.

"In relation to the national mandate which is based on the provisions under the Infectious Diseases Act 2003 Chapter 47 Section 1, parents or guardians must ensure that their children complete the vaccination schedule to protect against infectious diseases according to Schedule 4 of the act which covers 10 types of diseases – Diphtheria, Haemophilus Influenza B, Hepatitis B, Measles, Mumps, Pertussis, Polio, Rubella, Tetanus, and Tuberculosis.

"I advise parents to ensure that their children have received a full immunisation according to the set schedule and use the facilities provided by the government through health centres and clinics," added the Minister.

The Minister also touched on the ongoing commitment of His Majesty's Government, especially the immunisation programme for the high risk and public healthcare, which has made the Sultanate one of the countries declared free of Malaria by the WHO in 1987; free from Polio in 2000; free from Measles in 2015 and free from Rubella in November 2018.

"We should continue and maintain this achievement, and we must continue to strive to achieve the same achievement for various other types of diseases, *InsyaaAllah*," said the Minister.

In the context of COVID-19, the people and residents of Brunei are fortunate as the government had implemented the National COVID-19 Vaccination Programme from April 3, 2021 in stages according to the phases outlined in the Vaccination Strategy of Brunei Darussalam.

As of April 23, some 1,107,691 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been administered nationwide – 94.5 per cent of the population have received at least two doses and 64.1 per cent a booster.

The National COVID-19 Vaccination Programme for adolescents aged 12 to 17 and children aged five to 11 have shown encouraging responses.

"On this occasion, in support of the theme of this year's World Immunisation Week, the Ministry of Health is committed and will continue to work to further strengthen immunisation services at Brunei Darussalam for children and strive to increase immunisation coverage for those at high risk at all ages.

"I hope this year's World Immunisation Week will encourage citizens and residents of Brunei Darussalam to value health, be more responsible in ensuring proper vaccination to achieve 'Long Life for All', to realise the MoH's vision of 'Together Towards A Healthy Nation' and to achieve Brunei Vision 2035 of High Quality of Life of the Population," said the Minister.

COVID-19: 7,438 new cases detected

BERAKAS, April 30 – A total of 7,438 new cases were recorded throughout the month of April - bringing the overall number of positive COVID-19 cases in Brunei Darussalam up to date to 141,850 cases. On the other hand, three deaths were recorded. However, the cases were not identified as deaths due to COVID-19.

A total of 11,662 cases were reported to have recovered – which brings the overall number of recovered cases in the country up to date to 140,892.

Currently, there is one case categorised in Category 5, which is those who require treatment in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Whereas, there is zero case in Category 4.

As of April 29, a total of 216 doses of vaccine were given

to children aged 5 to 11 years, which brought the total number of first-dose vaccinations to 20,647 doses, which is 48.1 per cent.

Whereas, a total of 131 second doses of COVID-19 vaccine were given to children aged five to 11 years which brings the total second dose given to children in this age group to 963 doses, which is 2.5 percent.

Meanwhile, the coverage rate for the country's population who have received three doses of the vaccine is 65.3 per cent.

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohammad Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health announced the matter during the daily press conference sessions on the current situation of COVID-19 infections in Brunei Darussalam.

BIBD ME improves cooperation between Brunei and UAE



Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and Second Minister of Finance and Economy at the BIBD ME Office located at the Dubai International Financial Center.

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 1 - His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam had a warm welcome with the Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam team (BIBD) Middle-East (ME) Limited at Expo 2020 Dubai, recently.

BIBD ME is a wholly-owned subsidiary of BIBD based in Dubai. Among the activities undertaken include arranging investments; advice on financial products as well as structuring and advice on credit.

During a friendly tour at the Brunei Darussalam Pavilion at the expo, BIBD ME supported His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam's call to enhance cooperation between ASEAN and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in promoting economic prosperity for their people.

His Majesty in a *titah* (royal speech) during the World Government Summit 2022 in Dubai said that the youth and women as future leaders, will need to adapt to meet the challenges and demands of the time.

His Majesty further stressed the importance of closer cooperation between ASEAN and the UAE, especially in managing climate change.

On peace and stability, His Majesty stressed that it is important to continue economic progress to ensure a brighter future for generations to come.

At the end of the *titah*, His Majesty reiterated the importance of ensuring a better life for the people, a peaceful world, and the importance for the government to be well-prepared and responsive.

The calls are aligned to BIBD Group's Sustainability Framework which marks the bank's clear focus and strategy to support a commitment to sustainability, supporting not only the government agencies but also the private sector.

As the focal point for the BIBD Group of Companies in the Gulf Cooperation Council, BIBD ME remains committed and ready to respond to His Majesty's call and seeks new opportunities by forging new relationships for the bank as well as for the business community while strengthening existing ones.

The BIBD ME team is made up of 60 per cent male and 40 per cent female, all Bruneians, and the BIBD Group of Companies will continue to invest in local employees and ensure greater exposure, are given especially to younger teams.

BIBD has been working closely in providing strong support to the Ministry of Finance and Economy, the Brunei Economic Development Board, and Darussalam Enterprise (DARe) in the past six months for the Expo 2020 Dubai.

Prior to the World Government Summit, Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew bin Abdullah, the Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and Second Minister of Finance and Economy, who is also the Chairman of BIBD Group of Companies visited the BIBD ME Office located at the Dubai International Financial Center.

The Minister at the PMO and Second Minister of Finance and Economy during the visit was given a brief update and viewed a presentation regarding the business and operations.

In February 2017, BIBD established BIBD ME in Dubai, an entity regulated by the Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA) which has granted BIBD ME a Category 4 License to conduct Islamic Financial Business as an Islamic Financial Institution.

Green and sustainable infrastructure as part of economic recovery efforts



Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy during the meeting.

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 13 - Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew bin Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and Second Minister of Finance and Economy, and Hajah Rokiah binti Haji Badar, Managing Director of the Brunei Darussalam Central Bank (BDCB) joined the 8th ASEAN Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors' Meeting (AFMGM) and Related Meetings – 26th ASEAN Finance Ministers Meeting (AFMM) and ASEAN Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting Session with International Financial Institutions (AFMGM-IFIs), which was held virtually.

ASEAN Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors exchanged views with the International Monetary Fund (IMF); the World Bank (WB); the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB); the Asian Development Bank (ADB); and the ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO) on the regional and global outlook, in particular risks and opportunities, as well as policy recommendations, to foster a resilient, sustainable and inclusive recovery.

In his intervention, the Minister at the PMO and Second Minister of Finance and Economy emphasised the need for ASEAN to continue with collective efforts to ensure ASEAN remains an attractive investment destination.

The Minister also said it is important for the people of ASEAN to be equipped with the right mentality and skills to take advantage of opportunities arising from the new norm, which can further strengthen recovery.

He also shared the importance of building green and sustainable infrastructure as part of economic recovery efforts and encouraged multilateral development banks to assist member states to reach the goal.

The meeting concluded that as the pandemic recedes most economies are ready to re-open. However, the focus to alleviate the impact of the pandemic and support economic recovery

remains crucial.

As uncertainty and volatility of the global environment increase, the policy mix needs to remain supportive and ASEAN members are encouraged to continue to undertake reforms that will spur recovery.

In continuing the ministerial engagements with the private sector, the meeting held a dialogue with the ASEAN Business Advisory Council, the ASEAN-EU Business Council, and the ASEAN-US Business Council to discuss enhancing regional efforts on digitalisation and sustainability.

The Minister acknowledged the relevance of digitalisation and green growth to ASEAN's economic growth agenda.

Recalling the adoption last year of regional frameworks to advance cooperation in the Bandar Seri Begawan Roadmap: An ASEAN Digital Transformation Agenda; ASEAN Framework on Circular Economy; and ASEAN Taxonomy on Sustainable Finance (Version 1), he also shared Brunei Darussalam's pursuit of reforms in promoting digitalisation and green transition.

The Minister encouraged the councils to intensify the promotion of ASEAN as a single market to businesses from the Asia-Pacific region, EU, and the United States as well as to promote networking between multi-national corporations with businesses in all ASEAN Member States, such as fronting capacity building programmes to encourage the sharing of innovative digital or green practices. In subsequent plenary sessions, the ASEAN Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors discussed the progress of the various working groups. The finance track, in particular, included cooperation related to Infrastructure Financing; Cooperation in Insurance Matters; ASEAN disaster risk financing and insurance; cooperation in customs; anti-money laundering and counter terrorist financing; ASEAN Forum on Taxation; and ASEAN Capital Market Forum.

In closing, a joint statement of the 8th AFMGM was adopted.

Launch of Brunei Trade website

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 26 - The Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE) held the Launching Ceremony of the Brunei Trade Website, namely 'bruneitrade.mofe.gov.bn', at the Theater Hall of MoFE.

Present as guest of honour to launch the website was Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew bin Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy.

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At the ceremony, Dayang Nor Zerlina binti Haji Momin, Acting Director, Trade Division, MoFE, delivered a welcoming speech explaining that the website, among others, provides useful information for exporters, importers and buyers from overseas.

According to her, the website contains information, such as the steps required in the import or export of goods, free trade agreements entered into by Brunei Darussalam, local producers and products of Brunei Darussalam, goods tax, statistics trade as well as trade events, such as expos and exhibitions.

For more information on this website, the public can contact the Trade Division, Level 3, MoFE, at +673 2383696 or by email to 'tf@mofe.gov.bn' or Certificate of Origin Office, Level 1, MoFE or by email to 'coo.officebrunei@mofe.gov.bn'.

Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy during the launching ceremony of the Brunei Trade Website.



Towards a greener lifestyle

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 22 - Every April 22, Brunei Darussalam's commitment to stand united with the global community to commemorate the celebration of Earth Day, a platform for cultivating environmental awareness and promoting actions to protect the environment.

This year's theme "Invest in Our Planet" focuses on restoring the Earth through reduction and adaptation to the effects of environmental damage and pollution, as well as climate change.

The matter was stated in a message by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Ir. Awang Haji Suhaimi bin Haji Gafar, Minister of Development in conjunction with Earth Day 2022.

According to the Minister of Development, every individual's action gives a huge ripple effect on preserving the Earth's resilience.

"We have witnessed that environmental damage and pollution are results of human activities, which would lead to global economic deterioration," said the Minister.

The Minister also highlighted that it is time for the government, private sector, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), citizens, and residents of Brunei Darussalam to divert together our focus and mobilise more of our energy into building healthy and sustainable futures for the future generation to be able to continue living safely in our planet for the younger generations to be able to continue living safely on the planet.

All collective actions must be geared towards the preservation and managing of the environment effectively through investing in the planet by encouraging all individuals to practise eco-friendly habits.

A change in consumer habits towards a greener lifestyle said the Minister will eventually lead to a shift of demands in the market to support this new lifestyle.

Therefore, according to the Minister, it will further accelerate the transition to a greener economy and at the same time, have the potential to adapt to sustainable and environmentally friendly investments.

'All these actions,' said the Minister, "can be achieved when all the people in this country are united and work together in preserving our earth."

"This year, the Ministry of Development through the Department of Environment, Parks and Recreation (JASTRe) is running a campaign, 'Eco Ramadan bersama JASTRe' for the second year bringing together several stakeholders through a Whole-of-Nation Approach," said the Minister.

In collaboration with Zero Waste Brunei, this year's campaign with the theme "Bring My Own Reusables" focuses on investing in the earth by promoting the use of reusables and encouraging consumers to switch to sustainable and eco-friendly products.

In addition to that, are also in line including the expansion of the No Plastic Bag Everyday Initiative to convenience stores, restaurants, and food stalls.

Concluding his statement in conjunction with Earth Day celebrations, the Minister called on the public to remain committed and passionate in bearing the obligation to invest in inheriting the sustainable land of Brunei Darussalam to the future generation.

Sharing information tackling water issues together (continued)



His Majesty Emperor of Japan delivering his welcoming address.

From front page

His Excellency Fumio Kishida, the Prime Minister of Japan, and His Excellency Antonio Guterres, the United Nations Secretary-General in their speeches highlighted the importance of water for sustainable development and future resilience.

The Secretary-General emphasised United Nation's (UN) support and looked forward to the region's concerted effort toward global water actions.

"The UN eagerly anticipates the outcome of different levels of societies, including youth, coordinating and acting to achieve social development goals," he said.

The event then continued with speeches from the Heads of Member States which emphasised the importance of water for sustainable development and sustainability in the future, including among the most important issues related to water resources and conservation.

The highlight of the Opening Ceremony and Summit-Level Meeting was the adoption of the Kumamoto Declaration which underlines Member States' commitment to transforming into quality-oriented societies that are resilient, sustainable, and inclusive by leveraging improved governance, shrinking wealth gaps, and appealing to the science and technology community.

The two-day event were attended by Heads of Member States, governments, ministers and senior regional government officials, heads of the United Nations and international organisations, research institutions, NGOs, relevant experts, and practitioners. The substance of the summit comprised multiple sessions – parallel thematic, special island, and integrated.

There were also exhibitions and symposiums featuring presentations, discussions, and information related to water issues and initiatives across the globe.

Adhering to the summit theme "Water for Sustainable

Development – Best Practices and the Next Generation", the integrated sessions focused on finance, governance, and science and technology, particularly international and regional trends following the 3rd Asia-Pacific Water Summit in Yangon, Myanmar in 2017.

Nine themed sessions were open to participation from all delegations. The sessions engaged participants in a series of presentations on various topics including 'Water and Disaster/Climate Change'; 'Water Supply'; 'Water and the Environment from Source to Sea'; 'Water and Poverty/Gender'; 'Water and Sanitation/Wastewater Management'; 'Youth Leadership and Innovation by Youth'; 'Water and Food'; 'Water, Culture and Peace'; and 'Sound Water Cycle including Groundwater'.

The summit ended with the Closing Ceremony, which was held on April 24.

The 4th Asia-Pacific Water Summit concluded with a summary of the outcomes of the sessions that revolved around four main achievements: 'Towards a Sustainable Society'; 'Towards a Resilient Society'; 'Towards an Inclusive Society'; and 'Towards the UN 2023 Water Conference and Beyond'.

The Chairmanship Handover Ceremony was followed with a pledge and appeal of the Youth on Water Action, exhibiting the region's commitment to addressing youth participation as future ambassadors in a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive new era, particularly through actions on water management.

His Excellency Tetsuo Saito, Japanese Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism in his closing remarks addressed the adoption of the Kumamoto Declaration and agreement to take action on the three key focus areas of governance, finance, and science and technology.

He also reiterated and called on Member States and partners to participate in the 2nd International High-Level Conference on the International Decade for Action – "Water for Sustainable Development" to be held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan on June 6 - 9 and the 2023 UN Water Conference in New York, the United States on March 22 - 24, 2023.



His Excellency Prime Minister of Japan delivering his speech.

Act together to build positive safety and health culture

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 30 - The Safety, Health and Environment National Authority (SHENA) launched the E-SHENA, an online registration portal, in conjunction with World Day for Safety and Health at Work (WDSHW), this year.

The launching was officiated by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mat Suny bin Haji Md. Hussein, Minister

of Energy.

WDSHW falls on April 28 and aims to raise awareness on accident prevention in the workplace and improve work culture and best practices to ensure safety and health in the working environment.

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This year's theme is "Act Together to Build a Positive Safety and Health Culture" which explores the topics of participation and social dialogues in creating a positive safety and health culture.

"Over the last nine years, 68 work-related fatalities have been recorded in Brunei Darussalam and the majority of those occurred in the construction industry.

We are seeing a general down-trend, from 10-12 fatalities in 2013-2015, to four to five fatalities in 2020-2021, this is still not acceptable, because every life lost is just one is too many.

"Therefore, we must remain vigilant and closely scrutinise so as to prevent such occurrences and we must acknowledge that this is a huge task to be tackled and SHENA requires the support from everyone," said the Minister of Energy.

Everyone has an important role to create a positive and preventative safety and health culture in the workplace, in order to prevent injury or fatality.



Yang Berhormat Minister of Energy officiating the launching of the online registration E-SHENA.

In realising and embracing the use of technology in supporting Brunei Darussalam's national agenda on digital transformation, E-SHENA is an online registration portal allowing stakeholders to apply for registration of safety and health officers, and radiation workers and licences at their own convenience. It is

also designed to increase the efficiency of existing work processes as well as create a more responsive and dynamic work environment.

This year, SHENA also held a Doa Selamat and Doa Kesyukuruan Ceremony.

Gamification Team wins top prize



Yang Berhormat Minister of Education presents the top prizes to Team Gamification from Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD).

BERAKAS, April 28 - An educational board game developed by the Gamification Team from Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) won the top prize of \$2,000 from the BIMP-EAGA Entrepreneurship Competition.

Meanwhile, the SES Cares Team from UBD won the \$1,500 second-place prize while Mended Designs from UBD won the \$1,000 third-place prize.

The ceremony was held at the Institute of Brunei Technical Education (IBTE) Sultan Saiful Rijal Campus, where Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Hamzah bin Haji Sulaiman, Minister of Education presented prizes to the winners and six other runners-up.

Fourty-three teams submitted proposals for the competition, and only nine were shortlisted for the competition held at IBTE Mechanical Campus on April 21.

Each team made a five-minute pitch to a panel of judges comprising government officials and notable private sector individuals.

"Due to the COVID-19 situation, the competition was open only for students from higher learning and technical education institutions in the country," said Dr. Haji Mohd. Zamri bin Haji Sabli, Director and CEO of IBTE.

He hoped the competition would encourage the development of micro, small and medium enterprises among youths.

UBD and Imagine sign MoU in research



Yang Berhormat Minister of Transport and Infocommunications during the signing ceremony.

TUNGU LINK, April 21 - Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) and Imagine Sdn. Bhd. (Imagine) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at bridging the digital divide in Brunei Darussalam and better understanding the digital needs of low-income households and individuals, further enabling the Smart Nation initiative towards the National Vision 2035.

The study "Understanding Digital Inclusion in Brunei Darussalam" is the first initiative for the UBD research team to conduct surveys and interviews among beneficiaries from

the Community Development Department (JAPEM), Brunei Islamic Religious Council (MUIB), and Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, and will take place over the next three months.

The results of the research will provide the necessary foundation for Imagine to provide products and services that meet the needs and expectations of those below that demographic.

The signing ceremony which took place at the UBD Library was attended by Yang

Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Abdul Motalib bin Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Setia Dato Paduka Haji Mohammad Yusof, Minister of Transport and Infocommunications as the guest of honour.

Signing the MoU on behalf of UBD was Pengiran Dr. Emeroylariffon bin Pengiran Abas, Director of the Office of the Assistant Vice Chancellor (Innovation and Enterprise) UBD, while signing on behalf of Imagine was Suzannawati binti Haji Suharju, Chief Executive Officer.

Advancing the country's senior citizens' agenda

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 1 - In line with its goal to unite the senior citizens to continue to lead and achieve the Brunei Vision 2035, the WARGAMAS Organisation has and continues to make progress and move forward for the good of the nation and country.

As one of the top five ASEAN countries heading towards an ageing population, there it is undeniable that senior citizens will always be included in the joint efforts to ensure lasting well-being in Brunei Darussalam.

The matter was stated by Yang Berhormat Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Aminuddin Ihsan bin Pehin Orang Kaya Saiful Mulok Dato Seri Paduka Haji Abidin, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports at the Inauguration Ceremony of the WARGAMAS Headquarters Building.

The Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports added that this is a reflection of senior citizens as human beings who are rich in experience and treasures of knowledge who dare to contribute their thoughts and



Yang Berhormat Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports delivering his speech at the Inauguration Ceremony of the WARGAMAS Headquarters Building.

what is also important, guide the current and future generations.

According to the Minister, the Senior Citizens Action Plan has been and will be updated to be in line with the Ministry of Health's strategy, which focuses on successful ageing by highlighting the

family institution in the care of the senior citizens.

"Among the efforts implemented is the Senior Citizens Care Programme, which was jointly organised by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) with strategic partners since 2020," added the Minister.

So far, it is clear that a total of 294 senior citizens in need throughout the country are cared for through this programme and this number is targeted to be increased to 350 senior citizens in need of care.

"Through various initiatives," said the Minister, "collaboration programmes conducted, among others with the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Religious Affairs, and MCYS, in addition to the membership which has reached around 1,000 people, WARGAMAS Organisation also proved its maturity as a proactive organisation, able to stand-alone and resilient, even during the COVID-19 pandemic."

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The Minister officiating the new headquarters.

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The Minister further said that recently, senior citizens were among those who gave great support to the COVID-19 National Vaccination Programme to reach 100 per cent of two doses of vaccine, and until yesterday, 74 per cent have received their booster shot.

"Congratulations to the WARGAMAS Organisation and all senior citizens in Brunei Darussalam for the success that has been achieved. 'Biskita' is a source of our pride," said the Minister again.

"With the new headquarters," added the Minister, "this is the



The Minister touring the exhibition.

latest platform to continue to work together to jointly take the opportunities available while addressing current challenges, including in the fields of society, health, and education in line with the objectives of the Senior Citizens Action Plan and bigger, the Brunei Vision 2035 that we need to lead together. These are the advantages and strengths of seniors that need to be maintained."

The Headquarters is a governance centre and an important platform in linking its strategic roles and bilateral meeting to create strategic partners for collaboration programmes.

Tackling climate change



Yang Mulia Deputy Minister of Development; Yang Berhormat Member of Legislative Council; and Acting Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of BIBD at BIBD Connects Lambak.

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 1 - Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam (BIBD) started a nationwide tree planting initiative in conjunction with the International Day of Forests.

The initiative was held as part of the bank's campaign, a 'Sustainable Nation' facilitated by the Community for Brunei aimed to raise awareness of the importance of tackling climate change.

A total of 20 saplings were planted by volunteers and stakeholders in all four districts.

Present at BIBD Connects Lambak were Yang Mulia Dato Seri Paduka Ar. Awang Haji Marzuke bin Haji Mohsin, Deputy Minister of Development; Yang Berhormat Khairunnisa binti Awang Haji Ash'ari, Member of Legislative Council as the founder of Green Brunei; and Hajah Noraini binti Haji Sulaiman, Acting Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of BIBD.

"Today's initiative is just one of many activities that BIBD will



undertake as we strive to deliver on our commitment under the BIBD Sustainability Framework. There will be many more trees planted over the next six months as part of our efforts to support the Brunei Darussalam National Council on Climate Change's goal of net zero by 2050 as well as global commitments such as the World Economic Forum's One Trillion Tree Campaign and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030," said the Acting Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of BIBD.

Representatives from campaign partners such as the Brunei Climate Change Secretariat; Brunei Youth Council; Green Brunei; Growth.BN; Department of Environment, Parks and Recreation (JASTRe); and CIC Environmental Services Sdn. Bhd. also present along with senior members of BIBD management and government officials.

Tree planting activities were also held at the H40 Lambak Housing Scheme; Bukit Beruang Recreational Park in the Tutong District; Lorong Tengah Seria National Housing Scheme and Selangan Agricultural Development Area, Temburong District.

Share best practices in combating climate crisis

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 22 - Youth representatives from environmental Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) discussed environmental sustainability with the United States (US) Embassy in Brunei Darussalam in conjunction with Earth Day.

The event was an opportunity to assemble groups who have conducted US government-funded environmental initiatives so that they could share their progress and exchange best practices.

Representative Shaima Misli from Sustainable Ocean Alliance gave a presentation on the recently completed AdvocaSEA Camp, which taught youth leaders about marine conservation issues.

Reef Check Brunei representative Frederick Chong talked about initiatives like Marine-O-Debris, which was funded through the US government's Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) in 2019.

The project empowers scuba divers to remove marine debris from the ocean and report data on the types, quantities and locations of materials collected. Environmental NGO Green Brunei also attended the event.

Following the presentations and discussion, the youth representatives toured the embassy compound to learn about its sustainability features and energy efficient practices.

Jeff Barrus, US Embassy Public Affairs Officer said that the US government was committed to working with international partners



Youth representatives from environmental Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) discuss environmental sustainability at the United States Embassy in Brunei Darussalam in conjunction with Earth Day.

to combat the climate crisis.

He cited the recent 'Our Oceans Conference', co-hosted by the US and Palau, as an example of international cooperation in tackling challenges like ocean warming, sea level rise, and ocean acidification.

The US Embassy will host the annual YSEALI Summit in June, featuring over 100 young climate leaders across South East Asia to discuss solutions for a warming planet.

Emily Fleckner, US Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission was also present.

The BSI index increase

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 12 - Brunei Darussalam Central Bank (BDCB) published the Business Sentiment Index (BSI) for Brunei Darussalam for March 2022.

This index is based on surveys conducted on more than 500 micro, small, medium, and large-sized businesses from the 11 economic sectors in the Sultanate.

The monthly index is designed to measure the level of business confidence and sentiment in the Sultanate and cover various aspects including current and future business conditions; current and future investments, current and future employment of workers; as well as current and future costs of running the businesses.

Therefore, BSI serves as a leading macroeconomic indicator with its forward-looking element.

Within the BSI, there are nine sub-indices. The current business conditions sub-index, which is the main headline index for the BSI, was 50.3 in March. This was the sixth expansion since October 2021, slightly higher than the 50.1 recorded in February this year.

Several factors cited by businesses include increasing oil prices, more business activities, higher demand from the government and the public, as well as more projects compared to the month before.

However, several businesses observed worse or similar conditions than February from the impact of the highly transmissible Omicron variant that had reduced the number of customers frequenting the stores and also the reduction in manpower with employees undergoing quarantine orders either

from being tested positive for COVID-19 or identified as close contacts.

The index for the one month ahead business conditions sub-index was recorded at 50.6 which reflected that despite challenging conditions, businesses were hopeful with an expectation of an increase in sales and activities with the upcoming Hari Raya Aidilfitri and that the daily COVID-19 cases had started to decline.

The investment sub-index was 50.1 for the current month, 50.6 for one month ahead, and 50.1 for three months ahead, indicating that general businesses have increased investment activities and inventory in March.

Some have plans to increase investment expenditures in April such as improvement of office infrastructure and business premises and purchases of equipment, company vehicles, and raw materials.

The employment sub-index was 50.2 for the current month and 50.2 for the month ahead, indicating that most businesses were hiring more employees in March and will continue to hire in the next month.

Overall, businesses still faced an overall shortage of workers as they were unable to replace the foreign workers whose permits expired and have to return to their home countries.

Businesses also faced difficulties to secure local workers to fill the gap and some resorted to hiring part-timers. Despite this, businesses hope for an improvement in the procurement of labour procedures and welcome any efforts to resolve the

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persistent manpower challenges.

The costs sub-index was 50.2 for the current month and 50.2 for the month ahead. This indicates that businesses continued to face increased costs of running their businesses in March and April.

Businesses expressed concerns regarding the rising costs over the months which in turn had lowered their profits.

In general, businesses cited increases in the prices of ingredients such as meat and raw materials such as fertilisers and oil, plus higher freight and shipping costs.

Higher operational costs are also caused by additional employee-related expenses such as paying overtime to existing employees to cover manpower shortages, and the purchase of Antigen Rapid Test kits, sanitisers, and face masks.

In terms of economic sectors, there was a slight improvement

8 food items set for Seasonal Maximum Price

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 3 - The Department of Economic Planning and Statistics (DEPS), Ministry of Finance and Economy in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT) will implement Seasonal Maximum Pricing on selected food items during Ramadan and Syawal 1443 Hijrah.

This is to control the pricing of high-demand food items used as main ingredients during the festive season.

This initiative hopes to assist the public in their daily expenses, particularly for the festivities and is part of government efforts to mitigate the current increase in food prices.

The revised maximum prices of these selected food items will come into effect from 1 Ramadan until 30 Syawal 1443 Hijrah.

A total of eight categories of selected food items were set at maximum prices for this year's festive season, namely whole

chicken, chicken eggs, cattle meat (basic meat not including meat from premium breeds and premium cuts), butter, margarine, ghee, flour as well as condensed, evaporated and cream milk.

The reasons cited for the lower performances observed by the businesses include lower sales compared to the previous month and manpower shortages due to COVID-19 cases among employees.

Two sectors namely oil and gas related and finance and insurance indicated optimism in March. Other sectors reported similar current business conditions in March compared to February.

In terms of the index by business size, businesses of all sizes have generally reported contraction with medium-sized businesses shown to have hit the hardest by the third wave of COVID-19 which began in February 2022.

The latest wave has caused a widespread workplace disruption among micro, small, medium, and large enterprises in terms of staff shortages and temporary closures.

The full list of maximum prices is available on the PenggunaBijak mobile app and the DEPS website.

Businesses are advised to maintain healthy competition by offering competitive prices below the set maximum prices. This initiative is an addition to the price ceiling set on several essential food items including cooking oil, baby formula, rice, and sugar.

DEPS reminded that under the Price Control Act Order (Amended), 2021, effective November 23, 2021, legal action can be taken against businesses found not to be adhering to the seasonal price ceiling, under Cap 10B, Price Control Act, Chapter 142, with a compound not exceeding \$1,000. For a subsequent offence, the penalty is a maximum fine of \$20,000 and five years imprisonment.

ACMF committed to sustainability

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 6 - The ASEAN Capital Markets Forum (ACMF) has reaffirmed its commitment to sustainability, while also ensuring that the gains from capital market development would benefit all ASEAN Member States and assist in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ACMF convened its 36th ACMF Chairs' Meeting hosted virtually by the Securities and Exchange Regulator of Cambodia (SERC).

The meeting took note of the positive reception to the launch of Version 1 of the ASEAN Taxonomy for Sustainable Finance (ASEAN Taxonomy) on November 10, 2021, by the ASEAN Taxonomy Board (ATB). The ACMF together with the ASEAN Insurance Regulators Meeting (AIRM), ASEAN Senior Level Committee on Financial Integration (SLC), and the ASEAN Working Committee on Capital Market Development (WC-CMD) established the ATB in March 2021.

Following the release of Version 1, the ATB will undertake targeted consultations with stakeholders from both official and private

sectors, with the input received being used in developing the next version of the ASEAN Taxonomy.

As of the end of February this year, issuances amounting to USD22.8 billion have been issued under the ASEAN Green, Social, and Sustainability Bond Standards, introduced in 2017 and 2018.

Towards this end, the ACMF is also looking forward to the development of the ASEAN Sustainability-Linked Bond Standards as well as the ASEAN Sustainable and Responsible Fund Standards.

At the same time, the ASEAN regulators welcomed the progress being made in the ACMF Market Development Programme (A-MDP). In particular, the meeting noted the successful participation of over 40 senior-level officials in the training programme on Sustainable Finance held in December 2021.

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The training programme was the first part of the collaboration with the Programme on International Financial Systems (PIFS) of Harvard Law School with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) support. PIFS will also provide training on Fintech and Crypto in the first half of 2022.

"Inclusivity is a prime goal of SERC's Chairmanship of the ACMF. We want to ensure that all ASEAN Member States can benefit from developments in the capital markets through capacity building as well as information exchange," said SERC Director-General Sou Socheat.

Intensifying capacity building is one of the key priorities under the ACMF Action Plan 2021-2025, which also includes fostering growth and recovery with sustainability as a strategic objective.

On facilitating transparency and information exchange, ACMF was pleased with the progress in efforts to create a one-stop knowledge hub on sustainable finance on the ACMF website, as well as the significant progress in developing the ASEAN Collective Investment Schemes (ASEAN CIS)

Progresif wins 2 awards

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 5 - Progresif Sdn. Bhd. won two categories in the recent 2022 Asian Telecom Awards, being recognised as Brunei's 'Mobile Operator of the Year' and the best 'Marketing & Brand Initiative of the Year' for their corporate social responsibility (CSR) project 'Progresif for Schools' in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MoE).

Over the last two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought tricky conditions that have made innovation, adaptation, and agility as some of the necessary traits for corporate companies to stay on the right track to keep customers happy, and employees performing at high levels and the books balanced.

The entries were judged, and winners were chosen by industry leaders comprising Head of Technology, Media and Telecommunications and Head of Clients and Markets Development at KPMG Asia Pacific Darren Yong; EY-Parthenon ASEAN Leader and EY ASEAN Technology, Media & Entertainment and Telecommunications Sector Market Segment Leader at EY Joongshik Wang; Global Technology, Media and Telecommunications Industry Leader at PwC China Wilson Chow; Asia Pacific Telecom, Media, and Entertainment Sector Leader at Deloitte Michinori Sato.

Progresif earned its nominations in the two categories – 'Mobile Operator of the Year' and 'Marketing & Brand Initiative of the Year' – based on two campaigns: the launch of the Progresif MORE postpaid mobile plan, and the 'Donate Data' campaign in collaboration with the MoE.

The judges felt Progresif embodied these characteristics in their performance, but it was the company's steadfast commitment to helping the communities in need as part of their CSR that rounded off Progresif's profile as a business to take note of and one that stands out amongst the rest.

Progresif cemented itself as Brunei's top mobile operator for its achievements in its MORE postpaid mobile plan launch, releasing a new product to the market at the height of the pandemic's second wave.

The launch was Brunei's first entirely digital campaign including a live-streamed launch, a viral TikTok campaign, the company's first-ever remotely directed Ad via Zoom, and a Progresif Media socially distanced experiential series premiere watch-along to

Digital Repository which will become a platform to promote and publicise cross-border offerings of the fund in ASEAN.

The meeting also noted the Corporate Governance Awarding Ceremony, expected to be held in September. The meeting also acknowledged the progress of CG Assessment as discussed and agreed upon in the 36th ACMF Chairs' Meeting and also the effort was taken by the ACMF to strengthen the governance of the implementation of CG Assessment by developing a TOR.

The meeting welcomed the initiatives to include the recent update of the members in the next ACMF Chairs' Meeting's agenda, especially the sharing about the development of the digital asset among the ACMF members.

ACMF expressed its gratitude to the Asian ADB for providing ACMF with technical assistance as well as expert guidance to foster capital market development throughout the ASEAN region.

ACMF also thanked Sustainable Finance Institute Asia (SFIA) and the Industry Advisory Panel Working Groups under the Joint Sustainable Finance Working Group for their support and effort in developing ASEAN's sustainable capital market.



Progresif Chief Executive Officer receiving the awards virtually.

engage thousands of community members.

The judges noted Progresif's digital campaign, which also incorporated the introduction of online purchases via their new web store, free door-to-door delivery of purchases, and use of WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger for community engagement and after sales care.

"Winning this award represents a significant achievement, especially for a telecom company operating in a small market. We had to truly differentiate ourselves while still being very relevant – and the MORE! Plan allowed us to achieve both. We are pleased to provide a solution that allows our customers to develop together with us," said Adi Iskandar bin Haji Basri, Progresif's Chief Commercial and Digital Officer.

Johan bin Dato Dr. Haji Johar, Progresif's Chief Corporate Strategy Officer commented, "Winning this award is a testament to the collaborative commercial and creative ingenuity of the team. We took a good look at the market and realised that there was not anything out there that spoke to the growing TikTok generation – which is becoming an increasingly important market. We are particularly proud of filming Brunei's first-ever Zoom-directed advertisement."

In the case of the 'Marketing & Brand Initiative of the Year' award for the Donate Data CSR campaign with MoE, judges were impressed by the selfless and socially responsible efforts of the company to partner with the government and sponsor infrastructure to provide 10 local schools with broadband Internet and provide a platform for the public to donate data to students.

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Through the platform, both Progresif and non-Progresif subscribers are able to donate money via SMS and online banking, which was then converted to data for students to use during online education.

When the second wave hit Brunei in August 2021, Progresif adjusted the priority to support any students in need of data and devices to sustain schooling from home. Within six months of the campaign's launch, the 'Donate Data' collected over \$10,500 from the public, translating to SIM cards covering 350 students in need.

By February, donations had reached \$58,000 and reflected the public's response to support Progresif's cause for education, having provided the equivalent of 20,000GB worth of data additions to students.

Speaking of the impact of the campaign, Amilin Mat Sah said,

Progresif's CSR and Sponsorship Coordinator, "The initiative was the first of its type in Brunei and demonstrated how kind and supportive individuals, as well as businesses, are in aiding our students and educators in Brunei Darussalam. It emphasises the importance of social responsibility, and this award belongs to all of us.

Hajah Nurul Haniah binti Haji Jaafar, Progresif Chief Executive Officer said, "Receiving these awards for Progresif is again another significant achievement, following the regional award we earned last year for Best Employee Experience."

"This encapsulates all Progresif stands for, our people and our capabilities this recognition truly highlights the strength of collaboration, the passion we have for continuously improving and innovating, never settling, and always progressive and ready to give and do more for our customers and stakeholders. I hope this is just one of the many achievements and recognitions that we have yet to come across in our journey and that this is the start of many more success stories to come," she added.

RPPI increases by 7.6 per cent in Q4 2021

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 5 - Brunei Darussalam Central Bank (BDCB) yesterday published Brunei Darussalam's Residential Property Price Index (RPPI) for the fourth quarter of 2021 (Q4 2021).

The index was compiled using data sourced from banks in Brunei Darussalam and is published with close cooperation from the Ministry of Development (MoD), in particular the Authority for Building Control and Construction Industry (ABCI).

Based on the transactions in Q4 2021, the RPPI was at 97.4, showing a 7.6 per cent increase year-on-year, and a 4.3 per cent increase quarter-on-quarter. This shows a continued increasing trend from the previous quarter.

A total of 128 private residential properties were purchased in Q4 2021 via bank financing, compared to 130 transactions in the previous quarter.

The majority of these transactions were for detached houses at 62.5 per cent; semi-detached houses at 11.7 per cent; terrace houses at 18.7 per cent; apartments at 5.5 per cent; and land at 1.6 per cent.

The overall median price for all types of private residential properties was \$264,000 in Q4 2021, an increase of 7.8 per cent compared to the previous year and an increase of 5.6 per cent compared to the previous quarter.

The median purchase prices for specific types of properties for Q4 2021 were \$295,400 for detached houses; \$255,000 for semi-detached houses; \$219,400 for terrace houses; \$240,000 for apartments; and \$187,500 for land.

In RPPI compilation, the median price is used as opposed to the average price since the median price is not affected by unusual prices of the same property type and hence, provides a better price estimate of the typical property in that period.

CPI increases 2.2 per cent in December 2021

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 6 - The Consumer Price Index (CPI) in December 2021 increased by 2.2 per cent year-on-year compared to December 2020, while, the prices of food and non-alcoholic beverages and non-food increased by 2.0 per cent and 2.2 per cent respectively.

The increase in food and non-alcoholic beverages prices was due to the increase in food prices such as cooking oil at 18.1 per cent, meat at 6.6 per cent, and vegetables at 6 per cent.

The increase in prices of cooking oil was due to the short supply and wet season in exporting countries. Meanwhile, the increase in prices of beef and buffalo meat was due to rising demand and COVID-19 induced supply chain disruptions.

Chicken meat prices also increased due to the rising cost of chicken feed, in which based on information from the Department of Agriculture and Agrifood, Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT), factors driving vegetable prices include supply shortages due to unfavourable weather conditions.

The increase in non-food components was driven by three commodity groups – clothing and footwear at 11.2 per cent;

transport at 5.9 per cent; and miscellaneous goods and services at 1.6 per cent.

Clothing and footwear prices rose mainly due to the increase in prices of women's outer clothing and clothing materials for women such as cotton, polyester, silk fabric, and lace. Meanwhile, the increase in transport was largely attributed to the rise in prices of motor cars and airfares to selected destinations due to a limited number of flights.

Miscellaneous goods and services increased mainly due to an increase in the service cost of employment agencies. Indices which registered decreases were housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels at 0.2 per cent and recreation and culture at 0.1 per cent.

For month-on-month changes, the CPI in December 2021 increased by 0.2 per cent compared to the previous month. The food and non-alcoholic beverages index increased by 0.7 per cent while the non-food index increased by 0.1 per cent.

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For 2021, the CPI increased by 1.7 per cent compared to 2020. The food and non-alcoholic beverages index and the non-food index increased by 2.4 per cent and 1.6 per cent, respectively.

The increase in the food and non-alcoholic beverages index was mainly due to the rising prices of beef, buffalo, and chicken meat. Meanwhile, the increase in the non-food index was mainly due

to the increase in the costs of transport as well as restaurants and hotels.

The CPI is a measure of price changes of goods and services paid by the consumer in a specified period and compiled monthly.

The list of goods and services in the CPI is based on the average expenditure per household from the Household Expenditure Survey (HES).

BILIF - Best Islamic Finance Education & Training



BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 6 - Brunei Institute of Leadership and Islamic Finance (BILIF) was awarded Best Islamic Finance Education & Training Brunei 2021 by the Global Banking & Finance Review at the Global Banking & Finance Awards.

Since its inception in 2011, the Global Banking & Finance Awards reflect the innovation, achievement, strategy as well as progressive and inspirational changes that take place within the global financial community.

Established in 2010, BILIF, formerly known as Centre for Islamic Banking, Finance, and Management (CIBFM) is the Centre of Excellence for the finance industry under the purview of Brunei Darussalam Central Bank (BDCB).

BILIF provides high-quality learning solutions and organises signature and collaborative events for human capacity development in the areas of Islamic finance and leadership.

Global Banking & Finance Review is a leading online and print magazine for the banking and financial sector with a global readership in over 200 countries.

Winners for the awards include companies of varied sizes across the globe that have successfully demonstrated prominence in the areas of expertise and excellence within the financial industry.

As of December 2021, BILIF has conducted over 550 programmes and has organised 64 events for more than 13,700 participants.

This includes a new suite of Virtual Instructor-Led Training (VILT) programmes and online events.

BIBD ME and BSI, Dubai sign MoU



Senior Executive Officer at BIBD ME (fourth from left) with officers from Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI) at the signing ceremony.

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, April 8 - BIBD Middle East (ME) Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam (BIBD), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI) to foster cooperation in the region.

The MoU will unlock opportunities for

cooperation in the area of the treasury, trade finance, transactional banking, Islamic syndicated financing, remittance, and human capacity development, among others.

BSI is a state-owned Islamic bank in Indonesia officially founded in early 2021 as a result of a merger between

state-owned Syariah banks.

Signing on behalf of BIBD was Syed Alwi bin Syed Abdillah Alkaff, Senior Executive Officer at BIBD ME.

“As the focal point for the BIBD Group in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), BIBD is committed and eager to look into new opportunities to expand our business in this region, and this MoU will pave the way for us to forge new relationship and cooperation that will help us achieve our goal and align with the group’s strategy and sustainability framework,” said Syed Alwi.

The signing took place at The Ritz Carlton, Dubai International Financial Center on March 23.

BIBD ME’s range of activities includes arranging deals in investments; advising on financial products; and arranging and advising on credit.

In February 2017, BIBD established a presence in Dubai through BIBD ME, an entity regulated by the Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA) which has granted BIBD ME a Category 4 License to conduct Islamic Financial Business as an Islamic Financial Institution.