



## 37<sup>th</sup> National Day : Generate physical development in tandem with spiritual progress



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 from Istana Nurul Iman delivering a *titah* (royal speech) to mark Brunei Darussalam's 37<sup>th</sup> National Day Celebration.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 22** - 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 highlighted in a *titah* (royal speech) in conjunction with the 37<sup>th</sup> National Day of Brunei Darussalam's celebration from Istana Nurul Iman on February 22 that National Day is not merely a celebration, but a time to remember and to reflect on the value of independence and indeed is not something we can buy but a gift from Allah the Almighty.

His Majesty added that despite the different way of celebration this year, we should be thankful to Allah the Almighty for His will allowing Brunei Darussalam to celebrate this year's National Day celebration.

"An independent nation should not be complacent or slow to act because the environment is not static but changing rapidly. This change is what we call development," said His Majesty.

"This is our way of achieving independence, by generating physical development in tandem with spiritual development.

Continue on page 5

## Unscheduled visit to PB, IBTE : Irregular policies lead to weak administration

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 2** - 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) reminded that an irregular and incomplete policy will result in a weak administration of Politeknik Brunei (PB).

"I was a bit surprised to learn that PB does not have an orderly and complete policy. However, it was only realised when there was a change of position around October 2020. Imagine PB does not have an orderly and complete policy until 2020 is a very disappointing thing.

"Of course, irregular policies can make the administration weak, while PB is needed to provide educated and skilled

Continue on page 7



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) during the visit.



3. His Majesty receives audiences



5. 37<sup>th</sup> National Day : Generate physical development in tandem with spiritual progress



7. Unscheduled visit to PB, IBTE : Irregular policies lead to weak administration



8. RBAF and RBPF host Crown Prince's birthday



10. Tourism Industry greatly affected by impacts of COVID-19



13. Launching of Total Laboratory Automation System



14. Support Brunei's efforts to diversify economy, green society



15. Empowering call-to-action urging collective commitment fighting cancer



18. ASEAN-India Online Hackathon strengthens educational cooperation



19. KUPU SB's Open Day fosters ties with Thai community



FEBRUARY 2021 - VOLUME 36 ISSUE 2

### BRUNEI DARUSSALAM NEWSLETTER

is published monthly by the Department of Information. It reports on government, social and business events in the country. All money values are expressed in Brunei dollars \$, unless otherwise stated. Any information in this newsletter may be reproduced; a clipping of the publication would be appreciated. For free subscription (excluding postage) please write to the Distribution Unit, Department of Information, Prime Minister's Office, Old Airport, Berakas BB 3510, Brunei Darussalam.

EMAILUSAT: [info.dept@information.gov.bn](mailto:info.dept@information.gov.bn)

#### EDITORIAL Advisory Board:

Haji Shahrul Jeffri Dato Paduka Haji Ibrahim ([jeffri.ibrahim@information.gov.bn](mailto:jeffri.ibrahim@information.gov.bn))

Sastra Sarini Haji Julaini ([sarini.julaini@information.gov.bn](mailto:sarini.julaini@information.gov.bn))

#### Chief-Editor:

Saadiatul Nur Aqilah Haji Jaman ([aqilah.jaman@information.gov.bn](mailto:aqilah.jaman@information.gov.bn))

#### Editor:

Nor Hanizah Haji Abd Halim ([hanizah.halim@information.gov.bn](mailto:hanizah.halim@information.gov.bn))

#### Text & Translation:

Hajah Siti Muslihat Haji Salleh ([muslihat.salleh@information.gov.bn](mailto:muslihat.salleh@information.gov.bn))

#### Layouts:

Azimatul Azimah Siti Rahmat ([azimah.rahmat@information.gov.bn](mailto:azimah.rahmat@information.gov.bn))

#### Proofread:

Hajah Norliha Haji Salleh ([norliha.salleh@information.gov.bn](mailto:norliha.salleh@information.gov.bn))

#### Photographs

Photography Unit of Department of Information

#### General inquiries

Tel: (673) 2383 400/ext English Publications  
Fax: (673) 2382 012

#### Information Department

[www.information.gov.bn](http://www.information.gov.bn)

#### Information Gallery

[www.infofoto.gov.bn](http://www.infofoto.gov.bn)



#### Follow us

Download **InfoDeptBN**

**Instagram** - @infodept.bn

**Twitter** - @Infodept\_bn

**Facebook** - Jabatan Penerangan  
Jabatan Perdana Menteri  
Brunei Darussalam

## His Majesty receives audiences

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam received in audience at Istana Nurul Iman:



Her Excellency Retno L.P. Marsudi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia on February 17.



His Excellency Mehmet Suat Akgün, the outgoing Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Turkey to Brunei Darussalam on February 27.

## 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 Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Government and the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the occasion of Iran's National Day on February 11.
- His Majesty Emperor Naruhito, Emperor of Japan and His Excellency Yoshihide Suga, Prime Minister of Japan as well as to the government and people of Japan on the occasion of His Majesty Emperor Naruhito, Emperor of Japan's birthday anniversary on February 23.
- His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jabaer Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait and His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait as well as members of the royal family, the government and people of the state of Kuwait on the occasion of Kuwait's National Day on February 25.

## 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 on the occasion of Brunei Darussalam's 37<sup>th</sup> National Day from:

- 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 Malaysia;
- His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and King of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;
- Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland;
- His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn Phra Vajiraklaochaoyuhua, King of the Kingdom of Thailand;
- His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Sultan of the Sultanate of Oman;
- His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah Boromneath Norodom Sihamoni, King of the Kingdom of Cambodia;
- His Majesty King Philippe, King of Belgium;
- His Majesty King Willem-Alexander R., King of the Netherlands;
- His Majesty King Harald the Fifth, King of Norway;

Continue on page 4

**His Majesty receives congratulatory messages (continued)**

- His Majesty King Carl the Sixteenth Gustaf, King of Sweden;
- His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, the Emir of Qatar;
- Her Excellency Halimah Yacob, President of the Republic of Singapore;
- His Excellency Bounnhang Vorachith, President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic;
- His Excellency Nguyen Phu Trong, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam;
- His Excellency Joseph R. Biden, President of the United States of America;
- His Excellency Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation;
- His Excellency Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China;
- His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retired), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia;
- His Excellency Md. Abdul Hamid, the Honourable President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh;
- His Excellency Dr. Arif Alvi, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan;
- His Excellency Ram Nath Kovind, President of the Republic of India;
- His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of the Republic of Turkey;
- His Excellency Alexander Van der Bellen, President of the Republic of Austria;
- His Excellency Frank-Walter Steinmeier, President of the Federal Republic of Germany;
- His Excellency Janos Ader, President of Hungary;
- His Excellency Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland;
- His Excellency Sergio Mattarella, President of the Republic of Italy;
- His Excellency Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, President of the Portuguese Republic;
- His Excellency Guy Parmelin, President of the Swiss Confederation;
- His Excellency Kais Saied, President of the Republic of Tunisia;
- His Excellency Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
- His Excellency Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan;
- His Excellency Sadyr Zhaparov, President of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- His Excellency Miguel Diaz-Canel Bermudez, President of the Republic of Cuba;
- 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 Roch Marc Christian Kabore, President of Burkina Faso;
- His Excellency Ali Bongo Odimba, President of Gabonese Republic;
- His Excellency Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia;
- His Excellency Te Beretienti Taneti Maamau, President of the Republic of Kiribati;
- His Excellency Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization;
- His Excellency the Right Honourable Richard Wagner, P.C., Administrator of the Government of Canada;
- His Excellency Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore;
- His Excellency General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand;
- His Excellency Thongloun Sisoulith, Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic;
- His Excellency Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam;
- Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the State Administration Council, Republic of the Union of Myanmar;
- His Excellency Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz Al-Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of the State of Qatar;
- His Excellency Suga Yoshihide, Prime Minister of Japan;
- Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, the Honourable Prime Minister of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh; and
- His Excellency Imran Khan, Prime Minister of Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

**37<sup>th</sup> National Day : Generate physical development in tandem with spiritual progress (continued)**



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah Ibn Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam receiving a Royal Salute.

From page 1

Both physical and spiritual development must move in tandem to fulfil the nation's need," said His Majesty.

Thus, His Majesty highlighted that we must have quality human capital that is capable of handling all challenges towards generating physical progress in line with spiritual progress.

On February 23, His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam consented to join all levels of society to celebrate the 37<sup>th</sup> National Day of Brunei Darussalam which took place at Taman Haji Sir Muda Omar 'Ali Saifuddien.

Also gracing the event were His Majesty's sons and brothers, His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Wakeel; His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah; His Royal Highness Prince Haji Sufri Bolkiah and His Royal Highness Prince Haji Jefri Bolkiah.

The Grand Assembly began with the singing of the National Anthem. His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam then inspected the Guard of Honour Parade comprising personnel of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) and Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF) led by 640 Lieutenant Colonel Haji Mohd. Alimin bin Haji Subohi.

The Grand Assembly proceeded with a march past by eight teams consisting of 2,809 participants, led by the giant-size national flag bearers. This was followed by the Pledge Reading Team, bearers of the national flag and 37<sup>th</sup> National Day logo flag, as well as other teams according to their clusters. The march-past concluded with a COVID-19 Frontliners Group and combined agencies team comprising doctors, nurses and youth volunteers.

The National Day Pledge reading comprised of 37 representatives led by Pengiran Dr. Muhammad Nadzir bin Pengiran Mohd. Juanda, Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon at Gleneagles Jerudong Park Medical Centre. Meanwhile, Awang Abdul Nur

Continue on page 6



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam; His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Wakeel ; His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah; His Royal Highness Prince Haji Sufri Bolkiah and His Royal Highness Prince Haji Jefri Bolkiah at the 37<sup>th</sup> National Day Celebration.

## 37<sup>th</sup> National Day: Generate physical development in tandem with spiritual progress (continued)

From page 5

Mafuuz bin Haji Buhairi, a Youth Volunteer assigned as frontliner at Seria Health Centre led the three calls of 'Allahu Akbar'.

Further enlivening the celebration was the field performance with the theme, "Menjayakan Wawasan Negara" (Accomplishing the National Vision), involving 1,000 participants from various sectors and national development agencies, portraying the vision and



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkih Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah Ibn Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam inspecting the Guard of Honour at the 37<sup>th</sup> National Day Celebration.

mission of His Majesty's Government in building the country's human resource or manpower towards accomplishing the goals of Brunei Vision or Wawasan Brunei 2035. It also reflects the resilience of the country's development, the younger generation's preparedness in defending their country, while responding to the challenges of the technological boom, communication and the Fourth Industrial Revolution.



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam; 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 'Abdul Malik mingling with some of the performers of the celebration.



His Majesty and Their Royal Highnesses in a group photo with some of the participants.



The march past of giant-sized National Flag Bearers Team.



Enthusiastic students lined up to fly the national flag welcoming the arrival of the royal entourage.



## Unscheduled visit to PB, IBTE : Irregular policies lead to weak administration (continued)

From page 1

human resources," said His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam during an unscheduled visit to PB and two campuses under Institute of Brunei Technical Education (IBTE) namely IBTE Business Campus and IBTE School of Aviation.

In the *titah*, His Majesty also stressed the weakness of collaboration between PB and Hengyi Industries Sdn. Bhd. following the company chairman's tour of the PB campus and interaction with teachers and students undergoing the industrial Analysis Programme, which is a diploma programme between Hengyi Sdn. Bhd. industries and PB where both parties reportedly agreed to further broaden cooperation by planning to establish a petrochemical school which was expected to require more than 1,000 vacancies.

"But it sounds like the company does not trust and even underestimates the abilities of locals and takes the attitude of not accepting locals and instead hires workers from their countries to fill the vacancies. If this happens, it indicates a deficiency on the part of PB, that should be taken into account.

"The concept of enhancing and building quality must exist at all times but it should be done carefully instead of haste. As PB introduces the Level 5 Diploma Program in HND Petrochemical Engineering, it is known that PB still lacks of qualified instructors and adequate facilities for that. Is this not questionable?" said His Majesty.

Earlier, His Majesty said that PB has the vision to produce innovative graduates that are marketable, while its mission is to equip students with educational skills holistically.

In the early days of its establishment, nine advanced diploma programmes were introduced in business, info-communication technology and science as well as engineering.

PB has so far already had several schools offering various diploma programmes that are seen as very beneficial and meeting the current needs.

Among them is the School of Business Studies (SBS) which offers diploma programmes in Accounting and Finance, Business Studies, Entrepreneurship Studies, Human Resource Management Studies and Marketing Studies.

The School of Health Sciences (SHS) offers six diploma programmes including Nursing Health Science, Paramedics, Cardiovascular Technology and others.

The School of Science and Engineering (SSE) also offers attractive diploma programmes including Architecture, Interior Design, Petroleum Engineering and others.

His Majesty believed that all these programmes mentioned above are relevant for fulfilling the short and long-term demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

"Because of these attractive programmes, PB gained popularity and thus witnessed a surge in the number of students, exceeding the capacity in the available buildings and facilities.

"Hence, the question of building a new campus to accommodate the four schools under PB should be considered," said His Majesty.



His Majesty being briefed by a teaching staff during the visit.



His Majesty mingling with the students.

In line with an increase in the number of schools, it is inevitable for various issues to occur and therefore His Majesty hoped that all will run smoothly, particularly for the students in their respective schools, so that they may gain discipline and noble values.

"In its current age, PB has produced plenty of graduates who underwent various programmes offered. I would like to know whether any assessments have been made regarding the workforce marketability of PB graduates who gained employment or were successful in setting up their own businesses. It is crucial that this should be defined as a benchmark of excellence or failure for PB.

"With regard to IBTE, it was established to replace the responsibilities of the Department of Technical Education, with its mission is to produce highly skilled and marketable graduates. The rationale for its establishment was to restructing of the technical education system to be more responsive and relevant to the nation's needs," His Majesty reminded.

As a post-secondary institution, IBTE offers Higher National Technical Education Certificate (HNTec) and National Technical Education Certificate (NTec) courses, with seven clusters namely agro-technology and applied sciences, maritime, business and financial services, hospitality and tourism services, energy and engineering, building technological services, electronics and information technology.

Continue on page 8

## Unscheduled visit to PB, IBTE : Irregular policies lead to weak administration (continued)

From page 7

His Majesty also highlighted that IBTE provides the option, but not as a last resort, to continue education at post-secondary level. Courses in these various fields will undoubtedly provide specific opportunities for technical education, as opposed to an academic one, which is capable of supplying the nation with skilled workers.

His Majesty reminded that challenges should not be ignored in the face of current changes such as the spread of information technology, as well as forms of challenges whereas the facilities and buildings for the courses must be relevant to fulfil the job market.

His Majesty added that in 2015, a transformation was made with the addition of more Level 5 Diploma Programmes equivalent to the Higher National Diploma (HND).

"Since then, a total of 21 academic programmes have been offered by four more schools under PB, namely the School of Commerce, the School of Information and Communication Technology and the School of Science and Engineering.

"Looking at the vision and mission and programmes offered, there is no doubt as to Politeknik Brunei's potency and as a

source of pride," underlined His Majesty.

During the visit, His Majesty visited PB's main campus and several departments including estate management, finance and administration and various facilities.

From PB, His Majesty then visited the two campuses under the Institute of Brunei Technical Education (IBTE) namely IBTE Business Campus located at Jalan Pasar Gadong and IBTE School of Aviation (School of Aviation) located at IBTE Sultan Saiful Rijal Campus, Jalan Utama Berakas where His Majesty ended his visit.



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkih Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in a group photo with students at IBTE Business Campus.

## RBAF and RBPF host Crown Prince's birthday

**GADONG, February 18** – The Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF) hosted a high-tea reception to mark the 47<sup>th</sup> birthday of His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkih Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office.

Accompanying His Royal Highness the Crown Prince at the Officers' Mess in Gadong were Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah binti Pengiran Haji Salleh Ab. Rahaman; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik and Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Rabi'atul Adawiyah; Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Masna, Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Lela Cheteria Sahibun Najabah Pengiran Anak Haji Abdul Aziz bin Pengiran Jaya Negara Pengiran Haji Abu Bakar Chief of Adat Istiadat Negara.

During the reception, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince consented to sign the royal parchment and pose for a group photo, followed by a cake-cutting ceremony and received a *pesambah* (souvenir).

Prior to leaving the reception, His Royal Highness was introduced to police inspectorate Squad I and II and Probationary Inspector Officers.

The same event was also held on February 17, hosted by the Ministry of Defence (MinDef) and the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) at the Officers' Mess, Bolkih Garrison.

Accompanying His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran

Continue on page 9

From page 8



His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkih 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; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik and Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Rabi'atul Adawiyah; Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Masna binti Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as 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 in a group photo.

Anak Sarah were His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik and Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Raabi'atul 'Adawiyah binti Pengiran Haji Bolkih; and His Royal Highness 920 Captain (U) Prince 'Abdul Mateen.

Upon arrival, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and other members of the royal family consented to pose for a group photo.

During the reception, His Royal Highness was introduced to RBAF officers from Brunei Darussalam's 16<sup>th</sup> International Monitoring Team (IMT) to Mindanao, Republic of the Philippines; RBAF personnel embedded under the Malaysian Battalion

850-7 (MALBATT 850-7) for the United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon (UNIFIL); the recipient of the RBAF Commendation Award from the 10<sup>th</sup> RBAF Command and Staff Course 2020; RBAF personnel from the Independent Decommissioning Body Verification, Monitoring and Assistance Team (IDB V-MAT) to Mindanao, Republic of the Philippines; and newly commissioned officers who received awards of excellence during the recent Sovereign's Parade Ceremony for the 19<sup>th</sup> intake of officer cadets, RBAF Officer Cadet School.

Continue on page 10



His Royal Highness the Crown Prince signing the commemorative parchment.



Their Royal Highnesses with the police inspectorate Squad 1 and 2 who were recently promoted.



His Royal Highness and Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah and members of the royal family during the high tea reception to mark the 47<sup>th</sup> birthday of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince.

## RBAF and RBPF hosts Crown Prince's Birthday (continued)

From page 9

His Royal Highness then watched a video clip and was presented with a photobook album titled "Sejambak Ristaan XIV," a collection of photographs from previous years' High Tea Receptions at the RBAF from 2005 until 2020.

This was followed with the signing of a Commemorative Parchment, a cake-cutting ceremony in conjunction with His Royal Highness' birthday and a presentation of *pesambah* from RBAF Officers and personnel.

The *pesambah* was an all-terrain high-powered electric bicycle which is in line with current trend in which the ordinary bicycle is now powered by electricity. It also reflects the significance of cycling as a rapidly developing sports in the country.



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 during the cake-cutting ceremony at the high-tea reception hosted by RBAF. Also present were Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah binti Pengiran Haji Salleh Ab. Rahaman; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik and Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Raabi'atul 'Adawiyah binti Pengiran Haji Bolkiah; and His Royal Highness 920 Captain (U) Prince 'Abdul Mateen.

## Brunei-UK develop parliamentary cooperation

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 8**

The close ties and cooperation between Brunei Darussalam and the United Kingdom (UK) is hoped to be further strengthened and developed specifically in the field of legislation, defence, trading, investment and education. The matter was touched upon by Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Lela Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdul Rahman bin Dato Setia Haji Mohamed Taib, Speaker of the Legislative Council during a courtesy

call with by His Excellency John Virgoe, the British High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam.

The courtesy call took place at the Dewan Majlis Building.

Both parties also hoped that parliamentary cooperation between the two countries will continue to develop and strengthen as well as exchange of visits can be made after the COVID-19 pandemic is

under control. His Excellency John Virgoe praised the involvement of the Members of the Legislative Council (LegCo) in addressing climate change issues. The involvement of the LegCo can encourage the public to be more sensitive and concerned towards environmental.

At the meeting, both parties also touched on matters of mutual concern on the outbreak of COVID-19. His Excellency stated that Brunei Darussalam has taken rigorous measures to curb the pandemic. Both parties hope that UK and other affected nations can find a solution to control it.

Yang Berhormat Speaker of the Legislative Council and the British High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam during the courtesy call.



## Tourism Industry greatly affected by impacts of COVID-19

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 5** - Deep concern over the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic which has severely affected the tourism industry was among the matters discussed at the 24<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Tourism Ministers Meeting, 20<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Plus Three, China, Japan, Republic of Korea Tourism Ministers Meeting and 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ASEAN and India.

Brunei Darussalam was represented by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Ali bin Apong, Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism.

The meeting which was held through video conference on February 2 - 5 was chaired by His Excellency Dr. Thong Khon, Minister of Tourism, Kingdom of Cambodia and His Excellency Sandianga Salahuddin Uno, Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, Indonesia, served as Vice - Chairman at the 24<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Tourism Ministers Meeting with the theme "Unity for Sustainable and Responsible Tourism Recovery".

Continue on page 11

From page 10

The meetings were preceded by the 53<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of ASEAN National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) and other Senior Official Meetings with Dialogue Partners from on February 2 - 3.

The tourism sector had suffered a loss of approximately 36 per cent in tourism receipts, international arrivals had declined by approximately 72 per cent, the rate of hotel room occupancy is at its lowest, and the travel and tour industry also experienced massive cancellations last year.

The Ministers adopted the updated ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016 - 2025 with mitigation plans and actions using digital technology to be more resilient, sustainable and inclusive, taking into account lessons learnt from the pandemic as well as latest development in the industry.

The Ministers welcomed the Study on the Impact of COVID-19, and Recommendations for Policies and Best Practices for the Post-COVID-19 Recovery Plan for ASEAN Tourism in December 2020. It is supported by the Government of Canada through the Canadian Trade and Investment Facility for Development (CTIF) and supported the development of a Post-COVID-19 Recovery Plan based on the study as one of the priority economic deliverables during Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN chairmanship this year.

Cooperation with the Plus Three Countries (China, Japan and



Yang Berhormat Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism delivering his speech through video conference.

Korea) and India and with other ASEAN bodies and partners was also discussed. The ministers expressed their appreciation to the dialogue partners and various ASEAN bodies for the support and cooperation that will strengthen the ASEAN Member States' capacity and capability to maintain competitiveness in the tourism sector.

The Chairmanship of Cambodia to host ASEAN Tourism Forum 2021 has been extended to January 2022 in order to enable Cambodia to host the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) in 2022.



Brunei Darussalam with other ASEAN counterparts discussing matters concerning impacts of COVID-19 over tourism industry.

## Brunei-Singapore signs MoU on Agrifood, Agro-Technology Cooperation

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN February 8** - The Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and the Government of the Republic of Singapore has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Agrifood and Agro-Technology Cooperation.

It is aimed to further strengthen and develop cooperation between both

countries.

Signing on behalf of the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was Dayang Hajah Tutiaty binti Haji Abdul Wahab, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism, while Lim Kok Thai, Chief Executive Officer of Singapore Food Agency represented the Government of the Republic of Singapore.

Present to witness the signing was Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Ali bin Apong, Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism and Her Excellency Grace Fu Hai Yien, Minister for Sustainability and the Environment, Singapore witnessed the signing virtually.

The signing allows both parties to

Continue on page 12

## Brunei-Singapore signs MoU on Agrifood, Agro-Technology Cooperation (continued)



Witnessing the signing ceremony between His Majesty's Government and the Government of the Republic of Singapore were Yang Berhormat Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism of Brunei and the Minister of Primary Resources and Trade of Singapore.

From page 11

cooperate in matters related to agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, agro-technology, productivity, standards and quality that are beneficial and provide mutual benefits, specifically in the aspects of capacity building and market access.

Earlier, the Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism held a virtual bilateral discussion with Her Excellency Grace Fu Hai Yien, Minister for Sustainability and the Environment and Lim Kok Thai, Chief Executive Officer of Singapore Food Agency.



Yang Berhormat Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism witnessing the exchange of signed documents between representatives of both countries.



Yang Berhormat Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism during the virtual bilateral discussion with Her Excellency Grace Fu Hai Yien, Minister for Sustainability and the Environment and Lim Kok Thai, Chief Executive Officer of Singapore Food Agency.

## COVID-19: 6 new cases recorded in February

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 28** – In February, Brunei Darussalam recorded six new imported COVID-19 cases, bringing the total number of confirmed cases to 186.

Case 181 was announced on February 5. The case involved a man aged 36 years old who arrived in this country from Europe via Kuala Lumpur on January 22 on board flight Royal Brunei BI874.

Case 182 was announced on February 8. The case involved a 28-year old man who arrived in the country from Manila on January 26 on board flight Royal Brunei

BI688.

Case 183, was announced on February 10. The case involved a child aged 1 year 7 months who arrived in the country from Bangladesh via Kuala Lumpur on January 28 on board flight Royal Brunei BI874.

Case 184 was announced on February 11. The case involved a 29-year old man who arrived in the country from Singapore on February 3.

Case 185 was announced on February 17. The case involved a 23-year old man who

arrived in this country from Africa via Dubai and Kuala Lumpur on February 3.

Case 186 was announced on February 26. The case involved a 38-year old man who arrived in the country from India on February 12 on board Royal Brunei BI4112.

The announcements were made via press releases issued by the Ministry of Health. The patients were all taken to the National Isolation Centre for treatment and monitoring, and contact tracing were

Continue on page 13

## Launching of Total Laboratory Automation System

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 4** - The Department of Laboratory Services held a launching ceremony of the Total Laboratory Automation System at the National Clinical Chemistry Reference Laboratory, Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleh (RIPAS) Hospital.

Present as the Guest of Honour to launch the system was Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Md. Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health.

The National Clinical Chemistry Reference Laboratory provides a various range of biochemical tests, analysing electrolytes, enzymes, hormones and proteins analysis in blood, urine and

cerebrospinal fluid. The laboratory tests are provided to all medical and health services throughout the country.

The laboratory achieved International Standard ISO 15189 accreditation since 2011 and has maintained ISO 15189 accreditation to this day.

In 2020, with 17 technical staff, the laboratory received a total of 541,402 samples of blood, urine and cerebrospinal fluid and has completed a total of 3,213,518 laboratory tests.

The system utilises technology which performs 86 types of blood tests, includes an automated sample delivery track

system that delivers an estimated of 600 blood samples per hour from the initial analysis process until the test results are released and finally to a sample storage module that will dispenses samples automatically for disposal at later date.

With the system, the quality of the National Clinical Chemistry Reference Laboratory Service will be improved by providing more accurate and consistent laboratory test results according to the 'turnaround time' of each test. The system also offers the feature of reducing the risk of exposure to patient's blood samples which then assures the guaranteed safety of staff.



Yang Berhormat Minister of Health officiating the Total Laboratory Automation System at Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha Hospital (RIPAS).



Yang Berhormat Minister of Health reviewing the Total Laboratory Automation System, National Clinical Chemistry Reference Laboratory, Department of Laboratory Services.

## COVID-19: 6 new cases recorded in February (continued)

From page 12

actively carried out following the confirmation of the cases.

As of today, the last local COVID-19 case was reported on May 6, 2020. Meanwhile, the total number of imported cases since the last one is 45.

Six hundred and seventy six people are currently

undergoing mandatory self-isolation while 13,760 people have completed their mandatory self isolation since March 2020.

In the meantime, 566 samples have been tested for the SARS-COV-2 Virus, bringing the total number of lab tests since January 2020, to 102,232 tests.

## 11 Brunei students in UK tested positive COVID-19

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 15** – Eleven students residing at Brunei Hall in London, were confirmed positive for COVID-19, with three cases still active. The Ministry of Education stated the matter through its Media Release.

Starting from the first case detected, all students residing in Brunei Hall have undergone swab tests and isolation in their respective room and a total of 31 students have completed their isolation period. Following the situation, the Ministry of Education through the Students Unit in London has collaborated with the High Commission of Brunei Darussalam in the United Kingdom (UK) and the Ministry of Health (MoH), Brunei Darussalam in monitoring the students' health progress in the UK. Among the efforts undertaken are the immediate closure of the Brunei Hall building, health monitoring, implementation of contact tracing for all

students and workforce, supply of food and beverages and medical as well as other necessities.

Aside from the three active cases experiencing mild symptoms, all students are well. Students at the Brunei Hall in particular, and those in the UK in general, are advised to always adhere to the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) set from time to time to prevent COVID-19 infection. Students are also advised to always inform their daily situation to the management of Brunei Hall. Parents, guardians and families of students are advised not to panic about the situation.

The Ministry of Education will continue to collaborate with the MoH, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the relevant parties in monitoring the COVID-19 situation in the UK.

## Share key strategies to curb COVID-19

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 11** - The 4<sup>th</sup> Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator Facilitation Council meeting was held online on February 9, 2021.

Representing Brunei Darussalam at the meeting was Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Md. Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health.

Brunei Darussalam as the Chairman of ASEAN 2021 has become a Member of ACT Accelerator Facilitation Council established in 2020 to provide high-level political leadership and support global work to fight COVID-19.

The meeting shared priority strategies including increasing the delivery of two billion doses of COVID-19 vaccine, testing, treatment and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and addressing the COVID-19 variant through research and development.

The panel members are from companies including AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson, AXA and the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia discussed the challenges of achieving access to vaccines fairly and equitably as well as



Yang Berhormat Minister of Health representing Brunei Darussalam at the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting to Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator Facilitation Council online.

proposed measures to address those challenges.

In addition, the meeting also discussed the ACT-Accelerator budget for 2021, the ACT-Accelerator financing mechanisms to explore solutions for budget deficiencies to ensure fair and equitable access and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine and

to ensure vaccination coverage rates of 60 to 80 per cent targeted by most low- and medium-low income countries is achieved.

At the end of the meeting, the co-chair of the meeting shared a summary of the results of the meeting and the way forward for the ACT-Accelerator.

## Support Brunei's efforts to diversify economy, green society



The Guest of Honour representing the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at the reception was Yang Berhormat Minister of Health.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 17** - Japan will continue to support Brunei Darussalam's efforts to diversify its economy and foster green society through cooperation in the green energy sector, such as Advanced Hydrogen Energy Chain Association for Technology Development (AHEAD) for hydrogen production and cooperation with Mitsubishi Corporation in solar energy. Japan will work together with other countries, including Brunei Darussalam,

and lead international efforts at this year's Conference of the Parties or COP 26 and beyond, in order to realise a decarbonised world. This includes striving to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050, that is, to realise a carbon-neutral society.

This was among the matters stressed by His Excellency Eiji Yamamoto, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Brunei

Darussalam on the occasion of the 61<sup>st</sup> Birthday Celebration of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan's Reception at Rizqun International Hotel.

Representing the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Haji Md. Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health.

His Excellency also conveyed his appreciation for the leadership of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in dealing with the pandemic that hit last year and for the hard work and dedication of the Minister of Health and his team as frontline health workers in safeguarding the safety of the people of this country.

His Excellency further congratulated Brunei Darussalam as chairman of ASEAN this year, with the theme "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper" which is very relevant and timely, and Japan fully supports this country's efforts as ASEAN Chairman.

Regarding the upcoming summer specials, His Excellency added that

Continue on page 15

From page 14



Yang Berhormat Minister of Health receiving a souvenir from His Excellency Eiji Yamamoto.

Japanese government together with the International Olympic Committee is fully committed to hold the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympic Games as scheduled, while prioritising the health and safety of all athletes and spectators as well as Brunei athletes are invited to Tokyo.

The Reception was graced with a video clip of local youth activities in exchange events between the people through sports, culture and education that have been implemented virtually.

The event was also attended by representatives from Japanese companies based in the country, exhibiting locally made products exported to the Japanese market.



His Excellency Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Brunei Darussalam delivering his speech.



Among the guests in attendance at the reception held at Rizqun International Hotel.

## Empowering call-to-action urging collective commitment fighting cancer



Cabinet Ministers during the ribbon cutting ceremony in conjunction with World Cancer Day together with PJSC's Goodwill Ambassador and Messenger of Cancer Awareness, Wu Chun.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 28** - The number of cancer cases in Brunei Darussalam continues to increase annually where in 2019, a total of 704 cases were diagnosed compared to 664 cases in 2018.

In supporting the global initiative towards

cancer-free future, World Cancer Day is celebrated on every 4<sup>th</sup> of February with the main aim to raise and spread the awareness on cancer, encouraging in early prevention and detection, screening and life saving treatments in the meantime time reducing the economic burden of health.

In celebrating this year's World Cancer Day, Pantai Jerudong Specialist Centre (PJSC) organised the World Cancer Day weekend at the open area of Yayasan Sultan Haji Hasanah Bolkiah Shopping Complex.

Continue on page 16



## Empowering call-to-action urging collective commitment fighting cancer (continued)

From page 15

Present as special guests were, Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew bin Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy as Chairman of PJSC; Yang Berhormat Dato Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Md. Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health and Deputy Chairman of PJSC; Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Kerna Dato Seri Setia (Dr.) Haji Awang Abu Bakar bin Haji Apong, Minister of Home Affairs; Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd. Yussof, Second Minister of Defence; Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Abdul Mokti bin Haji Mohd. Daud, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office; Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Erywan bin Pehin Datu Pekerma Jaya Haji Mohd. Yussof, Second Minister of Foreign Affairs; Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Ir. Awang Haji Suhaimi bin Haji Gafar, Minister of Development; Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mat Suni bin Haji Md. Hussien, Minister of Energy; and Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Abdul Mutalib bin Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Setia Dato Paduka Haji Mohammad Yusof, Minister of Transport and Infocommunications and their spouses.

The event was officiated with a ribbon cutting ceremony by the special guests and PJSC's Goodwill Ambassador and Messenger of Cancer Awareness, Wu Chun. This was followed with the release of balloons and the launching of trishaws by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew bin Abdullah.

The trishaws will travel along a two kilometre route carrying a message of this year's theme "I Am and I Will" which is an empowering call to action, and



Cabinet Ministers and PJSC's Goodwill Ambassador and Messenger of Cancer Awareness at The World Cancer Day weekend.



Cabinet Ministers being briefed during a tour of the exhibition.

as a reminder that the enduring power of cooperation and collective actions matter for a healthier, brighter world without cancer.

The Chairman of PJSC presented certificates of appreciation to event sponsors and partners of World Cancer Day followed with a tour of the exhibition by Cabinet Ministers showcasing art works by cancer survivors and patients

held in collaborations with Rainforest Gallery led by Dato Paduka Awang Haji Shofry bin Haji Abdul Ghafor.

The artworks symbolise the courageous journey of cancer survivors and patients in a psychotherapeutic way.

The Cabinet Ministers also joined a Tai Chi session led by Brunei's National Wushu coach, Zhao Chu Jie.

## Expansion of ICT Hub regionally

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 5** - Brunei Darussalam recorded another encouraging development in telecommunications services when the new connectivity platform, Borneo IX housed at the Tungku Submarine Cable Station was ready to provide its services.

The platform offers services in the Southeast Asian region with an extension to other DE-CIX metro markets in

Malaysia and Singapore, acting as a new gateway between the United States (US) and Southeast Asia.

In this regard, Unified National Networks (UNN) as the national network infrastructure operator of Brunei Darussalam and is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Darussalam Assets Sdn. Bhd. and DE-CIX, a leading Internet Exchange operating company, recently

announced a strategic partnership to create Borneo-IX at its launch event held at the Royal Berkshire Hall, Royal Brunei Polo and Riding Club.

Present to officiate the launch were Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew

Continue on page 17

From page 16

bin Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy as Chairman of UNN; Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Abdul Mutalib bin Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Setia Dato Paduka Haji Mohammad Yusof, Minister of Transport and Infocommunications and Dr. Steffen Oehler, the Chief Executive Officer of UNN.

UNN in a statement said that Borneo is the largest island in Asia and the third largest in the world, well-positioned in the heart of Southeast Asia and Brunei Darussalam has a landing station for several international submarine cables and is connected to Malaysia and Indonesia.

In this regard, Borneo-IX offers domestic and regional customers the nearest and dedicated access to worldwide internet hubs in Asia, Europe, America and allows the global network to be closer to consumers in its densely populated Southeast Asian region.

Dr. Steffen Oehler in his speech during the event said that economic relations and transactions are highly dependent on robust and adequate telecommunications services and applications.

"UNN can offer this service from Brunei Darussalam with the same features and quality parameters to key locations in Asia, Europe and the US which will create new opportunities for Brunei Darussalam businesses to collaborate and grow internationally while attracting other international organizations to consider Brunei Darussalam as place of business and investment," he explained.

He added that Borneo-IX, combined with UNN's modern and stable fixed and mobile national network, is a key block to expand the telecommunications industry and the ambition to be an ICT Hub competitor for the region.



Present as Guest of Honours were Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy as the Chairman of UNN; and Yang Berhormat Minister of Transport and Infocommunications.



Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy; and Yang Berhormat Minister of Transport and Infocommunications officiating the launch of Borneo IX, held at the Royal Berkshire Hall, Royal Brunei Polo and Riding Club.

The development will also support the main purpose of the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in implementing the digitisation plan needed to achieve the objectives of Brunei Vision 2035 as part of the National ICT Development Plan.

The new liaison hub will be operated by DE-CIX on behalf of UNN, as part of the DE-CIX-as-a-Service (DaaS) programme. The DaaS programme includes a set of service such as installation, maintenance,

UNN Chief Executive Officer delivering a welcome speech at the event.

provisioning, marketing and sales support designed for data centre operators or other third parties to create their own exchange and internet connection platform fully operated by DE-CIX in Dubai, the newly launched SEECIX powered by DE-CIX in Athens, Greece, and Ruhr-CIX in German.

Meanwhile, Ivo Ivanov, DE-CIX International CEO said that with more than 600 million people in Southeast Asia, there is a lot of demand that needs to be addressed.

"As many as 80 per cent of those are related to international suppliers doing business in the region and need strong and flexible liaison service," stated the CEO.

## Call to protect Earth's ecosystems

**JERUDONG, February 9** - The British High Commission in Brunei Darussalam hosted a film screening "A Life on Our Planet" by Sir David Attenborough. The film supports the Climate Change Summit, COP 26, which calls for the need for countries to protect and restore the earth's natural habitats and ecosystems.

The screening took place at the Arts Centre, Jerudong International School.

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

His Excellency John Virgoe, British High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam in his speech said that Brunei has an important role to play as chairman of ASEAN this year whereas the United Kingdom is working closely with Brunei to promote action on climate change across the region.

He added that all countries need to gear up their actions to address climate change also protect biodiversity and Brunei Darussalam is no exception, especially given the economic dependence on exporting oil

and gas.

His Excellency further said, the stunning forests of the country are among the planet rich in diversity and well-protected ecosystems, an example to the world.

"Last week I was lucky enough to visit the Ulu Temburong National Forest and see some unique wild animals.

"The Temburong forest has existed for thousands of years, but "A Life on Our Planet" reminds us that such an environment, may not last much longer as it is threatened worldwide from climate change and deforestation," he added.

His Excellency also felt like he was in his own country when he was in Ulu Temburong where his initial research was done, in Borneo 50 years ago.

The documentary featured a first-hand account of humanity's impact on nature and a message of hope for future generations.

Also present were Members of the Legislative Council and Heads of Foreign Diplomats to Brunei Darussalam.



Yang Berhormat Minister of Development watching a film screening "A Life on Our Planet" by Sir David Attenborough hosted by the British High Commission in Brunei Darussalam.



The documentary featured a first-hand account of humanity's impact on nature.

## ASEAN-India Online Hackathon strengthens educational cooperation



Yang Berhormat Minister of Education delivering a message through a pre-recorded video.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 5** - The prize giving ceremony for the ASEAN-India Online Hackathon was held yesterday, which was attended by guests and delegates from ASEAN and the Republic of India.

The 'hackathon' was held under the ASEAN-India partnership and is an initiative introduced by the Government of India through the Ministry of Education of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of India.

The online hackathon was held for 36 hours non-stop with the participation of more than 330 students and 110 mentors from all over ASEAN and the Republic of India at the tertiary level.

The event was attended by His Excellency Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India and representatives from ASEAN and India.

At the event, Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Hamzah bin Haji Sulaiman, Minister of Education had the opportunity to deliver a message through a pre-recorded video, where the Minister outlined the long-standing relationship between ASEAN and the Republic of India in cooperation in various fields including resource development, people to people contacts and education.

Continue on page 19

## KUPU SB's Open Day fosters ties with Thai community

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 28** - The Royal Thai Embassy in Brunei Darussalam held a Thailand Day in conjunction with the Open Day of Seri Begawan Religious Teachers University College (KUPU SB).

Present as the Guest of Honour at the KUPU SB's Open Day and officiated the event was Yang Mulia Pengiran Dato Seri Paduka Haji Bahrom bin Pengiran Haji Bahar, Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs. Also in attendance was Dr. Haji Adanan bin Haji Basar, the Ra'ees of KUPU SB.

Her Excellency Wanthaneey Viputwongsakul, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Thailand in her speech said that through such event, it gives an opportunity to Thai students studying in this country to share with their Bruneian friends on various aspects of Thailand including food, tourism as well as arts and crafts which will further deepen ties of friendship between people and residents of both countries.

The ceremony, then followed with a choral speaking performance by Thai

students; religious performance of 'Mawlid' by KUPU SB students; and Thai traditional dance by the Thai community.

The Guest of Honour then visited exhibitions showcasing variety of Thai products including a demonstration of Thai cuisine.

Thailand Day is a special collaboration between the Royal Thai Embassy in Brunei Darussalam and KUPU SB with the support of Thai students studying in the country.



Yang Mulia Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs officiating KUPU SB's Open Day.



Yang Mulia Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs and Her Excellency Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Thailand touring the exhibition.



Yang Mulia Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs in a group photo at the KUPU SB's Open Day.

## ASEAN-India Online Hackathon strengthen educational cooperation (continued)

From page 18

The Minister further emphasised that the 'hackathon' is intended to provide opportunities and experience to the younger generations in developing skills such as teamwork, communication and working in challenging environment.

Students were tasked to provide solutions to problem statements in education, science, and technology. The event aims to stimulate innovative and creative ideas in sharing cultures, values and best practices among students with different backgrounds.

Brunei Darussalam was represented by a delegation consisting

of eight students and two lecturers from Universiti Teknologi Brunei (UTB).

The highlight of the ASEAN-India Online Hackathon saw the announcement of winners of the competition, where the team mentored by Assistant Professor Dr. Wida Susanty binti Haji Suhaili, Deputy Director of UTB Innovative Engineering Centre, was announced as one of the runner-ups. Meanwhile, the team led by Dayang Siti Aisah binti Janaji, a PhD student at UTB also managed to get second place in the 'hackathon'.

## Four RBAF Personnel join IDB VMAT

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 15** - The Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) is sending its personnel to join the 3<sup>rd</sup> Independent Decommissioning Body Verification, Monitoring and Assistance Team (IDB VMAT) in the Republic of the Philippines next week.

Prior to their departure to Mindanao, a handing over of national flag was held at Bolkiah Garrison Gymnasium and was handed over by Major General (U)

Dato Seri Pahlawan Haji Hamzah bin Haji Sahat, Royal Brunei Armed Forces Commander to Head of Delegation, Lieutenant Colonel Mohammad Shalleh bin Haji Ismail.

IDB VMAT is a step forward in the peace process in Mindanao, Republic of the Philippines to oversee process of decommissioning of the forces and weapons of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).



Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) Commander handing over the national flag to Head of Delegation (above).

Group photo with the four-member delegation joining the Mindanao peace process in Republic of the Philippines (left).

## Working together to address climate change

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 4** – Year 2021 is an important year for Brunei Darussalam and the British Government as each country play a role as Chairman of ASEAN and Presidency for the United Nation Climate Change Conference (COP26) to be held in Glasgow, Scotland.

This provides an opportunity for cooperation between both countries in encouraging the whole of ASEAN to act on climate change immediately, and at the same time support Brunei Darussalam in carrying out its own national climate change planning goals.

The matter was raised by Dr. Isabelle de Lovinfosse, Head of South East Asia COP 26 Strategy based at the British High Commission in the Republic of Singapore during a press conference after holding meetings with stakeholders from government and private agencies as well as NGOs.

Hosted by the British High Commission in Brunei Darussalam, the press conference which was held at the Piccolo Café was attended by His Excellency John Virgoe, the British High Commissioner in the country.

Dr. Isabelle shared various strategies and objectives that will be implemented by the British Government as Presidency of COP26, including the details of the three main pillars and five types of campaigns that will support the effectiveness of the pillars.

The three 'pillars' which are 'ambition', 'negotiations' and 'working on climate actions on the ground' are the main focus

of COP26 later, where Brunei Darussalam will also contribute to the achievement of these objectives with Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC).

Dr. Isabelle also stated that Brunei has already issued the NDC for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) with a commitment to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by 20 per cent compared to the Business-As-Ordinary level by 2030, and each country should aspire to achieve the GHG reduction target, and is committed to achieving the 'net zero emission' target.

Meanwhile, the objective of the consultation is for each government to give a final word on the implementation of the Paris Agreement that was agreed in 2015, which among others focuses on protocols and regulations related to the challenge of reaching consensus on discussion issues.

As Presidency of COP26, Britain will urge states, businesses, youths, cities and low-level governments to accelerate their efforts towards climate change.

In this regard, Dr. Isabelle welcomes the publication of the National Policy on Climate Change of Brunei Darussalam (BDNCCP) in July 2020, and the NDC last December, where the government is committed to 30 per cent renewable energy by 2035, and this is a positive sign of a willingness to change to a more 'green' system.

Continue on page 21

From page 20



In addition, Brunei Darussalam also aspires to achieve the target of 60 per cent Electric Vehicle (EV) by 2035, and this is in line with the COP26 policy and campaign.

His Excellency also welcomed this year's declaration as Brunei Darussalam's Climate Action Year and was keen to contribute to the effort by holding several activities leading to climate change at the British High Commission.

His Excellency British High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam, and Head of South East Asia COP 26 Strategy during the press conference.

## Canadian Corner offers additional value to UTB's library



Her Excellency while delivering her speech at the ceremony.



Vice Chancellor of Universiti Teknologi Brunei expressing her gratitude to the Canadian High Commissioner for the contribution.

**TUNGKU LINK, February 1** - The Le Coin Canadien or the Canadian Corner, an effort to introduce Canada's cultures including views and issues faced by the global community was launched by the High Commissioner of Canada to Brunei Darussalam, Her Excellency Jeanette Adele Stovel at Universiti Teknologi Brunei's Library.

The launching of the Canadian Corner ran concurrently with the presentation of 40 books which covers diverse topics including Canadian classics, history, poetry, and biographies and was presented by Her Excellency Jeanette Adele Stovel to Professor Dr. Dayang Hajah Zohrah binti Haji Sulaiman, Vice Chancellor of Universiti Teknologi Brunei (UTB).

The Vice Chancellor of UTB in a speech delivered at the Launching Ceremony said that the corner also acts as part of efforts by the High Commission of Canada in Brunei Darussalam to enrich the literary contributions of the academic community in the Sultanate, while strengthening ties between the High Commission and UTB.

Meanwhile, the High Commissioner of Canada to Brunei Darussalam in her speech said that the books also represent the cultural diversity in Canada, including the culture of indigenous peoples and migrants.

The book donation is hoped to offer additional value to the library's growing foreign mission collection while fostering love for reading within the UTB community. The Le Coin Canadian also acts as the added value for students and staff in UTB.



Her Excellency Canadian High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam receiving a souvenir from Vice Chancellor of UTB.

## Strengthen the role of ASCC

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 8** - The Senior Officials Committee for the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (SOCA) Retreat was held on February 8 via video conference.

The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Pillar is one of the three ASEAN Community Councils, and this is the first meeting among the senior officials of the ASCC this year, together with the ASEAN Secretariat, deliberating on the priorities and deliverables of the ASCC agenda for year 2021.

Under Brunei Darussalam's theme for ASEAN 2021, "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper", SOCA Leaders agreed to focus on strengthening ASCC's role, particularly in inter-pillar and cross-sectorial cooperation while maintaining ASEAN's centrality. These will be carried out through ASEAN-led mechanisms in the spirit of a community that is caring, prepared and prosperous in all its actions.

The meeting also reiterated ASEAN's commitment in continuing regional collective efforts to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, by implementing the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework, and following up on the recommendations of the Mid-Term Review of the ASCC Blueprint 2025, to enhance the ASEAN Community's



Permanent Secretary (Community and Culture) at the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, in her capacity as Brunei Darussalam's SOCA Leader, chairing the Senior Officials Committee for the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (SOCA) Retreat, held on February 8 via video conference.

resilience and sustainability. Among the priority areas also discussed were fostering greater understanding among the peoples of ASEAN and their empowerment including the strengthening of social protection, youth development, and advancement of the climate change agenda.

The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports as Brunei Darussalam's National Secretariat of the ASCC Pillar, led by Hajah Nor Ashikin binti Haji Johari, Permanent Secretary (Community and Culture), in her capacity as Brunei Darussalam's SOCA Leader, chaired

the meeting. In attendance were the SOCA Leaders and delegates of ASEAN Member States and His Excellency Kung Phook, Deputy Secretary General of ASEAN for ASCC and staff of the ASEAN Secretariat. National representatives of sectorial bodies under the ASCC were also present during the meeting.

The meeting further discussed SOCA's preparations for the 25<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Council and SOCA meetings, as well as, ASCC-related meetings and events, to be held in March 2021.

## 39<sup>th</sup> HLTF-EI Meeting discusses ACRF progress



Permanent Secretary (Economy) at the Ministry of Finance and Economy representing Brunei Darussalam at the 39<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the High-Level Task Force on ASEAN Economic Integration (HLTF-EI) via video conference.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 22** - Dr. Hajah May Fae'zah binti Haji Ahmad Ariffin, Permanent Secretary (Economy) at the Ministry of Finance and Economy attended the 39<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the High-Level Task Force on ASEAN Economic Integration (HLTF-EI) via video conference.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Gabriel

Lim, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Industry Singapore.

Also attending the meeting were high-level officials from all ASEAN Member States (AMS) and the ASEAN Secretariat which among others discussed on the implementation progress of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and the development of the Final

Report of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025 and ASEAN Post-2025 Vision.

The meeting also discussed the 10 proposed Priority Economic Deliverables (PEDs) for Brunei Darussalam's 2021 ASEAN Chairmanship under the theme "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper." These PEDs fall under three strategic thrusts, namely Recovery; Digitalization; and Sustainability.

In particular, the meeting deliberated on the concept of Circular Economy and progress on the development of the Fourth Industrial Revolution consolidated strategy.

The HLTF-EI serves as the advisory role on strategic matters relating to ASEAN economic community building, amongst others to provide strategic guidance in charting the future directions, and to deepen ASEAN's economic integration in the region and its engagement in the global community.

## Brunei receives Vaccine Contribution from China

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 10** - The People's Republic of China contributed Sinopharm vaccines to Brunei Darussalam. The contribution reflects the close bilateral cooperation in preventing the COVID-19 pandemic and commitment towards further strengthening the partnership in line with the commemoration of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

In a press release, the Ministry of Health stated that in March 2020, at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Brunei Darussalam provided assistance to the People's Republic of China. These contributions are on the basis of a Malay proverb, "berat sama dipikul, ringan sama dijinjing", indicating working together during peace or hardship.

The Ministry of Health at present is still reviewing the plans for the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine including the vaccine received in Brunei Darussalam, in accordance with the recommended priorities. The public will be informed on any health information and advice related to the COVID-19 vaccine.

In this regard, the public will be informed through the BruHealth application for the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine and therefore the ministry also advised the public to actively use the BruHealth application.

More information and the latest updates, the public can visit the Ministry of Health's website at [www.moh.gov.bn](http://www.moh.gov.bn) or contact the Health Advice Line at 148 or through the BruHealth application.

## Brunei ranks 35<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 1** - Brunei Darussalam is ranked 35 out of 180 countries with a score of 60 over 100 in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2020. The report was published by the Transparency International (TI) on January 28 on 180 countries. With the position, Brunei Darussalam is ranked second in ASEAN after the Republic of Singapore.

The TI-CPI ranks and measures countries by their perceived levels on governance and business climate where countries are scored on a scale of zero, for highly corrupt, to 100, for very clean.

The CPI aggregates data from a number of sources including public perception of corruption in public service and other economic development indicators. Some of the sources are as follows: Political Risk Service Country Risk Guide (ICRG);

World Economic Forum (WEF); and Global Insights Country Risk Rating.

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) will continue to focus on key strategies in preventing and combating corruption, money laundering and misconduct in the public and private sectors in the country. Preventing and combating corruption requires a holistic approach which involves the mobilisation and cooperation of all sectors of the government, private sector, as well as members of the society. ACB also has a role in preventing corruption in public and private sectors and to enhance integrity and good governance in the public sector including the implementation of monitoring measures in the public and private sectors aimed to ensure a good and etiquette governance.

Accordingly, efforts to prevent and

eradicate corruption will always be implemented continuously by ACB by promoting and cultivating good governance among the government sector, thereby indirectly contributing towards the business climate in this country.

It is important for us to realise that prevention and anti-corruption requires a holistic approach that involves accountability and transparency as well as participation from various walks of life.

The role of the government, the private sector, civil society organizations, the media and the public is urged to work together to curb corruption in Brunei.

In the meantime, ACB will implement these efforts continuously to ensure that the maintenance of well-being and

Continue on page 24

SCORE	COUNTRY/TERRITORY	RANK	SCORE	COUNTRY/TERRITORY	RANK	SCORE	COUNTRY/TERRITORY	RANK
88	Denmark	1	69	France	23	56	Georgia	45
88	New Zealand	1	68	Bhutan	24	56	Poland	45
85	Finland	3	67	Chile	25	56	Saint Lucia	45
85	Singapore	3	67	United States	25	55	Dominica	48
85	Sweden	3	66	Seychelles	27	54	Czechia	49
85	Switzerland	3	65	Taiwan	28	54	Oman	49
84	Norway	7	64	Barbados	29	54	Rwanda	49
82	Netherlands	8	63	Bahamas	30	53	Grenada	52
80	Germany	9	63	Qatar	30	53	Italy	52
80	Luxembourg	9	62	Spain	32	53	Malta	52
77	Australia	11	61	Korea, South	33	53	Mauritius	52
77	Canada	11	61	Portugal	33	53	Saudi Arabia	52
77	Hong Kong	11	60	Botswana	35	51	Malaysia	57
77	United Kingdom	11	60	Brunei Darussalam	35	51	Namibia	57
76	Austria	15	60	Israel	35	50	Greece	59
76	Belgium	15	60	Lithuania	35	49	Armenia	60
75	Estonia	17	60	Slovenia	35	49	Jordan	60
75	Iceland	17	59	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	40	49	Slovakia	60
74	Japan	19	58	Cabo Verde	41	47	Belarus	63
72	Ireland	20	57	Costa Rica	42	47	Croatia	63
71	United Arab Emirates	21	57	Cyprus	42	47	Cuba	63
71	Uruguay	21	57	Latvia	42	45	Sao Tome and Principe	63
						40	Trinidad and Tobago	86
						45	Montenegro	67
						45	Senegal	67
						44	Bulgaria	69
						44	Hungary	69
						44	Jamaica	69
						44	Romania	69
						44	South Africa	69
						44	Tunisia	69
						43	Ghana	75
						43	Maldives	75
						43	Vanuatu	75
						42	Argentina	78
						42	Bahrain	78
						42	China	78
						42	Kuwait	78
						42	Solomon Islands	78
						41	Benin	83
						41	Guyana	83
						41	Lesotho	83
						40	Burkina Faso	86
						40	India	86
						40	Morocco	86
						40	Timor-Leste	86
						40	Trinidad and Tobago	86

Brunei Darussalam scored 60 over 100 in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2020.

# Brunei ranks 35<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries (continued)

From page 23

public safety also collaborates with other agencies in strengthening national security policies and driving sustainable economic growth for Brunei Darussalam.

Brunei Darussalam's ACB is a law enforcement agency responsible for preventing and combating corruption; money laundering crimes; and misconduct

in the Public Office (misconduct in public office).

Towards that end, ACB focuses on key strategies in preventing and combating corruption, money laundering (misconduct), in the Public Office in the Brunei Darussalam, namely through law enforcement, under the Anti-Corruption

Act (section 131); and Criminal Asset Recovery Order, 2012.

Established on February 1, 1982, ACB is the 3<sup>rd</sup> anti-corruption agency established in the ASEAN region, after the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau, Singapore (1952); and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, Malaysia (1967).

## IMT November 2020 – Brunei trade decreased 39.5 per cent

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 11** - Brunei Darussalam total trade for November 2020 was valued at \$1,263.4 million, a decrease by 39.5 per cent from \$2,087.1 million during the same month in 2019. In the media release by the Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, Ministry of Finance and Economy, for the month-to-month changes, total trade for November 2020 stumbled by 14.1 per cent compared to October 2020. Meanwhile, total exports slipped by 51.1 per cent year-on-year to \$545.7 million compared to \$1,113.9 million in November 2019.

This was mainly due to the decline in mineral fuel exports to \$405.8 million in November 2020 from \$1,024.1 million in November 2019. The drop in mineral fuel exports was due to the decrease in crude oil exports and Liquefied Natural Gas following slow global demand as well as declining prices. Total exports were also contributed by the exports of other petroleum and gas products.

In terms of commodity by section, mineral fuels represent the major contributor to the country's exports, followed by Chemicals; Miscellaneous Manufactured Articles; Machinery and Transport Equipment; and Manufactured Goods. Main exports market in October 2020 were Japan, followed by the People's Republic of China and Thailand.

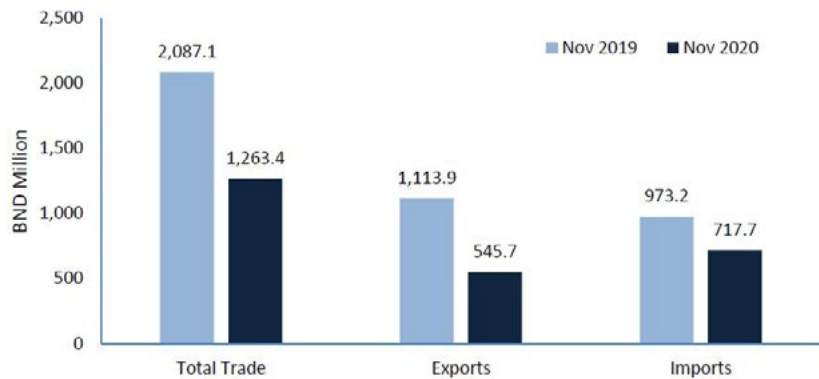
For imports, the total value dropped

to \$717.7 million in November 2020 from \$973.2 million in the same period in November, mainly driven by a decrease in imports of Mineral Fuels and Machinery and Transport Equipment. The five main imports

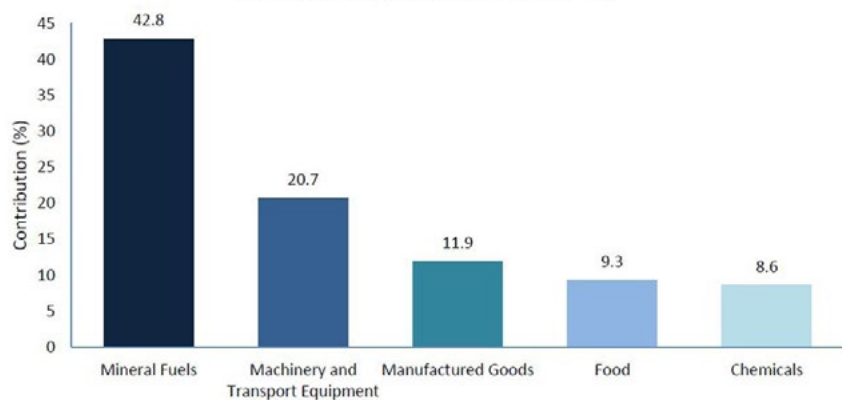
by commodity were Mineral Fuels; Machinery and Transport Equipment; Manufactured Goods; Food; and Chemicals. By End Use category, imports of Intermediate Goods accounted for 57.3 per cent of the total imports, followed by Capital Goods and Consumption Goods.

For imports by trading partners, the highest share was from Malaysia, followed by Singapore and Saudi Arabia. According to the mode of transport, the highest share was transport by sea which amounts to \$1,159.7 million, was followed by air transport at \$75.2 million and via land at \$28.5 million.

Brunei Darussalam's Trade Performance



Five Main Imports by Commodity



Share of Exports by Trading Partners

