



## His Majesty welcomes VTL establishment, appreciates Malaysia's support



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkhiah 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) during the Official Luncheon held in conjunction with the Official Visit of Yang Amat Berhormat Dato' Sri Ismail Sabri bin Yaakob, Prime Minister of Malaysia and spouse, Yang Amat Berbahagia Datin Sri Muhaini binti Zainal Abidin to Brunei Darussalam.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 15** – His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkhiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and Her Majesty Duli Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha binti Al-Marhum Pengiran Pemancha Pengiran Anak Haji Mohamed Alam received in audience Yang Amat Berhormat Dato' Sri Ismail Sabri bin Yaakob, Prime Minister of Malaysia and spouse, Yang Amat Berbahagia Datin Sri Muhaini binti Zainal Abidin.

The Audience Ceremony took place at the Cheradi Laila Kenchana, Istana Nurul Iman.

Prior to the ceremony, His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and Her Majesty Duli Raja Isteri welcomed their arrival at the Istana Nurul Iman and subsequently introduced them to the members of the royal family.

Present alongside Their Majesties 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 and Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Raabi'atul 'Adawiyah binti Pengiran Haji Bolkhiah; His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkhiah; Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Majeedah Nuurul Bolkhiah; Her Royal Highness

Continue on page 5

## His Majesty graces 38<sup>th</sup> National Day Celebration

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 23** – His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkhiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam graced the country's 38<sup>th</sup> National Day Celebration at the Taman Haji Sir Muda Omar 'Ali Saifuddien.

This year's celebration was scaled down, in light of the country's ongoing third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Accompanying His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam 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 Mateen; and His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkhiah.

Following the singing of the National Anthem, His Majesty was invited to inspect the Guard of Honour – comprising personnel from the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) and the Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF); and led by Lieutenant Colonel Azhar bin Matzan, Guard Commander.

Continue on page 8



3. Newly appointed Judicial Commissioner recites oath



10. Coherence, agreement required in nation building



11. First Meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> LegCo session commences



14. 354 UNISSA graduates receive degrees, diplomas



17. 9<sup>th</sup> Convocation Ceremony: UTB urged to enhance research programmes



20. KUPU SB gains popularity in educational field



22. Performing prayers: A 'fortress' against contempt



23. Producing the country's generation of huffaz



25. Royal birthday ceremonies held for the Crown Prince



29. MPRT sees launching of tourism product packages



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Newly appointed Judicial Commissioner recites oath



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 attending the Swearing-in Ceremony for the newly appointed Judicial Commissioner of the Supreme Court. Accompanying His Majesty 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 Mohamed Bolkiah; and His Royal Highness Prince Haji Sufri Bolkiah.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 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 attended the Swearing-in Ceremony for the newly appointed Judicial Commissioner of the Supreme Court. The event took place at Istana Nurul Iman.

Accompanying His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at the ceremony 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 Mohamed Bolkiah; and His Royal Highness Prince Haji Sufri Bolkiah.

The ceremony began with the reading of the Letter of Appointment by Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Penggawa Laila Bentara Istiadat Diraja Dalam Istana Pengiran Haji Alauddin bin Pengiran Paduka Tuan Pengiran Haji Abu Bakar, the Grand Chamberlain.

The event then proceeded with an oath recitation before His Majesty by Yang Arif Muhammed Faisal bin Pehin Datu Juragan Laila Diraja Dato Seri Pahlawan

Haji Kefli as the Judicial Commissioner of the Supreme Court, whose appointment is effective for two years (from May 6, 2021 to May 5, 2023).



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam presenting the Letter of Appointment to the newly appointed Judicial Commissioner of the Supreme Court at the Swearing-in Ceremony (above); His Majesty and other members of the royal family upon arrival at the Swearing-in Ceremony (below, left); and The Grand Chamberlain reading the Letter of Appointment at the ceremony (below, right)



## His Majesty sends congratulatory messages

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 congratulatory messages to:

- His Excellency Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran; the Government and people of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the occasion of its National Day on February 11;
- His Majesty Emperor Naruhito, Emperor of Japan; His Excellency Fumio Kishida, Prime Minister of Japan; as well as the government and people of Japan on the occasion of His Majesty Emperor Naruhito's 62<sup>nd</sup> birthday anniversary on February 23;
- His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Emir of Kuwait; His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of Kuwait; as well as members of the royal family, the government, and people of Kuwait on the occasion of its National Day on February 25; and
- His Excellency Nguyen Xuan Phuc, President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; as well as His Excellency Pham Minh Chinh, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Brunei Darussalam and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

## His Majesty receives congratulatory messages

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 congratulatory messages from the Heads of States and Leaders from friendly nations on the occasion of Brunei Darussalam's 38<sup>th</sup> National Day on February 23.

Among the aforementioned Heads of States were:

- His Majesty Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah Al-Musta'in Billah, Yang di-Pertuan Agong of Malaysia;
- His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;
- Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of the United Kingdom (UK) of Great Britain and Northern Ireland;
- His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain;
- His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Sultan of the Sultanate of Oman;
- His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah Boromneath Norodom Sihamoni, King of Cambodia;
- His Majesty King Philippe, King of Belgium;
- His Majesty King Harald V, King of Norway;
- His Excellency Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia;
- Her Excellency Halimah Yacob, President of the Republic of Singapore;
- His Excellency Joseph R. Biden, President of the United States of America (US);
- His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Rtd), Governor-General of Australia;
- His Excellency Xi Jinping, President of the Republic of China;
- His Excellency Moon Jae-in, President of the Republic of Korea (RoK);
- His Excellency Kim Jong-un, President of the State Affairs of the Democratic People's RoK;
- His Excellency Md. Abdul Hamid, President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh;
- His Excellency Dr. Arif Alvi, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan;

Continue on page 5

From page 4

- His Excellency Ram Nath Kovind, President of the Republic of India;
- His Excellency Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran;
- His Excellency Frank-Walter Steinmeier, President of the Federal Republic of Germany;
- His Excellency Alexander Van der Bellen, President of the Republic of Austria;
- His Excellency Zoran Milanović, President of the Republic of Croatia;
- His Excellency Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, President of the Portuguese Republic;
- Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary May Simon, Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada;
- His Excellency Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt;
- His Excellency Abdelmadjid Tebboune, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria;
- His Excellency Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Republic of Gabon;
- His Excellency Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone; and
- His Excellency Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

Meanwhile, the said Leaders from friendly nations included:

- His Excellency Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore;
- His Excellency Fumio Kishida, Prime Minister of Japan;
- Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh;
- His Excellency Imran Khan, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; and
- Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the State Administration Council of Myanmar.

## *News*

### His Majesty welcomes VTL establishment, appreciates Malaysia's support (continued)



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 Her Majesty Duli Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha binti Al-Marhum Pengiran Pemancha Pengiran Anak Haji Mohamed Alam during the Audience Ceremony with Yang Amat Berhormat Prime Minister of Malaysia and Yang Amat Berbahagia Datin Sri.

From front page

Princess Hajah Hafzah Sururul Bolkiah; Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Masna, Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA); and Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Amal Umi Kalthum Al-Islam; as well as other members of royal family.

Accompanying Yang Amat Berhormat Prime Minister of Malaysia were Yang Berhormat Dato' Sri Saifuddin bin Abdullah, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia; and Yang Berhormat Dato' Seri Dr.

Continue on page 6

## His Majesty welcomes VTL establishment, appreciates Malaysia's support (continued)

From page 5

Shahidan bin Kasim, Minister of Federal Territories of Malaysia.

Also in attendance was Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd. Yussof, Second Minister of Defence as the Minister-in-Attendance and spouse.

After the Audience Ceremony, His Majesty and Yang Amat Berhormat Prime Minister proceeded to the Cheradi Ratna Kenchana for a Four-Eye Meeting – where they discussed bilateral cooperation to further strengthen relations between Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia and exchanged views on issues of mutual importance, including post-COVID-19 cooperation, as well as regional developments.

In the afternoon, Their Majesties attended an Official Luncheon with the Prime Minister and spouse at the Baitur Rahmal Hall. The ceremony was preceded by a *doa selamat* recited by Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Seri Maharaja Dato Paduka Seri Setia (Dr.) Ustadz Haji Awang Abdul Aziz bin Juned, State Mufti.

His Majesty then consented to deliver a *titah* (royal speech); followed by a speech by the Prime Minister.

In the *titah*, His Majesty highlighted that the long-standing close relationship between the royal families, as well the government and people of Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia is a uniqueness centred on the similarities of religion, group, history, and

language. In this regard, it is important to continue nurturing this meaningful relationship to foster the understanding and bond between the two countries.

With the development of the Coronavirus situation, which is still affecting the whole world, the Monarch was pleased that both countries continue to work together in ensuring the well-being and safety of the people.

His Majesty further welcomed the discussions on the mutual recognition of COVID-19 Vaccination Certificates; and the establishment of a Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL) to restore-cross border movement. This will contribute towards improving the economies in both countries.

His Majesty also hoped for the further expansion of BIMP-EAGA cooperation (particularly through Sabah and Sarawak) to increase trade connectivity between Brunei and Malaysia. This will boost the private sector's confidence to move forward in the COVID-19 recovery phase.

On another note, His Majesty expressed his appreciation for Malaysia's support to Brunei as last year's Chair of ASEAN – especially on efforts to elevate the importance, as well as regional and international awareness on mental health.

The Monarch further touched on the Annual Leaders' Consultation – which has been held since 1997 and has provided many

Continue on page 7



Present alongside Their Majesties 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 and Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Raabi'atul 'Adawiyah binti Pengiran Haji Bolkiah; His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah; Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Majeedah Nuurul Bolkiah; Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Hafizah Sururul Bolkiah; Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Masna, Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA); and Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Amal Umi Kalthum Al-Islam; as well as other royal family members (above and below).



## His Majesty welcomes VTL establishment, appreciates Malaysia's support (continued)



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 and Her Majesty Duli Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha binti Al-Marhum Pengiran Pemancha Pengiran Anak Haji Mohamed Alam during the Official Luncheon held at the Baitur Rahmah Hall, Istana Nurul Iman.

From page 6

opportunities to discuss matters of mutual importance.

Despite facing the challenges of COVID-19, His Majesty added, the collaborative network across various fields – including trade, defence, education, and health – continues to show great development.

In further fostering the spirit of friendship, His Majesty also welcomed the next consultation which will be held in Malaysia.

The Monarch then congratulated the nation's counterpart for their admission as a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council for the 2022-2024 term. With this appointment, His Majesty believes that Malaysia will continue to play an important role in advancing the human rights agenda at a global level.

Earlier in the *titah*, His Majesty expressed his and Her Majesty's pleasure in welcoming Yang Amat Berhormat and Yang Amat Berbahagia Datin Sri, along with their delegation for the Prime Minister's first official visit to the country.

With this opportunity, His Majesty also congratulated Yang Amat Berhormat for his election as the Prime Minister of Malaysia.

The Monarch mentioned that the 'Malaysian Family' concept under the Prime Minister's leadership demonstrates the commitment in further strengthening the unity among the Malaysian community – which comprises a number of religions, races and cultures. Hence, His Majesty believes that Malaysia will continue to enjoy long-lasting stability and prosperity.

His Majesty then concluded the *titah* by thanking the Prime Minister and spouse, as well as their delegation for their visit;

and praying for their well-being, along with the progress and prosperity of the Malaysian government and people.

Yang Amat Berhormat and spouse arrived in the country along with their delegation on February 14.

Present at the Brunei International Airport

(BIA) to welcome their arrival were His Royal Highness the Crown Prince as His Majesty's Personal Representative; and Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Masna.

Also present to welcome the visitors were

Continue on page 8



Yang Amat Berhormat Prime Minister of Malaysia delivering a speech at the Official Luncheon.



The Official Luncheon was preceded by a *doa selamat* recited by Yang Berhormat State Mufti.

## His Majesty graces 38<sup>th</sup> National Day Celebration (continued)

From front page



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 country's 38<sup>th</sup> National Day Celebration at the Taman Haji Sir Muda Omar 'Ali Saifuddien. Accompanying His Majesty at the celebration 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 Mateen; and His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah.

This year saw the involvement of some 3,800 participants from eight groups - commencing with 38 members of the RBAF Training Institute carrying a giant-sized national flag, led by 1310 Lieutenant Awangku Wafuddin bin Pengiran Ismail; oath readers; as well as bearers of the national flag and the National Day logo banner.

This was followed by the national security groups: consisting of RBAF; RBPF; and uniformed government teams (including the Royal Customs and Excise Department; Prisons Department; Fire and Rescue Department; Department of Immigration and National Registration; National Service Programme; as well as other uniformed personnel).

The next group included people with different abilities (OKU); senior citizens and Brunei Darussalam's seven ethnic groups. Also participating in the event were representatives of the public and private sectors; public and educational bodies; cycling association and in-line skate's members. Concluding the march past were a team of COVID-19 frontliners from various agencies.

The National Day oath was then read by 38 participants (including the OKU), led by Awang Muhammad Abdul Wafi bin Haji Sofian, Head of the COVID-19 Youth Volunteer Operations Management Centre Secretariat.

This was followed by three cheers of "Allahu Akbar (Allah is most great)" by 2,500 participants, led by Awang Haji Abdul Afiq bin Zainuddin, Teacher at the Paduka Seri Begawan Sultan Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Religious School, Kuala Belait.

The celebration was further enlivened with performances featuring patriotic songs - among which include "Berat Sama Dipikul, Ringan Sama Dijinjing"; "Brunei Bumi Bertuah"; and "Pemangkin Pembangunan Negara", alongside a line-up of local creatives.

His Majesty also had a get-together session with some of the participants prior to leaving the event.

Continue on page 9

## HM welcomes VTL establishment, appreciates Malaysia's support (continued)

From page 7

Yang Berhormat Second Minister of Defence and spouse. Upon arrival, the Prime Minister inspected the guard of honour mounted by members of the Royal Brunei Land Force (RBLF) and Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF).

Yang Amat Berhormat was then introduced to the Cabinet Ministers; Deputy Ministers; Commissioner of the Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF) and spouse; Commander of RBAF and spouse; foreign envoys in Brunei Darussalam and their spouses; and Permanent Secretaries at PMO and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) along with their spouses.

The two-day official visit was aimed at strengthening the existing bilateral relations; while bolstering the 'Malaysian Family' network on an ASEAN level. During the visit, the Prime Minister also invited His Majesty to attend the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Leaders' Consultation, which will take place in Malaysia this year.



His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Masna welcoming the arrival of the Prime Minister of Malaysia and spouse, along with their delegation.

## His Majesty graces 38<sup>th</sup> National Day Celebration (continued)

From page 8



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam inspecting the Guard of Honour at the 38<sup>th</sup> National Day Celebration.

Previously, on February 22, His Majesty also attended a Kesyukuran Ceremony in conjunction with the 38<sup>th</sup> National Day Celebration.

The ceremony, which consisted of a mass Maghrib and Isyak prayer, Surah Yasin recitation and *doa kesyukuran* was led by Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Seri Utama Dato Paduka Seri Setia Haji Awang Salim bin Haji Besar.

Also in attendance at the ceremony were His Majesty's sons: His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah; His Royal



His Majesty during the get-together session with some of the participants at the event.

Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik; and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen.

Leading the mass Maghrib and Sunnat Hajat prayers was Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Seri Utama Dato Paduka Seri Setia Haji Awang Salim. Meanwhile, the mass Isyak prayer was led by Yang Dimuliakan Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Setia Raja Dato Paduka Seri Setia Haji Awang Suhaili bin Haji Mohiddin.

Continue on page 10



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik; and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen at the Kesyukuran Ceremony in conjunction with the 38<sup>th</sup> National Day Celebration.



Doa kesyukuran and Surah Yasin recitation led by Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Seri Utama Dato Paduka Seri Setia Haji Awang Salim bin Haji Besar.

National Day Celebration shows success despite third wave (continued)



His Majesty during the get-together session with some of the participants at the event.



From page 9

The ceremony was also held simultaneously in all mosques, suraus and religious halls across the country, with a focus on several mosques in each district.

This year's National Day Celebration still maintained the theme 'Menjayakan Wawasan Negara (Accomplishing the National Vision)'.

The National Day oath was led by the Head of the COVID-19 Youth Volunteer Operations Management Centre Secretariat (right).



Among those involved in the performances at the celebration (above & below).



Coherence, agreement required in nation building (continued)

From page 10

which connects the Brunei-Muara District and the Temburong District.

"With the building of this bridge, a lot of benefits can be attained. Apart from easing communication, the bridge also inspires us to rapidly move forward to generate development.

"Among the current advancements is the nation's establishment of the Temburong District Development Authority (AKTD) to formulate various plans – including those designed to develop the agricultural field and to turn the district into an eco-tourism destination," said the Monarch.

"Meanwhile, the National Development Plan (RKN) is a comprehensive long-term project conducted for the provision of infrastructure and facilities that can be enjoyed by the people, including investors in the country," added His Majesty.

"This is also a priority for implementation," the Monarch emphasised, while acknowledging that efforts towards economic recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic must be made with caution – including easing restrictions economic activities.

In this regard, the public and private sectors have also been pushed to incorporate information technology into their everyday lives.

"This requires us to accelerate the enhancement of Digital Transformation to ensure that the new normal can be carried out smoothly," said His Majesty.

This is in line with the goal of the Digital Economy Masterplan 2025, His Majesty highlighted. All of this requires coherence and agreement in the decision-making process.

Earlier in the *titah*, His Majesty expressed his gratitude to Allah the Almighty for the ability to celebrate the 38<sup>th</sup> National Day this year.

"The National Day is a historical event for all independent nations – including Brunei Darussalam," the Monarch explained, "by celebrating National Day, we get to remember and appreciate the value of independence – including the sacrifice of those who worked hard to attain it."

Thus, this independence should be preserved by all citizens and residents with great patriotic spirit, as it is a valuable heritage that should be enjoyed across generations.

First Meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> LegCo session commences

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 24** - 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 officiate the Opening Ceremony of the First Meeting of the 18<sup>th</sup> State Legislative Council (LegCo) session at the Legislative Council Chamber Hall, Dewan Majlis Building.

Accompanying His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam were His Majesty's son and brother: His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office; and



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) in conjunction with Brunei Darussalam's 38<sup>th</sup> National Day for the year 1443 Hijrah/2022 Masihi at the Istana Nurul Iman.

His Majesty also touched on the COVID-19 pandemic, whose outbreak has truly tested the nation's resolve and capabilities. The National COVID-19 Vaccination Programme – which is implemented in stages – has considerably achieved positive results.

The Monarch then acknowledged the efforts made by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) in organising weekly *munajat* night programme to bring people closer to Allah the Almighty through *istighfar*, Surah Yasin recitation, *tazkirah* and other forms of *zikir*. With this initiative, it is hoped that the people and the country will be given protection and will be safe from all disasters and diseases – especially from COVID-19.

His Majesty further suggested for the reading of Surah Yasin to be read as a mass instead of individually; and called for the recitation to be *tartil* (in proper order).

In concluding the *titah*, His Majesty conveyed his appreciation to all the participants, workers and committee members who are involved in making this year's National Day Celebration a success. The Monarch further extended his gratitude to all citizens – including members of the public service sector (locally and abroad), security agencies, volunteers, and those from the private sector; and prayed for the people and country to remain under the care and protection of Allah the Almighty.

His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah.

His Majesty's entry into the Legislative Council Chamber Hall was accompanied by the carrying of the *Cokmar* (royal mace), followed by the delivery of a *titah* (royal speech) to mark the commencement of the First Meeting of the 18<sup>th</sup> LegCo session.

In the *titah*, the Monarch called for prudence in managing the country's finances; and emphasised that every appointed control

Continue on page 12

Coherence, agreement required in nation building

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 22** – For 38 years since the country's independence, various challenges have been encountered. Nevertheless, the drive towards development continues – generating growth and progress in various sectors.

One of the government's most important achievements is the ability to implement the National Housing Scheme for the welfare of the people.

The matter was stated by 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) delivered in conjunction with Brunei Darussalam's 38<sup>th</sup> National Day for the year 1443 Hijrah/2022 Masihi at the Istana Nurul Iman.

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam further touched on another significant milestone: the completion of the Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Bridge,

Continue on page 11

First Meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> LegCo session commences (continued)



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 Opening Ceremony of the First Meeting of the 18<sup>th</sup> State Legislative Council (LegCo) session held at the LegCo Chamber Hall, Dewan Majlis Building.



Also present at the opening ceremony were His Majesty's son and brother: His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office; and His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah.

From page 11

officer should comply with the existing financial guidelines, and not use their power or authority to spend the national budget indiscriminately.

His Majesty also consented to the amendment of the Constitutional Order (Financial Procedure) (Amended) 2022 and Financial Regulations 2022 – which will take effect on April 1.

Touching on the Employee Trust Fund (TAP), His Majesty was pleased to note that a study on a new retirement scheme has been completed by the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE) in collaboration with TAP; and its full implementation is expected to kick off in 2023.

“All preparations ahead to the scheme need to be carried out accordingly – including the amendment to the Act, changes to the information technology system as well as its dissemination,” His Majesty emphasised.

The Monarch further stressed that it is important for those involved to understand

the new retirement scheme.

His Majesty also noted that the country is still reliant on the oil and gas industry. Nevertheless, efforts to diversify the economy to minimise this dependency has shown favourable outcomes – such as the exportation of refined fuel through foreign direct investments (FDIs) from January to November 2021, which was worth US\$4.9 billion.”

The Brunei Fertilizer Industries also began exporting some 6,200 metric tonnes of urea fertiliser on February 3 this year, the Monarch added.

According to His Majesty, FDIs will certainly provide employment and business opportunities to the local people and companies. This will bring significant benefits to the country, including increasing our revenue.

“Meanwhile, efforts to increase self-sufficiency in the agriculture, agri-food, fisheries, and livestock sectors are actively pursued,” said His Majesty – noting that the matter is being carried

out by the relevant ministries, with the increase in output from the agriculture and fisheries sectors.

Local rice production has also begun to show results – with the increased productivity of rice milling. The implementation of this project will help farmers to focus more on cultivating their paddy, His Majesty continued.

In this regard, the Monarch also expressed his hope for the members of LegCo to give their ideas and opinions without hesitation, for the sake of good. With this, the members are urged to use the opportunity to straighten out those that require polishing and improve those that need to be improved – this is the motto for this year's session.

His Majesty further reminded that the 11<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan (RKN11) will end on the financial year 2022/2023. This means that RKN12 will start on April 2023 – whereby, at the moment, the RKN Secretariat at MoFE is actively preparing a roadmap for projects that will be included in the development plan.

His Majesty explained that the road map will incorporate the Whole of Government Approach – which will involve all ministries – in the efforts to ensure that the Brunei Vision 2035 can be achieved.

“Since the second COVID-19 outbreak in the country, the government has extended its assistance to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) – with the aim to prevent workforce retrenchment. Financial aid has also been given to affected employees in the private sector to supplement their daily lives,” said the Monarch.

His Majesty continued, “among the issues that have come as a lesson following the outbreak of the pandemic is food security. Due to travel restrictions that are still in place in certain countries, the food supply chain has been affected – leading to a spike in prices. Brunei Darussalam is not exempt from the same impact.”

However, His Majesty was delighted to note that the Department of Economic Planning and Statistics (DEPS) at MoFE has been actively monitoring food prices, as part of the measure to keep businesses from increasing the prices of goods to an impermissible level.

Earlier in the *titah*, the Monarch expressed his gratitude for the ability to gather for the First Meeting of the 18<sup>th</sup> LegCo session.

Continue on page 13

First Meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> LegCo session commences (continued)



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and members of the royal family in a group photo session with the members of LegCo at the ceremony.

From page 12

His Majesty also highlighted that the LegCo meeting serves as a strategic platform to discuss matters pertaining to the welfare of the people and nation. This year's session will be reviewing the national budget for the financial year 2022/2023. The budget has been reviewed together with the relevant ministries at the National Budget Committee Meeting.

“Hence, all projects that are listed will surely support the said ministries and departments' strategic plans,” underscored His Majesty.

To bless the ceremony, a *doa selamat* was also recited by Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Seri Utama Dato Paduka Seri Setia Haji Awang Salim bin Haji Besar.

Prior to leaving the event, His Majesty and members of the royal family were invited for a group photo session with the members of LegCo.

The First Meeting of the 18<sup>th</sup> LegCo session will be chaired by Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Lela Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdul Rahman bin Dato Setia Haji Mohamed Taib, Yang Di-Pertua of LegCo; with the assistance of Yang Dimuliakan Pehin Orang Kaya Pekerma Jaya Dato Paduka Awang Haji Judin bin Haji Asar, Clerk to LegCo; and Rose Aminah binti Haji Ismail, Deputy Clerk to LegCo.

Continue on page 14



Yang Berhormat Yang Di-Pertua of LegCo at the Opening Ceremony of the First Meeting of the 18<sup>th</sup> LegCo session.



Among the members of LegCo at the Opening Ceremony (above and right).



## 354 UNISSA graduates receive degrees, diplomas

**BERAKAS, February 2** - The studies undergone by 354 graduates from Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA) has finally paid off at the institution's 11<sup>th</sup> *Hafli Al-Takharuj* (Convocation Ceremony).

Present to confer Degree and Diploma certificates to the said graduates at the ceremony was 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 Chancellor of UNISSA.

Accompanying His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was His Royal Highness Prince (Dr.) Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the Pro-Chancellor of UNISSA.

Upon arrival, His Majesty and His Royal Highness the Crown Prince entered the hall, led by the mace of the convocation featuring UNISSA's *Mushaf Al-Quran*. This was accompanied by *selawat* and *Qasidah (Dikir) Ahlan Bikum Sultana*; and afterwards, followed by the singing of the national anthem.

The ceremony continued with the recitation of Quranic verses: comprising Surah Saba', verses 10 to 13 by Muhammad Yusrun bin Haji Jahari, Bachelor of Usuluddin (Tahfiz and Qira'at) graduate and Special Degree in Hafaz Al-Quran 30 Juzuk recipient.

Meanwhile, the Al-Hadith recitation was delivered by Ahmad Shafie bin Haji Mohd. Adnan, Bachelor of Usuluddin (Tafsir and Hadith) graduate; whereas the interpretation of Al-Quran and Al-Hadith was recited by Mohammad Rif'at Atiyah bin Anwari Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Syariah Law graduate.



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).

His Majesty also delivered a *titah* (royal speech) at the ceremony, in which he reminded the graduates that received Degree does not signal the end of acquiring knowledge. Rather, it is merely a motivator or instigator towards a further direction.

The Monarch explained that the greater and stronger one's knowledge is, the more capable he is to elevate the nation to a higher level – as implied in Surah Al-Mujadalah, verse 11.

"This is where the importance of lifelong education lies, especially balanced education for worldly and *ukhrawi* (afterlife) importance," said His Majesty, emphasising the need to empower balanced education to shape the nation's identity.

Earlier in the *titah*, His Majesty congratulated the graduates who were

receiving their certificates as a symbol of their achievement in their respective studies. The Monarch also congratulated and expressed his appreciation to the parents, guardians and lecturers for their efforts and sacrifices in supporting the graduates' successes.

His Majesty was also pleased to know that UNISSA is very active in offering lifelong learning programmes to public and private servants, as well as the public. Such programmes are indeed commendable and even need to be continued – not only by UNISSA, but also other institutions of higher learning – by offering new programmes that are relevant to the current needs.

The Monarch also highlighted the importance of making the effort to

Continue on page 15

## First Meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> LegCo session commences (continued)

From page 13

There are currently 36 LegCo members – comprising ex-officio members; titled persons; individuals who have achieved distinction; and Brunei Darussalam's district representatives.

This year's session will deliberate on and approve issues of importance, including the Supply Bill 2022/2023 – which will be done through three stages prior to its approval, and will come into effect April 1. The meeting will continue tomorrow, on February 25.



Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Seri Utama Dato Paduka Seri Setia Haji Awang Salim bin Haji Besar reciting a *doa selamat* to bless the ceremony.

## 354 UNISSA graduates receive degrees, diplomas (continued)



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at UNISSA's 11<sup>th</sup> *Hafli Al-Takharuj*. Accompanying His Majesty was His Royal Highness Prince (Dr.) Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the Pro-Chancellor of UNISSA.

From page 14

complement and develop professional knowledge skills among the workforce – including academic and non-academic staff. This effort needs to be done in a continuous manner, so that the results can enhance the quality and effectiveness of the university's management.

In this regard, His Majesty welcomed the initiative to establish the Professional Development Unit at UNISSA, which will play an important role in enhancing the competency and quality of human resources at the university.

His Majesty also urged UNISSA to continue improving its research programmes for teaching excellence. Several areas that can be explored for research by the university's academics include Islamic law; Islamic banking and finance; agriculture; *Halal* science; and contemporary issues faced by the current Muslim community.

The Monarch then underscored that the university's achievements and excellence in teaching and research will make UNISSA one of the leading Islamic universities in the world.

His Majesty has also been following UNISSA's development in the publication field, under which 33 new scholarly books have recently been successfully published in 2021 through international collaboration with its Research and Publication Centre.

"Thirty-three books in various fields – written in Malay, English



The recitation of Quranic verses, comprising Surah Saba', verses 10 to 13 was delivered by Awang Muhammad Yusrun bin Haji Jahari; while the Al-Hadith recitation was delivered by Awang Ahmad Shafie bin Haji Mohd. Adnan; and the interpretation of Al-Quran and Al-Hadith was recited by Awang Mohammad Rif'at Atiyah bin Anwari.



His Majesty conferring a Degree certificate to one of the graduates at the ceremony.



His Majesty conferring a Degree certificate to one of the graduates at the ceremony.

and Arabic languages – is not an easy task," the Monarch emphasised, "but is a result of brainstorming efforts through studies and research."

"Hence, UNISSA should be applauded based on such efforts that can be described as significant initiatives, through which the university earns its own level of rank – as such efforts are best continued and are, in fact, worth emulating," said His Majesty.

Before ending the *titah*, His Majesty stated his hope for the graduates to make use of their knowledge gained to jointly

Continue on page 16



The Rector of UNISSA delivering his welcoming speech at the event.

354 UNISSA graduates receive degrees, diplomas (continued)



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 and His Royal Highness Prince (Dr.) Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in a group photo with the council and senate members, the rector, core officers and academic teaching workforce of UNISSA at the university's 11<sup>th</sup> Hafl Al-Takharuj.

From page 15

address and resolve contemporary issues faced by the Muslim community at this time.

His Majesty also congratulated and conveyed his appreciation to all of UNISSA's workforce – including council and senate members, the rector, core officers, Academic teaching workforce, as well as the university's officers and staff members – for their contribution and services in making the 11<sup>th</sup> Hafl Al-Takharuj a success.

The Monarch further prayed for Allah the Almighty to bless and grant them multiple rewards.

His Majesty then proceeded to confer Degree and Diploma certificates to the recipients: comprising 234 Bachelor's Degree graduates; eight PhD graduates; 62 Master's Degree graduates; 11 Diploma in Islamic Law and Syarie Law graduates; three Postgraduate Diploma recipients; 26 Higher National Diploma (HND) graduates; along with 10 graduates who received their certificates in Special Degree for Hafaz Al-Quran 30 Juzuk.

Among the numbers, 33 were international students from foreign countries, including Singapore; Thailand; Malaysia; Indonesia; Tanzania; Morocco; Burkina Faso; Yemen; and Sri Lanka.

Earlier at the event, a welcoming speech was delivered by Dr. Haji Norarfan bin Haji Zainal, Rector of UNISSA; whom afterwards, announced the recipients for UNISSA's Medal and Book Prizes Award as well as contributors for the 11<sup>th</sup> Hafl Al-Takharuj.



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and His Royal Highness the Crown Prince interacting with the graduates at the ceremony (above and below).



The ceremony was further enlivened with an Al-Jami'ah nasyid performance. To bless the event, a *doa selamat* was recited by Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Seri Maharaja Dato Paduka Seri Setia

(Dr.) Ustaz Haji Awang Abdul Aziz bin Juned, State Mufti. This year's Hafl Al-Takharuj also consisted of the distribution of coupons for UNISSA's small-sized Mushaf.

9<sup>th</sup> Convocation Ceremony: UTB urged to enhance research programmes



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, the Chancellor of Universiti Teknologi Brunei (UTB) delivering a *titah* (royal speech) at the 9<sup>th</sup> UTB Convocation Ceremony.



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and His Royal Highness Prince (Dr.) Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the Pro-Chancellor of UTB at the 9<sup>th</sup> UTB Convocation Ceremony (above and below).

**BERAKAS, February 12** – 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, the Chancellor of Universiti Teknologi Brunei (UTB) consented to attend and officiate the 9<sup>th</sup> UTB Convocation Ceremony.

The event was successfully conducted amidst the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic – in which Brunei Darussalam has recently entered the Early Endemic Phase – with the implementation of the outline Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Accompanying His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was His Royal Highness Prince (Dr.) Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Pro-Chancellor of UTB.

The ceremony commenced with the recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah, guided by Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Seri Maharaja Dato Paduka Seri Setia (Dr.) Ustaz Haji Awang Abdul Aziz bin Juned, the State Mufti.

His Majesty's procession into the Plenary Hall was led by the macebearer, carrying the Mushaf Al-Quran; followed by the singing of the national anthem.



A Quranic recitation of Surah Al-Imran, verse 190 to 195 was delivered by Awangku Yura Alif bin Pengiran Yusofe. Meanwhile, an interpretation of the verses was presented by Muhammad Khaliq Syafiq bin Md. Don.



A Quranic recitation of Surah Al-Imran, verse 190 to 195 was delivered by Awangku Yura Alif bin Pengiran Yusofe, Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) in Mechanical Engineering graduate. Meanwhile, an interpretation of the verses was presented by Muhammad Khaliq Syafiq bin Md. Don, Master of Science (Hons) in Management and Technology graduate.

The event then proceeded with a welcoming speech by Professor Dr. Hajah Zohrah binti Haji Sulaiman, Vice-Chancellor of UTB.

His Majesty also delivered a *titah* (royal speech) at the ceremony, in which he pleased to note UTB's achievement in earning five-plus for the QS Star Rating. This achievement, said the Monarch, is a testament to the university's elevation to a global standard.

Listing out UTB's successes (in attaining the 344<sup>th</sup> place in the QS World University Ranking; the 126<sup>th</sup> place in the QS Asia University Ranking; and the 40<sup>th</sup> place in Asia for Universities under 50 Years Old), the Monarch stated that since 2018, the institution has climbed 98 places, improved by threefold and has not shown a negative performance. These achievements have positioned UTB ahead of several prestigious universities.

Continue on page 18

## 9<sup>th</sup> Convocation Ceremony: UTB urged to enhance research programmes (continued)

From page 17

His Majesty further congratulated UTB for their success in the QS Subject Ranking Report – whereby UTB’s Petroleum Engineering Programme has attained the top 150 for the first time; while its Structural Engineering Programme has been rated five stars.

Previously, in 2019, the Monarch called for the university to update its programme list, so it is more relevant to the current needs.

In this regard, His Majesty was pleased to note that UTB has since been offering new programmes that have reviewed based on the latest necessities and trends. These programmes are hoped to support the nation’s requirements and development.

Earlier in the *titah*, His Majesty expressed his gratitude to Allah the Almighty for the ability to attend the 9<sup>th</sup> UTB Convocation Ceremony.

His Majesty further congratulated the graduates for their success in completing their studies (hoping that it will drive further achievements in the future); as well as the parents, guardians and academic staff who have consistently pushed the students to their success.

The Monarch also mentioned that Bachelor’s Degree programmes in Science and Technology (except for Engineering) has been shortened to three years. In relation to the matter, His



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 during the recitation of *doa selamat* by the State Mufti.



His Majesty and His Royal Highness the Crown Prince interacting with the graduates at the ceremony (left); His Majesty in a group photo with some of the graduates at the ceremony (right).



Yang Berhormat the State Mufti leading the recitation of *doa selamat*.

Majesty urged for this opportunity to be used to comprehensively review human resource needs in accordance with the needs for specialisation.

His Majesty welcomed collaborations between UTB and industry players – including UTB’s cooperation with Brunei Shell Petroleum and Shell Deepwater Borneo to set up the Artificial Intelligence Lab at the university (which is a ‘Gift to the Nation’); its collaboration with Huawei ICT Academy Laboratory through value-added certification in information communications technology (ICT) for the global job market; setting up a 5G laboratory with the Authority for Info-communications Technology Industry of Brunei Darussalam (AITI); and an articulation programme with Micronet International College in computer science, which will produce

Continue on page 19

## 9<sup>th</sup> Convocation Ceremony: UTB urged to enhance research programmes (continued)



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and His Royal Highness Prince (Dr.) Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister’s Office in a group photo with the council and senate members; vice-chancellor; core officers; academic workforce; as well as officers and staff members at the 9<sup>th</sup> UTB Convocation Ceremony.

From page 18

more graduates in the fields of multimedia and network security.

The Monarch also applauded UTB’s measures and initiatives in bolstering the nation’s aspirations towards becoming a Smart Nation, driven by a digital technology landscape across the government, economy, and community.

Through these initiatives, it is hoped that UTB will be able to enhance its research programmes – by focusing on key areas such as food science and technology; nanotechnology; downstream industrial technology; material science and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

This will contribute to an increase in publications, patents, and commercialisation – thus, spurring the country’s economic growth.

His Majesty also hoped that all graduates will be able to positively contribute to the nation’s economy as a workforce with a ‘growth mindset’; and will be more prepared in facing challenges as well as in grabbing opportunities that arise from the rapid development in technology and global changes.

In concluding the *titah*, the Monarch conveyed his appreciation to all members of UTB – including the council and senate members; vice-chancellor; core officers; academic workforce; as well as officers and staff members for their contributions and service. His Majesty then prayed for Allah the Almighty to bless all their efforts and to grant them multiple rewards.

Afterwards, His Majesty conferred PhD certificates to six graduates; Master’s Degree certificates to 78 graduates; and Bachelor’s Degree certificates to 339 graduates.

Prior to the Monarch’s departure, a *doa selamat* was read by the State Mufti to bless the ceremony. The 9<sup>th</sup> UTB Convocation Ceremony also saw the graduation

of the very first cohort under PhD in Chemical Engineering; PhD in Petroleum Engineering; PhD in Management; PhD in Computer Network Security; PhD in Computer and Information Systems; Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Computing with Data Analytics; Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Applied Mathematics and Economics; Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Food Sciences and Technology; Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Architecture; Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) in Electrical and Electronic Engineering (Major in Electronic and Communication); and Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) in Electrical and Electronic Engineering (Major in Electrical Power).

To date, UTB has produced over 5,141 graduates under Brunei Darussalam Vocational and Technical Education Council (BDTVEC) Higher National Diploma (HND); 295 under HND Level Five; 2,265 undergraduates; 365 Master’s Degree graduates; and eight PhD graduates in Engineering; Business; Computing and Informatics; Applied Sciences and Mathematics; as well as Design.



The Vice-Chancellor of UTB delivering her welcoming speech at the event.

## KUPU SB gains popularity in educational field

**BERAKAS, February 17** – 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 Chancellor of the Seri Begawan Religious Teachers University College (KUPU SB) graced the 11<sup>th</sup> KUPU SB Convocation Ceremony held at the Plenary Hall, International Convention Centre (ICC).

The event began with the recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah, led by Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Seri Maharaja Dato Paduka Seri Setia (Dr.) Ustaz Haji Awang Abdul Aziz bin Juned, the State Mufti.

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam's entry was then led by the carrying of the Mushaf Al-Quran into the hall by Pengiran Haji Amirul Amin bin Pengiran Haji Jamaluddin.

The ceremony then proceeded with the singing of the national anthem – followed by the mass recitation of Surah Ali-'Imran, verse 132 to 134; and Surah Al-'Alaq verse 1 to 5 by the graduates. The verse interpretation was read by Abdul Hadi Nasrullah bin Ashraf, Bachelor of Religious Education graduate.

Afterwards, Dr. Haji Adanan bin Haji Basar, Ra'ees of KUPU SB presented his welcoming address.

At the event, His Majesty consented to deliver a *titah* (royal speech), where His Majesty highlighted dedication as a key factor in achieving academic success and competency.

Graduates need to practice the experiences and knowledge obtained from education centres like KUPU SB and share them with the community – such is the goal of learning, said the Monarch.

His Majesty also noted KUPU SB's relevance with the current needs. Since the formulation of its curriculum a few years ago, the institution has already offered various minor courses as added values for its graduates' experiences and career market.

Earlier in the *titah*, His Majesty congratulated the graduates for their achievements in completing their respective courses and studies; as well as the academic workforce and family members for their patience and dedication in providing guidance and support for the graduates' success.

The Monarch applauded the institution's efforts in incorporating 'Islamic History' as a core subject under its Higher Diploma and Bachelor's Degree programmes. This measure was taken as a spontaneous response to His Majesty's *titah* in 2018 – which



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 Chancellor of the Seri Begawan Religious Teachers University College (KUPU SB) delivering a *titah* (royal speech) at the 11<sup>th</sup> KUPU SB Convocation Ceremony held at the Plenary Hall, International Convention Centre (ICC), Berakas.



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at the 11<sup>th</sup> KUPU SB Convocation Ceremony.

called for the subject to be made compulsory at all academic institutions.

His Majesty also consented to the establishment of a new faculty

Continue on page 21



His Majesty conferring Degree and Diploma certificates to some of the graduates at the ceremony.



## KUPU SB gains popularity in educational field (continued)



His Majesty in a group photo during the 11<sup>th</sup> KUPU SB Convocation Ceremony.

From page 20

at KUPU SB: the Faculty of Social Science Education – which serves to conduct research; as well as to develop syllabus and pedagogy related to the society such as Islamic history, health, civilisation, and other subjects.

His Majesty was also pleased to keep in track with the institution's social initiatives, such as conducting spiritual and intellectual programmes: which include organising roadshows on '*menghalusi sembahyang*' (refining prayers) in accordance with Mazhab As-Syafi'e, which involved some 1,500 educators (who were not only teaching Islamic Religious Knowledge) at the Ministry of Education (MoE); training for trainers courses for teachers to enhance their knowledge on Al-Quran teaching; the National Malay Islamic Monarchy (MIB) Education Seminar; the Dai'e strengthening workshop; and other activities.

"All of these are 'knowledge projects' that bring benefit," stressed the Monarch.

On the international aspect, His Majesty stated that KUPU SB



His Majesty interacting with some of the graduates at the ceremony (above and below).



has been gaining popularity among universities and individuals in the educational field. Several international online seminars and research agreements between the institution and universities from overseas have been carried out.

"This year, KUPU SB continues to move forward by offering the Brunei Darussalam Government Scholarship for Foreign Students to qualified candidates on a regional and global level. This shows that the institution has spread its wings on the international arena," His Majesty emphasised.

The Monarch further stated his gratitude and appreciation to all members of KUPU SB – especially the chair, as well as members of the council and senate; ra'ees of KUPU SB; core officers; academic workforce as well as staff members for the service that they have contributed. Before ending the *titah*, His Majesty called for a prayer, so that all their good deeds will be greatly rewarded by Allah the Almighty.

His Majesty also conferred Degree and Diploma certificates to 224 graduates. Among the recipients, one was awarded Doctor of Philosophy in Religious Teaching in Education; three in Islamic Education; and one in Syariah.

Meanwhile, one graduate received a Master's Degree in Religious Teaching in Ahli Sunnah Waljama'ah Research; another in Arabic Language; three in Islamic Education; and two in Syariah.

On the other hand, a total of eight graduates were conferred Bachelor's Degrees in Religious Education in Arabic Language Studies; whereas 83 others graduated with Bachelor's Degrees in Religious Education in Islamic Education (with minors in Al-Quran and Al-Sunnah Studies; Guidance and Counselling; Dakwah and Leadership; Philosophy and Islamic Thinking;

Continue on page 22



The Ra'ees of KUPU SB presenting his welcoming address at the ceremony.

## Performing prayers: A 'fortress' against contempt

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 27** – Israk Mikraj is an extraordinary event that happened to the Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wassalam. For the faithful, such an incident is not seen with common sense or logic, but with faith towards Allah the Almighty.

The matter was stated in a *titah* (royal speech) delivered by 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 conjunction with the national level Israk Mikraj Celebration for the year 1443 Hijrah/2022 Masihi.

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam also brought up Surah Al-Isra, verse 1; and explained that the main purpose of the event is to receive the command to pray five times as prescribed directly by Allah.

"This is the greatness and specialty of prayers. Without doubt, performing prayers is the connecting link between *Al-Khaliq* (the Creator) and His servants. Hence, it is obligatory to perform prayers as the core devotion in our daily lives: to maintain this connection, so that it continues to persist and remain strong without faltering," said His Majesty.

Earlier in the *titah*, the Monarch expressed his gratitude to Allah the Almighty – for it is with His consent that we can commemorate this extraordinary event.

According to His Majesty, through prayers, Allah will bestow peace, tranquillity, wellness, and happiness. This can be perceived in Surah Al-Ankabut, verse 45 – which is a sign for us to understand that prayers are entirely capable of cleansing us from defiance.

The Monarch then correlated prayers to a 'fortress' that protects us from contempt – when one is saved from such harm; he is given the highest hope to attain paradise.

It is for the sake of this noble aspiration that the government of His Majesty has been assertive in providing compulsory religious education, said the Monarch – underscoring his anticipation in seeing all Muslims performing their prayers, as it is the pillar of religion.

His Majesty further expressed his hope for the parties responsible in handling educational affairs to not neglect this obligation – as it is a basic task among other duties; and the highest form of

## KUPU SB gains popularity in educational field (continued)

From page 21

Fiqh Usrah; Islamic Finance; Malay Islamic Monarchy Studies; Early Childhood Education; Special Education; Health Sciences Education; Innovation and Islamic Education Technology; and Usul Fiqh).

As for the Diploma recipients, 34 received Postgraduate Diploma in Religious Teaching and Arabic language for non-Arabic Speakers; 80 received Higher Diploma in Religious Teaching in Islamic Education; five received Diploma in Art of Al-Quran Recitation Studies; one received Diploma in Kitab Turath Studies; and one received a Special Certificate in Teaching.

To bless the ceremony, a *doa selamat* was recited by Yang Berhormat State Mufti.



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) in conjunction with the national level Israk Mikraj Celebration for the year 1443 Hijrah/2022 Masihi.

*amanah* (entrusted obligation) to be fulfilled.

"Everyone cannot run from this obligation. Teachers, parents and even the government are equally responsible in ensuring that this act of devotion is truly embraced. When this happens, *insyaaAllah* (with the will of Allah), His blessings and grace will be descended upon Brunei and all of us," said His Majesty.

## New appointments

### Deputy Permanent Secretary at MoH

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 4** – 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, it is hereby announced that His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has consented to appoint Dr. Ang Swee Hui, Medical Specialist and Head of Accident and Emergency Services as the new Deputy Permanent Secretary (Professional) at the Ministry of Health (MoH). The date of appointment is effective from February 5.

### RBAF Senior Official

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 25** – A Senior Official from the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) has been promoted to the rank of Brigadier General effective today. The appointment is in place following the consent 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 Promotion Ceremony was officiated by Major General (U) Dato Seri Pahlawan Haji Hamzah bin Haji Sahat, Commander of RBAF; who presented the insignia to 412 Colonel (U) Haji Alirupendi bin Haji Perudin, Deputy Commander of the Royal Brunei Air Force (RBAirF) at the Officers' Mess, Bolkiah Garrison.

## Producing the country's generation of huffaz

**BERAKAS, February 16** – His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) presented 'Aliyah Qira'at Diploma Certificates to the graduates at the Ninth Institut Tahfiz Al-Quran Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah (ITQSHHB) Haflut Takharruj (Convocation Ceremony).

Accompanying His Royal Highness the Crown Prince was His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik.

The ceremony began with a recitation of Surah Al-Mutaffifin, verse 22 to 36 by Auni Marzuqi bin Haji Anuar; followed by its interpretation read by Awang Muhammad Ekram 'Afif bin Haji Awang Mohd Hanafi – both of whom were 'Aliyah Qira'at Diploma graduates for the 2018-2021 Academic Session.

In his welcoming speech at the event, 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 Patron of the Ninth Haflut Takharruj Executive Committee stated that the number of this year's graduates receiving their certificates after completing their three-year studies sums up the institution's total number of *al-kharrijiun* (alumnis) to 174 graduates. Among the figure, 85 have attained the *umtaz* (excellent) rank after scoring full marks in the Final Examination of semester six – including 13 graduates who were honoured at the 9<sup>th</sup> Haflut Takharruj.

His Royal Highness also delivered a *sabda* (royal speech) at the ceremony, where he called on the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) – especially ITQSHHB – as well as Islamic studies institutions and private services to continuously implement and diversify *halaqah* (incentive) programmes to nurture and improve Al-Quran reading, memorising and *tadabbur* (comprehension) skills.

Apart from that, the approaches utilised for existing plans and programmes need to be diversified in a more creative manner – in the efforts to engage and include the community (so that they are more interested in joining) – towards ensuring their widespread success and great impact.

"In the meantime," said His Royal Highness, "opportunities are wide open for graduates to acquire knowledge at a higher level – which adds value and increases their potential as community leaders."

Earlier in the *sabda*, the Crown Prince highlighted that the success of each graduate will continue to be the main foundation

in our aspiration to produce the country's generation of *huffaz* (Al-Quran memorisers) – which will directly contribute to the institution's excellence and preserve the continuity of generations who are guardians of the *Kalamullah* (words of Allah).

"In fact, the success also leads to the strengthening of emotional, spiritual, physical, and intellectual aspects of life in a community – in line with the aspirations of Brunei Vision 2035," His Royal Highness added.

"In addition," His Royal Highness continued, "the community's tendency to continue the practise of Al-Quran reading and *tadabbur* as well as reciting particular *zikir* and *doa*, can now be practised through various forms of media platforms with the sole intention of seeking His blessing in the world and the hereafter."

The Crown Prince further called for the institution to maintain awareness to the current demands – particularly by evaluating the effectiveness of the programmes pursued. This will act as a catalyst in producing more highly capable human capital

Continue on page 24



His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office delivering a *sabda* (royal speech) at the 9<sup>th</sup> Institut Tahfiz Al-Quran Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah (ITQSHHB) Haflut Takharruj (Convocation Ceremony).



His Royal Highness the Crown Prince at the 9<sup>th</sup> ITQSHHB Haflut Takharruj. Accompanying His Royal Highness was His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik.



Producing the country's generation of huffaz (continued)



His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik in a group photo with the graduates.

From page 23

towards progressively assisting national development.

Lastly, His Royal Highness once again congratulated the graduates and expressed his hope that the knowledge attained can be fully utilised. The Crown Prince also lauded and expressed his appreciation to the leadership, administration, the teaching workforce, and staff members of ITQSHHB, as well as the parents and guardians for their enduring spirit, cooperation and continuous commitment in contributing to the continuity of programme and the success of each graduate.

At the ceremony, 20 graduates received 'Aliyah Qira'at Diploma Certificates – 10 of whom received the *mumtaz* rank; whereas eight others received the *jayyid jiddan* (very good) rank; and two received the *jayyid* (good). Meanwhile, three other graduates have continued their studies in Republic of Egypt.

To bless the ceremony, a *doa selamat* was recited by Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Seri Utama Dato Paduka Seri Setia Awang Haji Salim bin Haji Besar.

Continue on page 25



His Royal Highness the Crown Prince presenting 'Aliyah Qira'at Diploma Certificates to the graduates at the ceremony.



Yang Berhormat Minister of Religious Affairs as Patron of the 9<sup>th</sup> HafIut Takharruj Executive Committee delivering his welcoming speech (left); and Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Seri Utama Dato Paduka Seri Setia Awang Haji Salim bin Haji Besar reciting a *doa selamat* at the ceremony (right).

Producing the country's generation of huffaz (continued)

From page 24



His Royal Highness signing a commemorative parchment.



His Royal Highness receiving a *pesambah* (souvenir).

Royal birthday ceremonies held for the Crown Prince

**GADONG, February 19** – His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah binti Pengiran Haji Salleh Ab. Rahaman attended a reception held in conjunction with the Crown Prince's 48<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration.

The event was hosted by the Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF) at the Banquet Hall of the Officers' Mess of the Police Headquarters.

Present alongside His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri were His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik and Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Raabi'atul 'Adawiyah binti Pengiran Haji Bolkiah; as well as Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Masna, Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and Commandant of Women Police and Yang Amat Mulia

Pengiran Lela Cheteria Sahibun Najabah Pengiran Anak Haji Abdul Aziz bin Pengiran Jaya Negara Pengiran Haji Abu Bakar.

At the reception, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince signed a commemorative parchment; followed by a group photo session. The ceremony was further enlivened by a cake cutting session, accompanied by a choir performance comprising officers from the RBPF.

His Royal Highness the Crown Prince also consented to receive a *pesambah* (souvenir) by Dato Paduka Seri Haji Mohammad Irwan bin Haji Hambali, Commissioner of Police.

Also present at the event were Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Abdul Mokti bin Haji Mohd. Daud, Minister at PMO; Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew bin Abdullah, Minister at PMO and Second Minister of Finance

Continue on page 26



His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah binti Pengiran Haji Salleh Ab. Rahaman at the reception held in conjunction with His Royal Highness the Crown Prince's 48<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. Present alongside Their Royal Highnesses at the event hosted by the Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF) are His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik and Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Raabi'atul 'Adawiyah binti Pengiran Haji Bolkiah; as well as Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Masna, Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and Commandant of Women Police and Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Lela Cheteria Sahibun Najabah Pengiran Anak Haji Abdul Aziz bin Pengiran Jaya Negara Pengiran Haji Abu Bakar.

Royal birthday ceremonies held for the Crown Prince (continued)

From page 25

and Economy; and Dato Paduka Haji Sufian bin Haji Sabtu, Permanent Secretary (Security, Enforcement and Law) at PMO.

Previously, on February 17, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri also attended a High Tea Reception hosted by the Ministry of Defence (MinDef) and the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) in conjunction the birthday celebration.

Accompanying Their Royal Highnesses at the High Tea Reception – which took place at the Bolkiah Garrison Officers' Mess – were His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik and Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Raabi'atul 'Adawiyah; and His Royal Highness 920 Major (U) Prince 'Abdul Mateen.

At the reception, Their Royal Highnesses joined a group photo session; and were, afterwards, introduced to the members of the RBAF workforce embedded under the Malaysian Battalion 850-8 (MALBATT 850-8) for the United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon (UNIFIL); the recipient of the RBAF Commendation Award from the 11<sup>th</sup> RBAF Command and Staff Course 2021; as well as newly commissioned officers who received awards of excellence during the recent Sovereign's Parade Ceremony for the 20<sup>th</sup> intake of the RBAF Officer Cadet School.

His Royal Highness the Crown Prince then watched a video clip and was presented with a photobook album titled 'Sejambak Ristaan XV' – which contains a collection of images documenting the Crown Prince's involvement in MinDef and RBAF from 2019



His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) officiating the cake cutting session.

until 2022.

The event then proceeded with the signing of a commemorative parchment; a cake cutting session; and a *pesambah* presented by the officers and workforce under RBAF.

To bless the ceremony, a *doa kesyukuran* was recited by Major Ariffin bin Amit @ Hamid, Assistant Director of the RBAF Religious Directorate.

Continue on page 27



His Royal Highness the Crown Prince signing a commemorative parchment (left); and receiving a *pesambah* (souvenir) from the Commissioner of Police.



His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah binti Pengiran Haji Salleh Ab. Rahaman attending the High Tea Reception hosted by the Ministry of Defence (MinDef) and the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) in conjunction the birthday celebration. Accompanying Their Royal Highnesses at the Bolkiah Garrison Officers' Mess were His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik and Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Raabi'atul 'Adawiyah; and His Royal Highness 920 Major (U) Prince 'Abdul Mateen.

Royal birthday ceremonies held for the Crown Prince (continued)



His Royal Highness the Crown Prince officiating the cake cutting session during the High Tea Reception hosted by MinDef (left); and Their Royal Highnesses and other members of the royal family during the recitation of *doa kesyukuran* at the High Tea Reception (right).



From page 26

Another Royal Birthday Celebration for His Royal Highness the Crown Prince was also hosted by PMO on the same day. Also present at the ceremony held at the PMO Building was His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik.

At the ceremony, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince was invited to a group photo session before proceeding to the *Pesambah* Gallery at the East Wing.

The ceremony commenced with the recitation of *doa selamat* led by Dato Seri Setia Dr. Haji Japar bin Haji Mat Dain @ Maidin, Deputy State Mufti.

Following a cake cutting session, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince also received a greeting card from PMO and *pesambah* from 12 agencies – comprising government agencies; higher education institutions; and the Brunei Darussalam Scouts Association (PPNBD).

A *Doa Selamat* Ceremony was also hosted the next day by the Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah (YSHHB), as the Secretariat of the Pengiran Muda Mahkota Al-Muhtadee Billah Fund for Orphans (DANA) to commemorate the birthday celebration. Present to grace the ceremony was His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik, as the Chairman of YSHHB Committee of Governors.



His Royal Highness the Crown Prince signing a commemorative parchment during the High Tea Reception hosted by MinDef.

The event commenced with a mass Maghrib prayer led by Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Seri Utama

Dato Paduka Seri Setia Haji Awang Salim bin Haji Besar, Chief Syari'e Judge.

Continue on page 28



His Royal Highness the Crown Prince during the cake cutting session and receiving a *pesambah* (souvenir) at the the Royal Birthday Celebration hosted by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).



His Royal Highness the Crown Prince in a group photo during the Royal Birthday Celebration hosted by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). Also present at the ceremony was His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik.

## Royal birthday ceremonies held for the Crown Prince (continued)



His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik, as the Chairman of the Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah (YSHHB) Committee of Governors in a group photo.

From page 27

This was followed by a mass recitation of Surah Yasin and *tahliil*, as well as *doa kesyukuran*. The ceremony concluded with a mass Isyak prayer.

Also in attendance were members of the YSHHB Committee of Governors and Board of Directors, as well as the DANA Board of Trustees; along with special guests comprising contributors of DANA, officers, and staff members of YSHHB, as well as teachers from the YSHHB School.



His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik attending the Doa Selamat Ceremony hosted by YSHHB, as the Secretariat of the Pengiran Muda Mahkota Al-Muhtadee Billah Fund for Orphans (DANA) to commemorate the birthday celebration of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince.

## Her Royal Highness graces Khatam Al-Quran Ceremony

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 23** – Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah binti Pengiran Haji Salleh Ab. Rahaman graced a Khatam Al-Quran Ceremony organised by the Girl Guides Association of Brunei Darussalam (PPPBD) in conjunction with Brunei Darussalam's 38<sup>th</sup> National Day.

The event, which took place at the An-Naura Hall, Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah (YSHHB) Complex, began with a *doa*.

This was followed by the reading of Al-Quran verses by Dayangku Nor Fatin Fetriah binti Pengiran Haji Isa; and afterwards, a recitation of surah (commencing with Surah Al-Fatihah) by Dayangku Norsabreena binti Pengiran Razali.

The event then proceeded with a mass takhtim recitation by the participants of the Khatam Al-Quran Ceremony, led by Nur Izzati Umairah binti Abdullah Ali and



Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah binti Pengiran Haji Salleh Ab. Rahaman at the Khatam Al-Quran Ceremony organised by the Girl Guides Association of Brunei Darussalam (PPPBD) in conjunction with Brunei Darussalam's 38<sup>th</sup> National Day.

Dayang Siti Nurashiffa binti Haji Awang Mohd. Eddie.

Meanwhile, the Doa Khatam Al-Quran was read by Nor Sabrina binti Ratna; whereas the recitations of the Doa Allah Peliharakan Sultan dan Negara Brunei Darussalam and *doa selamat* were led by Dayangku Nor Fatin Fetriah. All of them were Young Leaders of PPPBD.

Two groups of readers (consisting of members of the Committee of Governors; Adults and Young Leaders; Ranger Girl Guides; and Girl Guides) completed their 30 juzuks of Al-Quran recitation at the event. Members of the Pencinta Kalam Allah Project were also involved at the ceremony.

## MPRT sees launching of tourism product packages

**TUTONG, February 12** - Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Ali bin Apong, Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism officiated the Launching Ceremony for the Tutong Product Packages at the Official Residence of the Tutong District Officer.

In his speech at the event, the Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism highlighted the growth in Tutong District's new tourism products developed by members of the village consultative councils (MPKs) that have the potential and have proven to be of interests to visitors from within and outside the country – with the support of the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT), through the Tourism Development Department; and other stakeholders, including the Minister of Home Affairs (MoHA), through the Tutong District Office.

The Minister further underscored that the district has several landmarks and various attractions of its own.

The ceremony also saw the presentation of the ASEAN Clean Tourist City Award by the Minister to Pekan Tutong, represented by Haji Azmi bin Haji Abdul Rahim, Chairman of the Tutong Municipal Board.

The award was won during the recent ASEAN Tourism Forum 2022 in Cambodia. It serves as a prestigious recognition for Pekan Tutong – placing it on par with the rest of the ASEAN region.

After the launching, the media and travel agents were brought for a familiarisation trip to the Lakaba Jaya Gallery, Kampung Sengkarai; Angkasa Oudh Agarwood; as well as Syarikat Wira Bina and Lamin Warisan in Kampung Tanjung Maya. This was followed by a visit to the Bintudoh Greenspring Resort and Eco Ponies Garden in Tutong District.

Also present were members of the State Legislative Council (LegCo); senior government officials; and stakeholders in the tourism sector.

The Minister also presented another speech at a similar event held for the Temburong Product Packages earlier on February 3 at The Abode Resort and Spa, Temburong District – where he stated that since the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic in the country, various restrictions have been tightened.

The Tourism Development Department has taken initiatives to review and identify tourism products and activities that can be packaged in all four countries.

In regard to the matter, a number of

brochures have also been produced – comprising information on the tourism product packages in each district. The packages consist of sample itineraries for visitors to choose from, or design their own tours and activities through local travel agencies – excluding the costs of stay; food and drinks; transportation; as well as services from tourism agents.

"This is to provide indicative prices and flexibility to the visitors, for them to choose additional activities or services in accordance with their respective preferences," explained the Minister.

Such packages are hoped to help visitors to plan their own trip. However, the use of travel agent services is recommended to ensure a safe, smooth, and orderly holiday experience.

The Minister further stated that the Temburong District has increasingly gained the attention of visitors – especially since the opening of the Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Bridge.

Early this year, The Abode Resort and Spa – which is located Sungai Peradayan – also began its operations.

The tourism product packages were successfully produced in collaboration with tourism stakeholders – including the Association of Travel Agents Brunei (ATAB); Brunei Association of Hotels (BAH); tourism service providers (including community-based ones); as well as MPKs through the District Offices, MoHA.

To further promote these packages, the Tourism Development Department also produced promotional videos that focus on the tourism products and activities available in the four districts.

The videos will be promoted on various platforms, such as websites and social media. It can also be used by tourism stakeholders – including hotels, travel agents, tourism service providers, tour guides and the Royal Brunei Airlines (RB) – to provide 'ideas' and insights on the tourism attractions and activities in the country.

"The Tourism Development Department has also produced a travelogue concept series programme aimed to provide an overview of holiday experiences in Brunei Darussalam to the local and international audiences," added the Minister.

According to the Minister, the department is working with Radio Television Brunei (RTB) to promote tourism attractions and activities.



Yang Berhormat Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism during the Launching Ceremony for the Tutong Product Packages at the Official Residence of the Tutong District Officer.

In addition, the department has already arranged familiarisation trips – especially for media partners and travel agents – to provide exposure and first-hand experience on the available products and activities.

The event proceeded with the presentation of awards to the winners of various categories in the ASEAN Tourism Forum 2022 that have upheld the ASEAN Tourism Standards.

The ASEAN Sustainable Tourism Award (Rural Category) was presented to Freme Travel Services Sdn. Bhd. for their two days and one night Discover Temburong package.

Receiving the award on behalf of the company was Pengiran Dato Paduka Osman bin Pengiran Haji Patra, Director of Freme Travel Services Sdn. Bhd.

A familiarisation trip was also conducted – starting with The Abode Resort and Spa. This was followed by a trip to the Bumiputera Main Complex in Pekan Bangar.

Continue on page 30



Among the Tutong Product Packages available at the Tutong District Officer's office, showing a woman in a hijab and mask preparing food.

## MPRT sees launching of tourism product packages (continued)

From page 29

Four MPKs (MPK Batu Apoi; MPK Belais and Buda-Buda; MPK Senukoh; and MPK Sibut Longhouse) – which are included in the Temburong District package – were present to showcase their local products and cultural performances.

Also in attendance were Yang Berhormat Haji Emran bin Sabtu, member of LegCo and Penghulu of Mukim Bokok; Hajah Tutiati binti Haji Abdul Wahab, Permanent Secretary at MPRT, Deputy Permanent Secretaries at the ministry; members and representatives of the Brunei Tourism Board; as well as Acting Temburong District Officer.

In two other related events, the Permanent Secretary at MPRT was also present to officiate the launching of the Brunei-Muara Product Packages at the Centre of Islamic Calligraphy and Art Studies Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah (YSHHB), Jalan Jerambak on February 5; as well as the launching of the Belait Product Packages at the Tropical Biodiversity Centre, Jalan Labi on February 9.

The Launching Ceremony for the Brunei-Muara Product Packages also saw the presentation of ASEAN Tourism Standards Awards to three winners of the ASEAN MICE Venue Award: The Empire Brunei; Armada Properties; and the Radisson Hotel in recognition of their exceptional services and facilities – particularly on meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions.

The event then proceeded with the conferment of the ASEAN Green Hotel Award to Radisson Hotel as a nod for the hotel's sustainable tourism through its environmentally friendly principles



The Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT) in a group photo with the winners of the ASEAN MICE Venue Award at the Launching Ceremony for the Brunei-Muara Product Packages (left); and during the Launching Ceremony for the Belait Product Packages (right).

in hotel operations.

The ceremony was attended by Yang Berhormat Haji Tahamit bin Nudin, member of LegCo and Penghulu of Mukim Gadong 'A'; Deputy Permanent Secretary; members of the Brunei Tourism Board; Brunei-Muara District Officer; as well as Government Senior Officials.

The Deputy Permanent Secretary and members of the Brunei Tourism Board were also present at the Launching Ceremony for the Belait Product Packages; along with the Chairman of Kuala Belait and Seria Municipal Board; as well as Government Officers and tourism stakeholders.

The launching of the tourism product packages is hoped to boost domestic tourism by encouraging the public to visit the array of interesting sites across the nation.

The launching, among others, is also aimed at promoting places of interests that offer 'experiential tours' services involving primary and emerging products from MPKs; assisting tourism stakeholders (such as hotels, tour guides, tour agents and tour service providers) in providing complete and flexible itineraries; promoting new tourist attractions that are less known but have the potential to attract visitors and for the school holidays in April, August and December this year.

Also present were Members of the Legislative Council, senior officials government agencies as well as important tourism stakeholders.



## Minister launches Brunei Gastronomy Week 2022

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 16** – The Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT) virtually organised the Launching Ceremony of Brunei Gastronomy Week 2022.

The event serves as the ministry's annual programme conducted by the Brunei Tourism Board. The 6<sup>th</sup> Brunei Gastronomy Week is also held in conjunction with Brunei Darussalam's 38<sup>th</sup> National Day Celebration, with its theme entitled "Daun Pandan (Pandan Leaves)".

Present to officiate the launching online was Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Ali bin Apong, Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism.

Aside from celebrating the country's National Day, the event is also aimed at raising community awareness on local cuisines; as well as to encourage more hotels and restaurants to

Continue on page 31

## Minister launches Brunei Gastronomy Week 2022 (continued)

From page 30

serve local dishes that are on par with international standards, while elevating their presentation quality.

In addition, this year's event hopes to expand its activities through three sub-events: Brunei Gastronomy Workshop 2022; Taste of Brunei 2022; as well as the Brunei Gastronomy Award.

A total of 12 hotels, restaurants and food service providers joined the event: including the Institute of Brunei Technical Education (IBTE) School of Hospitality and Tourism; The Rizqun International Hotel; V Plaza Hotel Brunei; Stoneville Hotel; The Brunei Hotel; Mulia Hotel; Wafa Hotel and Apartment; Anjung Saujana Restaurant; Dynasty Restaurant; Eco Ponies Garden; Nasi Talam Brunei Restaurant; and The Melting Pot.

The ceremony also saw a speech presentation by Salinah binti Haji Mohd. Salleh, Acting Director of the Tourism Development Department.

Participating agencies will be promoting their own signature dishes throughout the event's period; where each agency involved received certificates of participation delivered by the Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism.

The launching ceremony was then followed by the Brunei Gastronomy Award 2021 Ceremony. The awards included "Best Starter" which went to The Rizqun International Hotel for its 'Satay Lilit with Sambal Mentah'; "Best Main Course" went to The Rizqun International Hotel for its 'Rizqun Special Gear Box Soup'; as well as "Best Dessert" which went to Goldiana Café and Lounge, Mulia Hotel for its 'Onde-Onde Churros and Bubur Cacah Mochi'.

Meanwhile, the Brunei Gastronomy Workshop is a new initiative organised by the Tourism Development Department in collaboration with IBTE and Cloudstreet



Yang Berhormat Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism virtually attending the Launching Ceremony of Brunei Gastronomy Week 2022.

Restaurant, Singapore. The workshop will be instructed by Chef Mark Tai, Michelin-Guide Young Chef Award Recipient, who will be highlighting techniques on elevating Brunei Darussalam's local delicacies with innovative and modern cooking skills.

The next sub-event will be Taste of Brunei 2022 – which will be held for the second time in collaboration with The Radisson Hotel. A total of 10 young and talented budding chefs will be partaking in this event on February 26 and 27. They will be showcasing their take on signature dishes at Mutiara Ballroom, The Radisson Hotel.

The ceremony then proceeded with the presentation of certificates of participation by the Minister to Chef Mark Tai as the instructor for the Brunei Gastronomy Workshop 2022; the representatives at the Taste of Brunei 2022; as well as the Judges of the event.

The event is supported by the Brunei Tourism Board; IBTE; Cloudstreet Restaurant, Singapore; The Radisson Hotel Brunei; GoMamam; Mc Maju Cold Storage Sdn. Bhd.; PDS Abbatoir Sdn. Bhd.; Farmgate Trading; TGT Sdn. Bhd.; Brunei Association of Hotels; Association



Yang Berhormat Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism presenting the "Best Starter" award which went to The Rizqun International Hotel for its 'Satay Lilit with Sambal Mentah'.

of Travel Agents Brunei; Radio Television Brunei (RTB); and the local media.

The winners of the Brunei Gastronomy Week 2022 will be announced on March 3.

Also present at the event were members of the Brunei Association of Hotels and Association of Travel Agents Brunei; restaurants; hoteliers; food service providers; travel agencies; event partners; and other tourism stakeholders.

## COVID-19: Over 40,000 cases detected, health protocols revised

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 28** – With the consent 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; and in reference to a media statement from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) regarding the extension of the Early Endemic Phase (dated January 10), the COVID-19 Steering Committee,

on February 9, announced its further extension for another month: from February 15, to March 14.

In relation to the matter, movement restriction implemented

Continue on page 32

## COVID-19: Over 40,000 cases detected, health protocols revised (continued)

From page 31

under Operasi Peralihan (the directive to stay at home between 12:00am to 4:00am) was also extended to March 14.

Meanwhile, a total number of 47,016 new cases were recorded throughout the month February – bringing the overall number of positive COVID-19 cases in Brunei Darussalam up to date to 63,542.

On the other hand, 23 deaths were recorded. From the figure, five were confirmed as deaths due to COVID-19; whereas 13 cases were not identified as deaths due to COVID-19; and five other cases were still under investigation.

A total of 17,588 cases were reported to have recovered – which brings the overall number of recovered cases in the country up to date to 33,512.

Currently, the total number of active cases stands at 29,905 cases, while the overall bed occupancy rate in all National Isolation Centres (NICs) is at 11.7 per cent.

Among the cases that are currently being treated at the NICs, eight cases are currently reported under Category 4 – whereby the patients would require assistance from oxygen respirators and are placed under close observation. Six other cases have been identified under Category 5 – whereby the patients require assistance from oxygen respirators and heart/lung machines (Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation – ECMO) under the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

The cases were announced by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Md. Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health, in a series of press conferences on the current situation of COVID-19 infections in Brunei Darussalam held throughout the month at the Al-'Afiyah Hall, Ministry of Health (MoH); as well as in the daily infographics issued by MoH.

In a session held on February 15, Dr. Justin Wong, Public Health Consultant at MoH also shared four new health protocols for COVID-19 detection. The first is for individuals to consult a doctor who will refer them for a PCR; and should they positive, they will then have to await further instructions from the ministry. PCR testing can no longer be conducted on one's own accord and can only be carried out with the exception of certain situations.

Secondly, if a person displays flu-like symptoms, the individual

should isolate and conduct two consecutive ARTs. Should they test positive on both tests, they will be required to report their results on the portal ([www.moh.gov.bn/ARTreport](http://www.moh.gov.bn/ARTreport)); or to Talian Darussalam 123 before awaiting further directives from MoH.

The third protocol applies to individuals who do not have any symptoms; but tested positive on ART. Such cases would require the individual to isolate and repeat the ART – if both results are positive, then they must provide a self-report of their results.

The fourth protocol is for individuals who are close contacts of a positive case. They are required to isolate and conduct ART on Day 1 and Day 5 from the notification. If the individual tests positive by ART on either Day 1 or 5, they will then need to self-report and await instructions.

In improving the provision of health services amid the country's third wave of COVID-19, it was further informed on February 16 that the definition of primary contact had been updated. The term is now identified as an individual sharing the same household; as well as a colleague sharing the same room, space or sitting next to a positive case.

The term close contact will also be used on an individual who has had a face-to-face interaction with a positive case for over 30 minutes at less than 1 metre in an enclosed area or indoors; as well as someone who has been in a vehicle and sat at close range (no more than two seats away) from a positive case for over 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, to facilitate the provision of public services – particularly for individuals travelling abroad – RT-PCR swab tests will be conducted at the Jerudong Park Medical Centre (JPMC) starting February 16; and at the Panaga Health Centre starting February 17. Services at such centres will incur charges, which will likely include administration fees.

Under the National Vaccination Programme, it was reported (as of today) that 54.4 per cent of the nation's population have completed three doses of COVID-19 vaccination; whereas the percentages of those who have received their first and second doses have both surpassed 94 per cent respectively.

In the past 24 hours, a total of 3,896 samples have been tested for the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

## Pusat Ehsan, Imagine receive AOSWADA

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 13** – The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) recently conducted the First ASEAN Outstanding Social Welfare and Development Awards (AOSWADA) Trophy Presentation Ceremony at the Kunjungan Room, MCYS Building.

Present to physically deliver the trophies and certificates was 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.

The event commenced with a recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah, followed by a welcoming speech by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports.

The awards were given to two recipients: Pusat Ehsan Al-Ameerah

Al-Hajjah Maryam for the Non-Government Organisation (NGO) Category; and Imagine Sdn. Bhd. for the Private Sector Category. Representing Pusat Ehsan Al-Ameerah Al-Hajjah Maryam at the ceremony was Pengiran Datin Hajah Noraini binti Pengiran Dipa Negara Laila Diraja Pengiran Haji Abd. Momin, Executive Trustee of the organisation, whereas Imagine Sdb. Bhd. was represented by Dayang Suzannawati binti Haji Suharju, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the company.

The award was first introduced in during the 17<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD) – which took place online recently – in recognition of the role, achievements and contributions of NGOs and the private sectors from ASEAN member states in the field of social welfare and development.