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## 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit: support regional recovery



**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 12** – His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, joined ASEAN Leaders for the 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit – which carries the theme, Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN – held virtually via video conference from Baitul Mesyuarah, Istana Nurul Iman.

At the Plenary Session of the 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit, His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in a *titah* (royal speech) emphasised that ASEAN's recovery would require a strategic and holistic approach, to rebuild a resilient and sustainable ASEAN Community. In this regard, His Majesty highlighted that



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 ASEAN Leaders for the 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit held virtually via video conference from Baitul Mesyuarah, Istana Nurul Iman.

ASEAN needs to urgently support the regional recovery by: First, to prioritise the peoples' well-being and livelihoods including by enhancing regional safety nets and addressing social issues such as unemployment and mental health.

Second, to improve ASEAN's preparedness by building resilience through enhancing regional capacity to detect and respond to emerging challenges; and Third, to keep regional economies open and ready for businesses, so ASEAN can rapidly

recover and prosper.

His Majesty looked forward to the signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement which will signify ASEAN's firm commitment towards an open, inclusive and rules-based multilateral trading system.

In addition, building up bilateral and regional travel arrangements is encouraged so professionals can move safely and without risk to health and lives.

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## COVID-19 pandemic - test of APEC's relevance as an economic cooperation platform



**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 20** - His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in a *titah* (royal speech) highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic is a test of APEC's relevance as an economic cooperation platform that has

benefitted the people of APEC. Therefore, Brunei Darussalam welcomes the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040 which provides impetus to fulfil a new mission in a post COVID-19 era.

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam

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**6. 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN-China Summit: Realise full potential of ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement**



**17. UNISSA's Mushaf - a source of blessings, a symbol of Islamic greatness**



**21. Produce religious scholars of quality and excellence**



**25. Her Majesty graces Women's Special Assembly**



**30. ABAC Brunei Presents ABAC Report**



**16. Maintain integrity, adhere to teachings of Islam**



**18. Prioritise Islamic ethics, cultural values in human resources**



**22. Issues regarding youths should not be neglected**



**29. COVID-19: 2 new cases recorded in August**



**31. Ensure resilience of ASEAN transport sector**



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## His Majesty receives audience



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 received in audience at Istana Nurul Iman, His Excellency Heng Swee Keat, Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinating Minister for Economic Policies and Minister for Finance of Republic of Singapore on November 10.

## Her Majesty receives audience



Her Majesty Duli Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha binti Al-Marhum Pengiran Pemancha Pengiran Anak Haji Mohamed Alam received in audience at Istana Nurul Iman, Women Heads of Foreign Diplomatic Missions and wives of Heads of Foreign Diplomatic Missions to Brunei Darussalam on November 11.

Also present were Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Rashidah Sa'adatul Bolkiah; Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Majeedah Nuurul Bolkiah; and Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Hafizah Sururul Bolkiah.



## Crown Prince receives outgoing envoy



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 received in audience at Qashr Al-Meezan, His Excellency Heng Swee Keat, Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinating Minister for Economic Policies and Minister for Finance of Republic of Singapore on November 10.

## 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:

- Her Excellency The Right Honorable Jacinda Ardern on her re-appointment as Prime Minister of New Zealand on November 6.
- His Excellency Joseph R. Biden, President-Elect of the United States of America following his victory in the recent presidential elections on November 8.
- His Majesty Norodom Sihamoni, King of the Kingdom of Cambodia and His Excellency Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia as well as the government and people of the Kingdom of Cambodia on the occasion of its 67<sup>th</sup> Independence Day on November 9.
- Her Excellency Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, following the National League for Democracy's victory during the recent Myanmar general elections on November 15.
- His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Sultan of the Sultanate of Oman, the government and people of the Sultanate of Oman on the occasion of its National Day on November 18.

## His Majesty sends message of condolences

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam consented to send a message of condolences to:

- His Excellency Rodrigo Roa Duterte, President of Republic of the Philippines, the government and people of Republic of the Philippines, following the recent widespread devastation caused by Typhoon Goni in Republic of the Philippines on November 3.
- His Excellency Nguyen Phu Trong, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Viet Nam and President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and His Excellency Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the government and the people of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, following the heavy rainfall and Typhoon Vamco that resulted in the loss of lives and widespread devastation in Socialist Republic of Viet Nam on November 17.

## Opening Ceremony of 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and Related Summits



His Excellency Nguyễn Xuân Phúc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam as the Chairman of ASEAN for the year 2020 during the Opening Remarks at the Summit.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 12** – The Plenary Session was preceded by the Opening Ceremony of the 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and Related Summits to welcome the ASEAN Heads of State and Government which featured cultural performances and the ASEAN theme song, "The ASEAN Way".

This was followed with opening statements from His Excellency Nguyễn Phú Trọng, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Viet Nam and President of the

Socialist Republic of Viet Nam; and His Excellency Nguyễn Xuân Phúc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam as the ASEAN Chairman for 2020, which focused on effective responses to emerging challenges towards regional economic growth and recovery, forming a suitable position for a post COVID-19 world, as well as enhancing ASEAN's global role.

At the ceremony, a video on ASEAN's progress in 2020 was presented, and

the ASEAN Prize 2020 was awarded to the ASEAN Studies Centre (ASC) of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) - Yusof Ishak Institute of the Republic of Singapore.

The ASEAN Prize honours the outstanding achievements of individuals or organisations who foster the ASEAN identity, promote the ASEAN spirit, champion the ASEAN way and have significantly contributed towards ASEAN community building efforts.



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At the same time, His Majesty emphasised that ASEAN needs to work with partners to collectively overcome future challenges and ensure an ASEAN Community that can provide more opportunities to its people.

In ending the *titah*, His Majesty assured that as ASEAN Chair in 2021, Brunei Darussalam will work with all ASEAN Member States and partners towards a caring, prepared and prosperous region. At the Summit, the leaders were

## 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit: support regional recovery (continued)

presented with reports by Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization on the COVID-19 pandemic situation and global response; followed by a progress report on ASEAN by His Excellency Dato Paduka Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of ASEAN which included achievements throughout the year under the three Community Pillars, more action to push transformation and bolster recovery including higher productivity and strengthening human capital.

Afterwards, His Excellency Phạm Bình Minh, the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, as Chair of the ASEAN Coordinating Council (ACC) also delivered a progress report on ASEAN including promotion of 'ASEAN Identity', and sub-regional development.

At the end of the Summit, the ASEAN

Leaders adopted the ASEAN Leaders' Statement of the 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit; Ha Noi Declaration on the ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision; ACC's Report on ASEAN 2020's Deliverables and COVID-19 Response Initiatives; ASEAN Strategic Framework for Public Health Emergencies; ASEAN Declaration on an ASEAN Travel Corridor Arrangement; Ha Noi Declaration on the Adoption of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan IV (2021-2025); ASEAN Declaration on Digital Tourism; Narrative of ASEAN Identity; and Ha Noi Declaration on Strengthening Social Work Towards Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN Community.

This was followed with the launching of the Mid-term Reviews of the ASEAN Community Blueprints 2025, ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework and the ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies.



## 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN-China Summit: Realise full potential of ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 12** - At the 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN-China Summit which was held virtually via video conference, 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 acknowledged the People's Republic of China's support for ASEAN's community-building efforts over the years, and towards mitigating COVID-19.

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam also expressed appreciation for China's effective efforts in addressing the pandemic overseas, which have translated into positive outcomes for the region's economy, including continued growth of ASEAN and China's two-way trade despite the global economic downturn. To this end, greater efforts are encouraged to further open up trade and realise the full potential of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement to facilitate ASEAN's recovery efforts.

Next year is a significant year to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations and Brunei-China Diplomatic Relations, as well as the centenary of the founding of the Communist Party of China.



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 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN-China Summit.

His Majesty acknowledged the opportunity next year to build greater understanding and deepen trust and confidence amongst ASEAN and China, which will enhance cooperation on all fronts in taking relations to greater heights. At the Summit, the leaders touched on the importance of

digital economy to regional resilience; trade and investment; connectivity and the ASEAN Smart Cities Network; people-to-people exchanges; and welcomed the designation of 2021 as the ASEAN-China Year of Sustainable Development Cooperation to cooperate on key areas for sustainable development.

## 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN-Japan Summit: Focusing on sustainable economic development



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 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN-Japan Summit, held virtually via video conference.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 12** - At the 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN-Japan Summit, 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)

acknowledged Japan's close and supportive relationship with ASEAN, where both sides have progressed their work together with renewed commitment despite challenges.

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam appreciated Japan's contributions to establish the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases, whereby the Centre will greatly improve the region's preparedness for any future health crisis.

His Majesty joined other ASEAN Leaders and ASEAN Dialogue Partners for the 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN-Japan Summit held virtually via video conference.

Central to this, ASEAN and Japan are encouraged to also focus on building a more resilient economy by ensuring that people can adjust to the changes from the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

In view of Japan's expertise in technology

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and innovation, His Majesty welcomed cooperation in various areas such as automation and digital technology that would help develop a skilled and prepared workforce for the future.

In emphasising the importance to build greater trust and understanding, so that ASEAN and Japan can better address complex challenges in a rapidly changing geo-political landscape, His Majesty valued Japan's continued support for ASEAN Centrality and ASEAN-led processes.

Earlier at the Summit, His Excellency, the ASEAN Chairman for 2020 in his remarks spoke about the pressing need for ASEAN-Japan to expand cohesive cooperation including combating COVID-19 and mitigating its impacts.

In addition, joint activities have been held to show a close partnership between ASEAN and Japan.

At the Summit, the leaders discussed Japan's support towards regional recovery and development including to address emerging health crisis; welcomed Japan's support to further enhance capacity for production and trade, as well as

developing digital infrastructure; creating collaboration between the industry and academia in ASEAN and Japan; and continue to prioritise people-to-people exchanges.

At the end of the Summit, the ASEAN and Japan Leaders witnessed the launching of the ASEAN Regional Centre on Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases, of which Japan contributed 50 million USD, through Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) to support the Centre's establishment, which will further support ASEAN's capabilities and efforts in countering future threats of public health emergencies in the region.

## 21<sup>st</sup> ASEAN-ROK: Build a future-ready ASEAN Community



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 21<sup>st</sup> ASEAN-Republic of Korea Summit.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 12** - 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 at the 21<sup>st</sup> ASEAN-Republic of Korea (ROK) Summit, held virtually via video conference in a *titah* (royal speech) delivered the ASEAN Common Statement, as Country Coordinator of ASEAN-ROK Dialogue Relations, in which His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam appreciated His Excellency Moon Jae-In, President of ROK's continued personal efforts to strengthen ASEAN-ROK relations, including through the New Southern Policy-Plus as well as the ROK's strong support for ongoing ASEAN initiatives on measures to help overcome the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam welcomed the ROK's proposal to establish a Health Dialogue Channel that

would strengthen public health capacity through exchanges of information and expertise, and complement the work towards regional recovery. His Majesty therefore looked forward to enhancing the ASEAN-ROK Free Trade Agreement through further liberalisation efforts that will bring more benefits to people, help businesses and the development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

This is where the ROK's expertise in e-Commerce, Artificial Intelligence, and 5G technologies can help build a future-ready ASEAN Community. His Majesty also welcomed more scholarships and training opportunities from the ROK in various areas such as governance innovation, e-learning and farming technologies that can build resilient societies. Furthermore, His Majesty was pleased with the ROK's interest to deepen sub-regional cooperation, including with the BIMF-EAGA through a fund for joint projects which will facilitate inclusive and sustainable

economic growth throughout the region.

ASEAN continues to value the ROK's support of ASEAN Centrality as well as the ROK's active participation in ASEAN-led processes. Looking ahead, His Majesty reiterated ASEAN's readiness to work with the ROK in efforts to promote peace and security in the region.

Earlier at the Summit, His Excellency, the ASEAN Chairman highlighted that an open economic mindset and cooperation are common values in ASEAN and the ROK. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ROK and ASEAN have reaffirmed their commitment to develop efforts in containing outbreaks such as through research and development of vaccines, and facilitating movement of skilled workers through travel corridors.

Aspects of human capital such as upskilling and reskilling were underlined to assist these efforts.

Meanwhile, the President of the ROK in his statement welcomed continued exchanges of cooperation between ASEAN and the ROK to overcome the pandemic, with the objective to create better preparedness in facing unexpected challenges. The ROK will share their expertise in managing the spread of the pandemic both from physical kits as well as financial contributions. The ROK hopes to take the lead in the post COVID-19 era towards building a people-centred community.

At the Summit, the leaders also touched on strategic partnerships between ASEAN and the ROK, which continues to grow despite the current challenges brought about by COVID-19; economic recovery through regional economic integration and the importance of reskilling of human resources towards, among others, increasing business and investment opportunities; as well as green infrastructure.



## 17<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-India Summit: Increase capacity development for traders

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 12** - His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam joined other ASEAN leaders and the Prime Minister of the Republic of India for the 17<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-India Summit held virtually via video conference.

At this Summit, His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, in a *titah* (royal speech) acknowledged the great importance of the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership and highlighted the importance of India's continued support for ASEAN Centrality and ASEAN-Led processes, as well as the contributions of India's Act East Policy to further promoting peace, stability and mutual understanding in the region.

In these challenging times, the strong historical ties between ASEAN and India can serve as the foundation for close cooperation going forward, and encouraged more collaboration in areas such as education youth and cultural exchanges.

In this regard, His Majesty encouraged a focus on initiatives that can bring benefits to people's livelihoods, such as through improving the ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement to ensure greater market access and to enhance the facilitation of trade for businesses.



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 delivers *titah* (royal speech) at the 17<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-India Summit.

Furthermore, His Majesty suggested more capacity building for business people, so they can better adapt to the digital economy.

Earlier at the Summit, His Excellency the ASEAN Chairman remarked that the strong bonds between ASEAN and India, forged by commerce and engagement, has led to India's active participation across all sectors in ASEAN, resulting in vast market potential and economic growth through the increasing opportunities in trade and investment.

At the Summit, the leaders also touched on joint collaboration to mitigate COVID-19 impact and to facilitate equitable deliveries of supply; upholding the principles of a rules based multilateral trading system to increase bilateral trade in the region, promote economic recovery, and sustain the supply chains; appreciate India's support under the connectivity sector and promote both physical and digital connectivity; narrowing the development gap; and fostering cultural linkages based on ASEAN and India's long history.

## 8<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-U.S. Summit: U.S.' strategic engagement with ASEAN remains crucial



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 joining ASEAN leaders and ASEAN Dialogue Partners for the 8<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-United States Summit, held virtually via video conference

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 14** - His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, joined other ASEAN Leaders and ASEAN Dialogue Partners for the 8<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-United States (U.S.) Summit, held virtually via video conference.

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in a *titah* (royal speech) stressed that the U.S.' strategic engagement with ASEAN remains crucial to ensuring peace, security and prosperity in the region, and that this has helped ASEAN's socio-economic development and community-building efforts over the years.

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In addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, His Majesty highlighted that ASEAN appreciated the U.S. commitment to the ongoing initiatives in improving ASEAN's medical and health capacities whilst encouraging further progress, specifically to cooperate with the U.S. to provide affordable and effective COVID-19 vaccines for all ASEAN countries.

In addition, ASEAN welcomed the Joint Statement on Human Capital Development at the 8<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-US Summit, and looked forward to initiatives that could help develop their people's skills in ICT, digital literacy and cybersecurity to take into account the challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

In concluding the *titah*, His Majesty said that ASEAN also encouraged the U.S.' continued support in ASEAN businesses through the enhancement of their digital skillsets so they could better participate in the digital economy.

Earlier at the Summit, His Excellency the ASEAN Chairman for 2020 in his

remarks welcomed the U.S.' constructive engagements in enhancing dialogue and cooperation in the region through ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the US' active role in practical initiatives in raising the capacity of ASEAN countries.

ASEAN partners including the U.S. have been able to effectively respond to emerging challenges, as well as efforts to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigate its impacts, in maintaining a stable environment conducive to a speedy recovery and sustainable development of countries.

The Honourable Robert O'Brien, National Security Advisor and Special Envoy to the President of the U.S. delivered a statement on behalf of the President which expressed US' appreciation towards ASEAN efforts to keep supply chains open, which contributed to the robust foundation for ASEAN-U.S. cooperation in public health and combatting infectious diseases through which the U.S. has contributed ventilators and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to ASEAN partners.

ASEAN welcomed the U.S.' continued support for improving and enhancing the skills and economic competency of the ASEAN workforce through the promotion of public-private partnerships and socio-cultural partnerships.

ASEAN also valued U.S. support in the areas of digital transformation and smart cities, as well as efforts to narrow the development gap in ASEAN. ASEAN looked forward to close cooperation with the U.S. against the COVID-19 pandemic and addressing its socio-economic impacts by ensuring the sustainability of supply chains and international connectivity.

At the Summit, the leaders also spoke about further renewing commitment to the strategic partnership of ASEAN-U.S. relations and taking new approaches to tackle current global issues; enhancing cooperation in the fields of research and vaccines as a way forward to combat COVID-19; and recognising the importance of digital technology in improving digital infrastructures and connectivity as well as maintaining uninterrupted trade and supply chains.

## ASEAN-New Zealand Commemorative Summit: Promote e-Commerce



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 ASEAN-New Zealand Commemorative Summit, held virtually via video conference.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 14** - 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) expressed satisfaction in celebrating the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ASEAN-New Zealand Dialogue Relations, in which the cooperation continues to bring many mutual benefits for their peoples in a wide range of areas.

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang

Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, joined other ASEAN leaders and ASEAN Dialogue Partners for the ASEAN-New Zealand Commemorative Summit, held virtually via video conference.

To this end, His Majesty called upon ASEAN and New Zealand to focus on improving their peoples' livelihoods and building a resilient region, particularly in pursuing efforts for a swift regional recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic by ensuring that businesses and trade remain

active and supply chains connected.

Amid the rapid growth of internet users in the region, His Majesty encouraged ASEAN and New Zealand to promote e-Commerce, which would provide more opportunities and greater market access, particularly for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and other consumers in the region.

Therefore, ASEAN looked forward to upgrading the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (AANZFTA) to advance economic growth and integration.

In concluding the *titah*, His Majesty emphasised that ASEAN and New Zealand need to ensure that their recovery efforts are environmentally friendly and sustainable, and therefore cooperation on mitigating climate change and disaster management is greatly encouraged.

Earlier at the Summit, His Excellency the ASEAN Chairman in his remarks welcomed the encouraging progress in cooperation between ASEAN and New Zealand, including through New Zealand's active contributions in ASEAN-led dialogues and frameworks in the region, and Socialist Republic of

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Viet Nam believed that ASEAN and New Zealand are able to overcome challenges as the world faces complex developments including the COVID-19 pandemic.

Meanwhile, The Right Honourable Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister of New Zealand in her statement acknowledged that the broad and deep relationship of ASEAN and New Zealand has brought about peace and prosperity in the region with great success. ASEAN is one of New Zealand's top trading and investment partners and forms a critical strategic hub, connecting New Zealand to Asia and the rest of the world.

To further strengthen the

ASEAN-New Zealand Strategic Partnership, New Zealand is encouraged to design innovation and youth development programmes to ensure people are well-equipped to face ever-changing global demands; to narrow the development gap and increase regional integration especially in the fields of food security, agriculture, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and women entrepreneurship; assist in natural disaster relief programmes for ASEAN countries, in particular the C.L.M.V. countries; and undertake joint efforts to recover and stimulate economic growth through maintaining and upholding a multilateral trading system.

At the Summit, the leaders also highlighted stronger partnerships in the Pacific

including focus on trade, investment, education, human resource development, public health, connectivity, food security, fisheries, climate change and disaster recovery; charting a course towards early economic recovery and continue regional economic integration that is mutually beneficial based on a free, open and rules-based multilateral system; and the need to remain vigilant on the threats posed by terrorism by addressing its root causes.

At the end of the Summit, the ASEAN and New Zealand Leaders adopted the Joint ASEAN-New Zealand Leaders' Vision Statement on the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN-New Zealand Dialogue Relations: A Legacy of Partnership, A Future Together.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN-Australia Biennial Summit: Further strengthen health care system

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 4** - 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 in a *titah* (royal speech) highlighted that Australia has continued to play an important role in promoting regional peace, stability and prosperity, in which ASEAN-Australia cooperation has progressed over the years in mutually beneficial areas such as trade and education.

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam joined other ASEAN Leaders and ASEAN Dialogue Partners for the 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN-Australia Biennial Summit, held virtually via video conference.

His Majesty said ASEAN appreciates Australia's support in addressing the impacts of COVID-19, including the continued supply of food to the ASEAN Member States during the outbreak.

His Majesty further stressed the importance of strengthening healthcare systems for the future, and thereby encouraged more capacity-building initiatives in this area, including in safeguarding peoples' mental health and well-being.

In concluding the *titah*, His Majesty urged ASEAN and Australia to work for a swift regional economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and believed that the upgrading of the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (AANZFTA) would bring better benefit to businesses and people.



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 joining other ASEAN Leaders and ASEAN Dialogue Partners for the 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN-Australia Biennial Summit.

Earlier at the Summit, His Excellency, the ASEAN Chairman in his remarks welcomed the continued partnership of ASEAN and Australia in achieving important cooperation outcomes across all sectors.

Throughout this year, ASEAN and Australia have coordinated responses to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and addressed its repercussions.

ASEAN appreciates Australia's consistent policy and close connection to the region, in its support of ASEAN Centrality and activities under ASEAN-led dialogues conducive to priority areas and emerging challenges towards peace, prosperity and stability.

Meanwhile, The Honourable Scott Morrison, Prime Minister of Australia in his statement commended ASEAN on its cohesive and responsive approach to the COVID-19 pandemic, and recognised ASEAN Centrality as the core of Australia's vision of the Indo-Pacific.

Under the ASEAN-Australia Strategic Partnership, Australia underlined its commitment to support the development of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines for Southeast and the Pacific as well as cooperation in health and science.

ASEAN and Australia Leaders then adopted the Joint Statement of the Second ASEAN-Australia Biennial Summit: Strong Partnership for Recovery.

## 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN+3 Summit: Strengthen regional cooperation in public health

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 14** - 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, joined other ASEAN Plus Three (ASEAN+3) Leaders for the 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN+3 Summit, held virtually via video conference.

At the Summit, His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam underlined that ASEAN+3 countries need to stand more closely together in strengthening regional cooperation in public health to address the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly for disease control, treatment and prevention. ASEAN thereby appreciated the Plus Three countries for their valuable contributions and commitments in addressing current challenges, including support for the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund.

Meanwhile, His Majesty emphasised the importance of maintaining economic continuity, which would enable a swift and sustainable recovery by ensuring that goods and services are readily available, supply chains are open and connected, and businesses are able to continue operating.

In addition, His Majesty encouraged the consideration of establishing arrangements between ASEAN+3



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 joining other ASEAN Plus Three (ASEAN+3) leaders for the 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN+3 Summit virtually via video conference.

countries to facilitate the necessary and safe movement of people in the region towards accelerating and contributing to regional economic recovery and development.

His Excellency the ASEAN Chairman for 2020 in his opening remarks at the beginning of the Summit affirmed commitment in enhancing ASEAN's coordination with ASEAN+3 countries to respond effectively to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on the

livelihoods of people and the economy. At the Summit, the leaders talked about a collective response to the regional and global crisis, which includes addressing the adverse impact of COVID-19 towards socio-economic recovery; strengthening healthcare infrastructure to build resilience; and enhancing cooperation between institutions and businesses towards building the digital economy, restoring essential travel and ensuring continued food supply, among other things.

## 15<sup>th</sup> EAS: Cooperation for wide-scale COVID-19 recovery

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 14** - 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 joined other ASEAN Leaders for the 15<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit (EAS), held virtually via video conference.

At the 15<sup>th</sup> EAS, His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in his *titah* (royal speech) stated that the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the EAS is an occasion for participating countries to reaffirm their commitment to the EAS. In this regard, His Majesty reiterated Brunei Darussalam's commitment to the principles of peace, stability and prosperity, and encouraged the use of the EAS platform for positive action and shared benefits.

His Majesty stated that, with its vast population size and GDP, the EAS has great potential to push for a



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 joining other ASEAN Leaders for the 15<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit virtually via video conference.

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wide-scale recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

His Majesty thereby encouraged EAS participating countries to work closely to ensure equitable access to safe and affordable COVID-19 vaccines and treatments.

Aside from that, the pandemic has also intensified people's dependence on technology for essential services, leading to a rise in online challenges such as cybercrimes and the use of social media platforms to promote violent extremism and disinformation.

To this end, His Majesty encouraged greater cooperation and capacity building initiatives towards ensuring that the people can safely operate online.

His Excellency the ASEAN Chairman for 2020 in his opening remarks at the Summit highlighted that the EAS should

uphold international law and undertake a rules-based approach to international issues to sustain security and development in the region.

Peace and stability are needed to respond to unprecedented challenges resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak. Active collaboration and discussions are therefore paramount in advancing the EAS to rebound from the COVID-19 impact.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the World Bank Group also briefed the meeting on global efforts in addressing COVID-19 pandemic and promoting comprehensive recovery.

The Secretary-General of ASEAN also reported on the progress of the EAS cooperation in which the EAS were urged to further strengthen regional economic collaboration to mitigate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as to address global health issues.

At the Summit, the East Asia leaders agreed to pursue dialogue and mutually close collaboration including by ensuring access to vaccines and supplies to combat COVID-19; strengthening regional health resilience and stability; as well as further developing integration projects to help economic recovery.

At the end of the Summit, the Ha Noi Declaration on the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the East Asia Summit; East Asia Summit Leaders' Statement on Maritime Sustainability; the East Asia Summit Leaders' Statement on Cooperation to Promote Steady Growth of Regional Economy; the East Asia Summit Leaders' Statement on Strengthening Collective Capacity in Epidemics Prevention and Response; the East Asia Summit Leaders' Statement on Women, Peace and Security; the Non-Paper on Enhancing the Coordinating Role of the EAS Chair; and Asia Pacific Leaders Malaria Alliance (APLMA) Leaders' Malaria Elimination Roadmap: A 5-year Review of Progress (2015–2019) were also adopted.

## 11<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-UN Summit: Regional sustainable recovery through ASEAN-UN Comprehensive Partnership



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 joining ASEAN Leaders and ASEAN Dialogue Partners for the 11<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-UN Summit, held virtually via video conference.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 15** – 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, in a *titah* (royal speech) congratulated Secretary-General António Guterres on the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Nations (UN) and commended the UN's success and the World Health Organization (WHO) in leading the global response against the COVID-19 pandemic, while expressing support to the UN in his regard.

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang

Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam delivered the *titah* at the 11<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-UN Summit and 4<sup>th</sup> Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Summit held virtually via video conference.

His Majesty acknowledged that efforts have been made to complement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ASEAN's Community Vision 2025, encouraging further efforts to identify measures that better care for the people and prepare them for future challenges.

Continued progress between ASEAN and the UN will depend on a region that

is peaceful and stable, and therefore it is important to address together the security challenges such as transnational crimes, violent extremism and terrorism.

In ending the *titah*, His Majesty encouraged ASEAN and the UN to work together through the UN Alliance of Civilisations to uphold a culture of peace and dialogue and to deepen trust and understanding, in response to the rise of racial and religious intolerance.

Earlier at the Summit, His Excellency the ASEAN Chairman for 2020 in his remarks at the 11<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit of the UN highlighted that ASEAN is at the centre of harmonising actions with the UN in maintaining peace and promoting sustainable development through the ASEAN Charter.

Meanwhile, His Excellency António Guterres, Secretary-General of the UN called for ASEAN leadership and resolved to safeguard shared goals of ASEAN and the UN in the face of global threats to sustainable development including rising geopolitical tensions, poverty and inequality.

The UN also commended ASEAN's swift action and response to the pandemic and appreciated ASEAN's recommendation for the COVID-19 vaccine to be a global public good. On the environment, the

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UN asked all ASEAN Member States to transition to net zero carbon and reiterated the need for robust action to reverse climate change impacts.

At the Summit, the leaders touched on UN

## 4<sup>th</sup> RCEP Summit: Potentially boosting global economic growth

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 15** – The 4<sup>th</sup> Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Summit was also joined by leaders from Australia, the People's Republic of China, Japan, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea.

At the Summit, 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 in a *titah* (royal speech) congratulated RCEP participating countries for the demonstration of solidarity and cooperation in concluding the RCEP negotiations, in support of free trade despite economic challenges.

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam emphasised that the RCEP Agreement will also play a significant role in the region's post-pandemic recovery efforts. As the largest Free Trade Agreement in the world, with a population of 2.2 billion and nearly 30 per cent of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the RCEP Agreement is expected to provide new opportunities and the further deepening of economic ties among the participating countries.

His Majesty thereby expressed confidence that RCEP would be an engine of growth that will shape the region's economic landscape in the years to come.

achievements that have been beneficial to many countries in enduring peace, security and stability in all corners of the world; and the collective responsibility of the UN and ASEAN to restore multilateralism towards better preparedness in addressing COVID-19 as well as future pandemics.

The leaders also called for UN support in sharing best practices and experiences towards enhancing ASEAN capacity to tackle hostilities in sustaining regional and global peacekeeping; addressing climate change; and ensuring preparedness for natural disasters.



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 joining ASEAN Leaders and ASEAN Dialogue Partners for the 4<sup>th</sup> Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Summit, held virtually via video conference.

At the Summit, leaders of the RCEP partner countries emphasised the signing of the RCEP agreement as a reflection of the region's strong resolve to promote free trade. It is a significant milestone whereby the RCEP becomes the largest free trade agreement, creating a trading area that covers a third of the world's population, GDP or trade volume with ASEAN at its centre. The signing shows the commitment of participating countries in developing multilateralism and free trade, boosting solidarity and partnership for greater inclusive cooperation in global economic growth and development.

The strategic value of the RCEP is a catalyst for driving the economy forward and enhance economic sustainability in the region. RCEP will fully reflect the emerging pattern of integration where economies can come together and contribute to each other's development.

The Summit adopted the Joint Leaders' Statement on RCEP.

Towards the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> RCEP Summit, His Majesty also witnessed the signing of the RCEP Agreement by RCEP Ministers.

## Closing ceremony, handing over ASEAN Chairmanship

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 15** - 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, joined other ASEAN leaders for the Closing Ceremony of the 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and Related Summits and Handing Over of the ASEAN Chairmanship to Brunei Darussalam, held virtually via video conference.

The Closing Ceremony began with remarks by His Excellency Nguyễn Xuân Phúc, the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam as the ASEAN Chairman for 2020, among other things, reiterated ASEAN's strong commitment to multilateralism, dialogue, ASEAN Centrality, and shaping an inclusive rules-based regional architecture. The ASEAN Identity was emphasised in contributing to sustainable development of the region.



His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam as ASEAN Chairman for 2020 hand over the ASEAN Chairmanship to Brunei Darussalam who will be the Chair of ASEAN for 2021.

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The conclusion and signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) will further promote economic liberalisation and connectivity. The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam expressed confidence in Brunei Darussalam's chairmanship in 2021.

The Prime Minister of Viet Nam then handed over the ASEAN Chairmanship to His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam who will be the Chair of ASEAN for 2021.

This was followed with His Majesty's *titah* (royal speech), in which His Majesty congratulated the Prime Minister and the government and people of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, on successfully chairing ASEAN during a very challenging year.

Despite the disruptions, Viet Nam has guided ASEAN to fulfil its promise of being 'Cohesive and Responsive'. Brunei Darussalam will continue to advance regional recovery and Community-building efforts.

ASEAN was formed over fifty years ago with a vision for a better and more peaceful future based on the shared understanding that ASEAN as a whole, is greater than the sum of its parts. Integration, unity and solidarity, have and must continue to be, the foundation of ASEAN's relations in advancing together.

In today's polarised world, ASEAN must continue to advance together. His Majesty expressed satisfaction with what ASEAN has achieved thus far.

Although ASEAN is a prosperous region with a growing economy and improved connectivity, the region has faced financial crises, energy shortages, natural disasters and climate change. The severe challenges on global activities brought about by a virus has also shown us that ASEAN must continue to strengthen ASEAN solidarity and centrality to overcome them.

As a region, ASEAN must continue to cooperate and innovate, even during challenging circumstances.

His Majesty believed that ASEAN's strength is through its collective desire for peace, development and prosperity as enshrined in the 1967 Bangkok Declaration and the ASEAN Charter.

The people always come first in advancing together as one ASEAN Community, guided by values and aspirations articulated decades ago.



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 Closing Ceremony of the 37th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits and Handing Over of the ASEAN Chairmanship to Brunei Darussalam.

His Majesty stated that as Chair in 2021, Brunei Darussalam will promote three fundamental areas, inspired by ASEAN's long history of development.

First, caring for our people and each other's well-being. Second, preparing for future opportunities and challenges. Third, prospering together as a unified region.

In this spirit, the theme for Brunei Darussalam's Chairmanship will be "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper". These three fundamental areas will strengthen ASEAN's solidarity and reinforce ASEAN Centrality.

Moreover, it will accelerate efforts to recover from the pandemic and realise our ambitions of an inclusive ASEAN Community.

To this end, the support and contributions of our Dialogue Partners are important to help shape the regional outlook and ASEAN's post-2025 Vision.

At the end of the ceremony, the ASEAN leaders also witnessed a video presentation by Brunei Darussalam, revealing the theme and aspirations of Brunei Darussalam as ASEAN Chairman in 2021 which is "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper".

## COVID-19 pandemic - test of APEC's relevance as an economic cooperation platform (continued)



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delivered the *titah* while joining the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation APEC must advocate for a

pro-business climate by pursuing structural reforms, strengthening trade facilitation and economic integration, as well as progressing work on the Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP).

Second, the empowerment of APEC's people, especially the youth and women, as well as businesses, especially Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), has to be prioritised to ensure that no one is left behind.

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This includes improving equitable access to economic opportunities and resources to enable them to benefit from new technologies and growth prospects.

Finally, His Majesty also highlighted that Brunei Darussalam welcomes efforts towards strengthening APEC's economic and technical cooperation agenda which should promote more capacity building, sharing of best practices especially in digitalisation and human resource development. His Majesty further urged APEC to leverage upon its collaboration with other international organisations.

Brunei Darussalam, as an APEC member and ASEAN Chair in 2021, looks forward to working closely with all economies in continuing the regional economic revitalisation agenda.

His Majesty also wished The Right Honourable Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister of New Zealand much success for New Zealand's APEC Chairmanship next year, and said that together, APEC will be able to face the challenges and seize opportunities ahead, towards achieving its vision of an open, dynamic, resilient and peaceful Asia-Pacific community by 2040.

Earlier in the meeting, Yang Amat Berhormat Tan Sri Dato' Haji Muhyiddin bin Haji Mohd. Yassin, Prime Minister of Malaysia as the APEC Chairman for 2020 in his opening remarks recognised that APEC has provided the framework for its economies to implement economic ideas based on consensus, to further raise the prosperity of people in the region.

As APEC economies work together to mitigate impacts of COVID-19, the relevance of APEC is more pronounced as



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam delivering a *titah* (royal speech) during APEC Leaders for the 27th AELM Leaders' Retreat.

it pursues regional solutions to ensure that the distribution of vaccines is affordable, accessible and equitable.

At the AELM, the leaders were presented with a report on the Global Economic Outlook by Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, who stated that the global economic growth has contracted by 4.4 per cent from last year, and thereby urged economies to steer the course towards robust economic recovery through investments in people, health, education and social protection.

The IMF recommended enhancing infrastructure and revitalising and modernising trade to help lift the growth trajectory to pre-COVID-19 levels.

The leaders touched on post-COVID-19 measures, the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040 and the 2020 Kuala Lumpur Declaration. The APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040 fosters the participation of people,

further allowing for a strong market system and multilateralism for open and fair trade and economic growth. Meanwhile, the 2020 Kuala Lumpur Declaration will promote sustainable and inclusive growth to further build a more resilient region that can benefit the people.

Leaders also highlighted the importance of innovation driven growth, and enhancing connectivity to facilitate the flow of goods, and people. Regional recovery also depends on fair, equitable and safe access to COVID-19 vaccines as well as structural reforms to develop local business ecosystems. APEC must also prioritise the climate change agenda to achieve balance between the digital and green economies.

At the end of the meeting, the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040 and the 2020 Kuala Lumpur Declaration were adopted. The Prime Minister of Malaysia then handed over the Chairmanship of APEC to the Prime Minister of New Zealand.



## Maintain integrity, adhere to teachings of Islam

**TUNGKU LINK, November 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, Chancellor of Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) graced the 32<sup>nd</sup> UBD Convocation.

His Majesty the Sultan Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was greeted by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Hamzah bin Haji Sulaiman, Minister of Education; and Datin Dr. Dayang Hajah Anita Binurul Zahrina binti Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Wijaya Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Abdul Aziz, UBD Vice-

Chancellor.

Also present was His Royal Highness Prince (Dr.) 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) as Pro-Chancellor of UBD.

The ceremony commenced with the reading of Surah Al-Fatihah led by Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Paduka Seri Utama Dato Paduka Seri Setia Awang Haji Salim bin Haji Besar and began with the recitation of Surah 'Ali-Imran by second-year undergraduate Muhammad Izzuddin bin Haji Nor Hisham who participated in the Higher Learning Institution Musabaqah Tilawah Al-Quran in 2019, National Youth Musabaqah Tilawah Al-Quran in 2017 and Musabaqah Tilawah Al-Quran Mosques Level in 2015.

At the ceremony, His Majesty consented to deliver a *titah* (royal speech) stressing the need for graduates to maintain their integrity and faith when faced challenges. His Majesty referred to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic as a blessing in disguise, prompting the application of increasingly rapid digital technology.

The use of Artificial Intelligence has also contributed to the government's efforts to curb the outbreak's spread.

His Majesty also lauded the university for updating its Computer Science Course and introducing the new Digital Science Programme. The Bachelor of Digital Science Programme started in August this year and offers four academic disciplines - Computer Science; Data Science; Artificial Intelligence and Robotics; as well as Cybersecurity and Forensics.

His Majesty said, "In this regard, I am pleased to note that UBD has updated its Computer Science Programme and introduced a Bachelor of Digital Science with an emphasis on courses such as Artificial Intelligence, Robotics Data Science and Cyber Security. It is my recommendation that UBD's digital initiatives should be aligned with and uphold the Digital Economy Master Plan 2025, which was introduced this year."

The Monarch further highlighted UBD's research in smart farming and personalised medicine - medicine tailored to an individual's genetic profile - will increase the institution's competitiveness.

Touching on this competitiveness, the university was ranked in the top 400 Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings for the first time this year.

In respect of the QS World University Rankings, UBD was included among the 1 per cent of the world's top universities.

After congratulating the new graduates, His Majesty said, "I wish to take this opportunity to thank the entire populace of UBD, which includes its Council and Senate Members, Vice-Chancellor, executive officers, academic personnel, officers and staff members. May they receive manifold blessings for their contributions and services."

At the convocation, His Majesty first presented certificates to 40 PhD graduates and 521 Bachelor's Degree graduates. A total of 1,182 graduates received their certificates this year.

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

After the convocation, His Majesty toured an exhibition

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His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, Chancellor of Universiti Brunei Darussalam presenting certificates to graduates (above and below).



His Royal Highness Prince (Dr.) 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 as Pro-Chancellor of University Brunei Darussalam (UBD) presenting a certificate to one of the graduates in the afternoon session.

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featuring a research project by graduating student Nurbazilah binti Haji Metussin on a Hand Gesture Recognition Device. The project was aimed at developing a Natural User Interface (NUI) using hand gesture to control different devices and systems. Developed to control smart home appliances using a video camera and machine learning models, NUI can help those with different abilities to carry out daily activities such as switching on and off lights or sounding an alarm. The convocation was organised and coordinated with the

Ministry of Health (MoH) with precautionary measures including swab tests and self-quarantine for graduates guests and the organising committee.

Graduates and guests at the Chancellor Hall underwent body temperature check and used the BruHealth mobile app. Parents and guardians were accommodated at satellite sites on campus where they viewed the ceremony via live broadcast.

In the afternoon session, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince conferred degrees and diplomas to 621 graduates.

## UNISSA's Mushaf - a source of blessings, a symbol of Islamic greatness



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) as Chancellor of Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA), on the occasion of the university's 10<sup>th</sup> Hafl Al-Takharuj (Convocation Ceremony), at the International Convention Centre.

**BERAKAS, November 9** - The Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA) Haflut Takharuj (Convocation Ceremony) this time was very meaningful and historic said 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 as Chancellor of UNISSA in a *titah* (royal speech) on the occasion of the university's 10<sup>th</sup> Hafl Al-Takharuj, at the International Convention Centre.

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was very pleased to know that UNISSA's Mushaf is fully hand-written and designed by Bruneians. With the highest congratulations and appreciation to

UNISSA's Mushaf Writing Executive Committee and all the parties involved in making it a success. This is a very meaningful success and at the same time elevates Islam's eminence in the country.

In the *titah*, His Majesty also highlighted that UNISSA has undeniably achieved a lot in a decade. However, His Majesty also underscored the need for a change in the educational system during today's digital era.

His Majesty said that it is not the end of efforts because education is not static but is dynamic and progressive. In the digital era, the world of education requires teaching and learning approaches that are different from the previous one.

His Majesty consented to the establishment of the Faculty of Islamic Technology at UNISSA. It is hoped that the establishment of this new faculty will generate research of great value.

His Majesty congratulated graduates who have successfully completed their studies at UNISSA and hoped that the graduates will be more proactive and not simply act as observers.

"Grab all available opportunities and foster a progressive attitude because a degree scroll is not the end of the endless pursuit of knowledge since Islam views it as a lifelong endeavor," said His Majesty.

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 as Pro-Chancellor of UNISSA.

Upon arrival, His Majesty and His Royal Highness the Crown Prince were welcomed by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Hamzah bin Haji Sulaiman, Minister of Education in his capacity as Chairman of UNISSA's Council; Dr. Haji Norarfan bin Haii Zainal, Rector of UNISSA.

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

The ceremony continued with the

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UNISSA graduates during the event.





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 presenting certificates to graduates during Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali's (UNISSA) 10<sup>th</sup> Hafli Al-Takharri.

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recitation of Surah Al-Israa, verses 78 to 80 by graduate in Bachelor of Science in Islamic Finance, Awangku Muhamad Zul Iskandar bin Pengiran Zulkifli, while the interpretation was read by graduate of Bachelor of Law and Islamic Law Muhamad Hafiz bin Haji Hamzulani.

Two hundred ninety-two graduates of UNISSA received their PhD, Master's Degree, Bachelor Degrees and Diplomas in various fields and disciplines during the 10<sup>th</sup> Hafli Al-Takharri.

His Majesty presented certificates to eight PhD graduates, 44 Master's Degree graduates, 13 Diploma in Islamic Law and Syariah Law graduates, nine Postgraduate Diploma graduates, 187 Bachelor's Degree graduates and 31 Higher National Diploma in Syariah Criminal Justice System graduates.

Of those who graduated, 26 were international students from various countries including Afghanistan, Egypt, Indonesia, Nigeria, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, Palestine, Singapore, Tajikistan and Republic of Kyrgyzstan.

This year also saw graduates of two new degrees introduced by UNISSA awarded. A Bachelor of Tahfiz and Qiraat was



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam viewing UNISSA's Al-Quran Mushaf.

awarded to seven graduates while nine graduates received a Bachelor of Science in Islamic Finance (BSch) and Associate Qualification of Islamic Finance (AQIF) certificates.

The Rector of UNISSA delivered his welcoming address and announced the recipients for UNISSA's Medal and Book Prizes Awards and contributors for the 10<sup>th</sup> Half At-Takharri.

One of UNISSA's missions is to produce pious and excellent leaders who can

contribute to the development of the ummah through academic excellence, research and community services. It is hoped that the graduates will continue to serve the community with *taqwa* (pious), leadership, integrity, and excellence.

UNISSA's progress will be more prominent after the completion of its permanent campus in Mukim Labu, Temburong District, while at the same time help boost UNISSA's reputation and realising the country's hope to see it as a hub for higher Islamic education in the region.

Shortly after arriving, His Majesty the

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## Prioritise Islamic ethics, cultural values in human resources

**BERAKAS, November 16** - 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, Chancellor of Universiti Teknologi Brunei (UTB) graced the 8<sup>th</sup> Convocation of UTB held at the International Convention Centre.

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

Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was invited to Royal Lounge to launch of the Writing for UTB's Mushaf. His Majesty began writing the Mushaf by writing the word '*Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*' on the *Ummul Quran* page.

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His Majesty consented for the Mushaf Al-Quran to replace the *Cokmar* during the UTB Convocation on January 17, 2011.

The Mushaf is written by a local *Khat* writer, Awang Haji Sabtu bin Surat, while Noor 'Izzati binti Haji Mohd Alinoor, Assistant Officer at the Office of Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah is the designer. The motifs on Mushaf UTB represent different meanings. The writing of Mushaf UTB upholds His Majesty's *titah* (royal speech) that calls the country's institutions of higher learning to have hand-written Mushaf which are produced by Bruneians.

At the Plenary Hall, the ceremony commenced with the reading 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.

The Procession of the Chancellor into the Plenary Hall was followed by the mace-bearer holding aloft the Mushaf Al-Quran. Verses 11-13 from Surah At-Taghabun in Al-Quran were recited by Haji Muhammad Adam bin Haji Rosli, a Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) in Mechanical Engineering graduate.

This was followed by a welcoming address

by Profesor Dr. Dayang Hajah Zohrah, Vice Chancellor UTB.

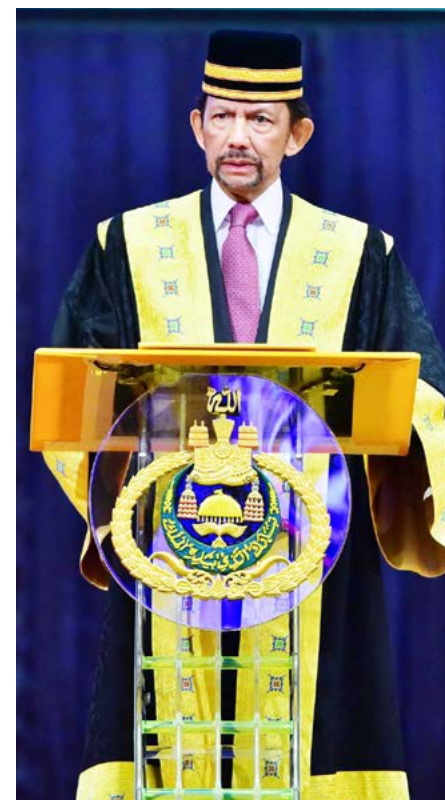
At the ceremony, His Majesty consented to deliver a *titah* which highlighted that the Mushaf will be at the forefront of every procession for UTB's Convocation Ceremony and UTB has not been excluded in honouring the Mushaf as an unparalleled symbol of knowledge.

"With regard to UTB's efforts to provide human resources, I wish to remind that Islamic ethics which conform to local cultural values should always be prioritised. It is important that our national identity not be compromised by foreign influences," said His Majesty.

His Majesty concluded the *titah* by saying, "I wish to acknowledge and express my thanks to the workforce at UTB, including the council and senate members, the Vice Chancellor, executive officers, academic personnels, officers and staff members. May Allah the Almighty bless our efforts and bestow multiple rewards."

His Majesty welcomed UTB's world-class engineering research cooperation with Brunei Shell Petroleum Company Sdn. Bhd. (BSP), Imperial College in the United Kingdom and University of New South Wales in Australia.

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His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam who is also the Chancellor of Universiti Teknologi Brunei (UTB) delivering a *titah* (royal speech) at the 8<sup>th</sup> Convocation of UTB.



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 and Pro-Chancellor of UTB consented to take photos with graduates at the UTB's 8<sup>th</sup> Convocation (above and below).





This project is expected to solve one of the most expensive technical challenges in Brunei Darussalam, namely the sand issue in the production of hydrocarbon. It will also offer scholarships to students and provide local employment to UTB graduates.

His Majesty also said UTB's research activities have been extended to the community, such as the village consultative councils, as a live project for UTB staff and students, in line with its vision to become a global university with an impact on society.

His Majesty congratulated UTB for its ranking as a global university. This year, UTB successfully reached 350<sup>th</sup> place in the QS World University Ranking. It has also appeared for the first time, in 40<sup>th</sup> place, on the list of 50 Young Global Universities under the age of 50 years.

His Majesty then consented to present a Doctor's of Philosophy (PhD) to two graduates, Master's Degree to 89 graduates and Bachelor's Degree to 216 graduates. This year marked the first cohort of graduates of PhD in Electrical and Electronic Engineering, PhD in Civil Engineering, Master of Science (by Research) in Creative Computing, and Masters of Science (by Research) in Food and Science Technology graduates. UTB currently offers 24 under graduate degrees, including its part-time programmes and 22 Master's Degrees and PhD programmes.

To date, UTB has produced over 5,141 BDTVEC HND, 295 Higher National Diploma Level 5, 1,926 undergraduates, 287 postgraduates and two PhD graduates.



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 launching the Writing for UTB's Mushaf.



The graduates with their certificates during the ceremony (above and below).



## Produce religious scholars of quality and excellence



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, Chancellor of Seri Begawan Religious Teachers University College (KUPU SB) delivering a *titah* (royal speech) during the 10<sup>th</sup> Convocation of KUPU SB.

**BERAKAS, November 23** – 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) emphasised that the country places great hope on educators to shape and produce a generation that is excellent in all aspects, particularly in knowledge and noble character.

His Majesty delivered the *titah* at the 10<sup>th</sup> Convocation of the Religious Teachers University College of Seri Begawan (KUPU SB), held at International Convention Centre.

"Knowledge and good morals are the adornments of the race, it will be a very elevated one," added His Majesty.

His Majesty stressed that Brunei Darussalam too, is instilling and building itself with knowledge and morals delivered by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

It is the same obligation, which has been entrusted to higher educational institutions such as KUPU SB.

His Majesty also touched on KUPU SB's objective; to produce human resource who are expert educators. Similar to Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University, the goal is to produce religious scholars.

"Alhamdulillah, these two religious institutions have managed to produce many graduates, but the question is can they be regarded as religious scholars?"

"In my opinion, it all depends on the study systems and programmes. Therefore, in this regard, the systems and programmes need to be constantly evaluated and reviewed," said His Majesty.

The present Bachelor Degree and Higher Diploma in Religious Teaching graduates are the products of a programme which has been upgraded since 2016 as an integration of academic experience and character-building (*sahsiah*) through co-curriculum programmes.

"If such a programme has been effectively implemented, then it is my view that is already capable of producing graduates of

quality and excellence," said His Majesty.

In the *titah*, His Majesty also commended the new graduates of KUPU SB, "I wish to extend my sincere congratulations to all of the graduates, for the successful completion of their studies.

"I also wish to congratulate their parents and guardians, as well as their lecturers at KUPU SB, for providing them with constant support and guidance."

"I wish to express my appreciation and gratitude to the staff of KUPU SB particularly the Chairperson, Council and senate members, Ra'es, executive officers, academic personnel and employees, for their services and contributions. May Allah

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His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam presenting certificates to graduates (above and below).





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the Almighty reward them for it," added His Majesty.

The ceremony saw His Majesty conferred the degrees and diplomas to 251 graduates during the ceremony.

The ceremony began with the reading 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, followed by the mass recitation of Surah Al-Muddatstsir verses 1-16 by the graduates. Its interpretation was read by Abdul Hadi Nasrullah bin Ashraf, a student of Bachelor Degree In Religious Teaching.

The ceremony continued with a welcoming address by Dr. Haji Adanan bin Haji Basar, Ra'ees of KUPU SB.

From the 251 graduates who received degrees and diplomas, one received Bachelor of Religious Teaching in the Study of Ahli Sunah Waljamah; 16 received Bachelor of Religious Teaching in Islamic Education while two others



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 take photos with graduates.

received Bachelor of Religious Teaching in Usuluddin.

Thirty-one graduates received Post-Graduate Diploma in Religious Teaching, six received Post-Graduate Diploma in Religious Teaching (Teaching

of Arabic as a Second Language), 136 graduates received Bachelor of Religious Teaching in Islamic Education, 57 graduates received Higher Diploma in Religious Teaching (Islamic Education) and two received Diploma in the Study of Turath Books.

## Issues regarding youths should not be neglected

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 30** - The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) should be truly alert and should continuously assess its proposed schemes particularly character development programmes for youths. The current situation is a cause for concern, with youths more prone to unacceptable behaviours.

Issues such as drug abuse, theft and smuggling, are frequently perpetrated by youth. There are even reports of mosque youths being involved in criminal activities, which include the disgraceful act of breaking open mosque donation boxes.

These were among the issues raised 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) during an unscheduled visit to MCYS.

"This poses a challenge for the relevant parties, particularly MCYS. Issues regarding the youth should not be neglected. Projects for the development of character among youths need to be

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 an unscheduled visit to the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) (right and below).



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precise on what they are about, or the areas which need to be prioritised and in what form," said His Majesty.

"If they are just formed for recreational or an entertainment purpose, then it is my view that these are far from adequate for developing great character. Apart from character development programmes, measures for addressing social issues must also be arranged. In this respect, has MCYS developed any strategies yet?" asked His Majesty.

"MCYS is responsible for cultural, youth and sport matters, in addition to dealing specifically with community development," said His Majesty.

Because of its wide-ranging role and responsibilities, MCYS was allocated a budget of almost \$94 million for the financial year of 2019-2020, which is an increase of 22.8 per cent, compared to the previous financial year.

Among the current steps being undertaken by MCYS are the administrations of Pusat Bahagia in Kampung Pulaie, which is responsible for looking after the interests of children with special needs and people with different abilities (OKU).

Some of the students at the centre are undergoing skill acquisition courses, as an initial step towards finding appropriate jobs. But it has come to light that this group is not favored by employers, whether in public or private sector.

"In the realm of sports, what matters here is the country's readiness for regional and international meets such as the Southeast Asian (SEA) Games. Are our athletes being prepared by solid training or is MCYS still doing last-minute selections? Aside from that, facilities owned by MCYS, such as sport buildings or complexes, must be managed according to the requirements," said His Majesty.

Other projects which are still being called into question include the renovation and refurbishment of the Brunei Museum in Jalan Kota Batu.

"I was informed that the renovation work has been carried out long enough, but has yet to be completed. In its early days, the museum was an attractive place, which captivated both local and foreign visitors. But all of this has changed with the coming of a new era and a line of new administrator's becoming in-charge of the museum.

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His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam speaking to employees of MCYS (above and below).



His Majesty during the visit to MCYS.





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 visiting a workshop at Pusat Bahagia (above and right).



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The new era and administration were supposed to bring about improvements. But what has transpired? The museum has been closed for an extended period of time. I urge for this matter to be looked into, as to why the situation has deteriorated and for solutions to resolve it," said His Majesty.

One of the Ministry's roles related to civilisation is performed by the Language and Literature Bureau (DSP), which is responsible for the promotion and development of language, particularly our country's official language. It is a mechanism for the development of civilisation among the people.

His Majesty also noted that this Ministry has various plans, such as reviving the Youth Centre in the capital. To oversee this project, the Ministry has assigned a group of youths, together with a budget allocation.

"The programme was already in progress, even before the COVID-19 epidemic, with activities being organised on Saturday nights and the road in front of the Youth Centre closed to motorists, to allow local youth entrepreneurs to carry out commercial operations, live concerts, busking and religious activities on certain months. The Youth Hostel is also used as a chargeable accommodation.

"I wish to remind that this programme should not be conducted improvidently. We should think of its appropriateness in all aspects, especially in terms of culture and religion. According to its true definition, culture is not all about entertainment and amusement, but civilisation, which is of a much larger scope. I hope that MYCS understands this," concluded His Majesty.



His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam during the visit to Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) (above and below).



## Her Majesty graces Women's Special Assembly



Her Majesty Duli Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha binti Al-Marhum Pengiran Pemancha Pengiran Anak Haji Mohamed Alam and members of the royal family during the Women's Special Assembly in conjunction with the Maulidur Rasul Celebration for 1442 Hijrah/2020 Masihi (left and below).



**JERUDONG, November 5** - Her Majesty Duli Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha binti Al-Marhum Pengiran Pemancha Pengiran Anak Haji Mohamed Alam graced the Women's Special Assembly in conjunction with the Maulidur Rasul Celebration for 1442 Hijrah at the Royal Berkshire Hall.

Accompanying Her Majesty Duli Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha were Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah binti Pengiran Haji Salleh Ab. Rahaman; Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Bini Hajah Faizah binti Dato Haji Nasir; Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Rashidah Sa'adatul Bolkiah; Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Majeedah Nuurul Bolkiah; and Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Masna, Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs.

Her Majesty was greeted by Yang Berhormat Pehin Udana Khatib Data Paduka Seri Setia Ustaz Haji Awang Badaruddin bin Pengarah Dato Paduka Haji Awang Othman, Minister of Religious Affairs as Chairman of Major Islamic Events Celebrations Executive Committee for 1442 Hijrah; Co-Chairmen; as well as Members of the Working Committee.

The event began with the recitation of Al-Quran verses by Dayangku Siti Ummi Syazana binti Pengiran Haji Marjuki, Qariah Champion of the National Al-Quran Reading Competition for Adults 1441H/2020.

This was followed with a welcoming

remark by Datin Dr. Dayang Hajah Noor Hira binti Haji Noor Kaseh, Acting Ra'es of KUPU SB as Co-Chairperson and the event's working committee.

A *Dikir Marhaban* performance was then presented by the officers and staff of the Ministry of Development and the Council of Women of Brunei Darussalam's (CWBD) Dikir Group, followed with a talk by Dr. Dayang Hajah Anie Haryani binti Haji Abd. Rahman, Environmental Health Services Director.

The Women's Special Assembly in conjunction with the Maulidur Rasul Celebration for 1442 Hijrah was implemented in accordance with the guidelines set by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Religious Affairs to control the spread of COVID-19.



## Commitment to road safety must continue

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 28** - Brunei Darussalam has seen a drop in the number of road accidents from 3,598 cases in 2011 to 1,196 in 2019, while fatality cases went down from 47 cases to 13.

This was among the matters stated in a *sabda* (royal speech) delivered by Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Masna binti Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in her capacity as the Royal Patron of the National Road Safety Council (MKKJR), through a recorded video message aired at the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims (WDR) ceremony, held at the Amar Pahlawan Hall of the Ministry of Transport and Infocommunications (MTIC).

Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Masna added that the encouraging trend ought to continue into the future and warned against complacency due to the achievement and called for awareness on road safety and instil the culture of vigilance on the road.

Her Royal Highness added, "The community needs to cooperate with the authorities, especially traffic police, by adhering to the road traffic regulations and being disciplined and safe.

"We are all here to remember those who died and injured in road traffic accidents by giving support and expressing sympathy to the family members and also make the community aware of the importance of road safety."

Her Royal Highness referenced the 'Global Status Report on Road Safety 2018' issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) noting that "The annual number of victims from road accident fatalities

has reached 1.35 million people. Road injuries are the main cause of death among those aged five to 29. Such a burden is being borne disproportionately by pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists, especially in developing countries. A more comprehensive traffic enforcement is needed to meet the global targets to save lives".

Her Royal Highness added, "Many initiatives have already been implemented by member countries of the United Nations (UN). The UN recently launched the 'Second Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030'. This is in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 which outlines targets to reduce half of the fatality and injury rate and to provide access to a safe public transport system by 2030."

Her Royal Highness said that this year marked the end of Brunei Darussalam's Blueprint Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020.

"The strategy has its own action plan which contains comprehensive programmes for the next five years. It will also continue to be aligned with the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030 to jointly achieve the goal of road safety in a proper collective spirit," said Her Royal Highness.

Her Royal Highness added, "With the strategic plan, the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, through the MKKJR in cooperation with action groups formed with members from various government agencies and the private sector will be able to mobilise resources and implement initiatives that are more focused and persistent, thus providing solid support towards achieving vision of zero road accidents."

Her Royal Highness believes the Whole of Nation Approach is a wise step in bringing road safety issues closer to the community.

In line with the digital technology era, Her Royal Highness sees the establishment of the MKKJR website since 2019 as timely.

"Apart from the various physical initiatives planned towards road safety, the coordination and the dissemination in addressing educational, legal and technical aspects through social media are very effective resources, especially in today's world affected by the COVID-19 pandemic," said Her Royal Highness.

Her Royal Highness also extended her gratitude to MKKJR, other agencies and the community for the efforts in reducing road accidents in the country, adding that "it is our responsibility to ensure our roads are safe".



Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Masna binti Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in her capacity as Royal Patron of the National Road Safety Council delivering a *sabda* (royal speech) through a recorded video message aired at the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims (WDR) ceremony.

## Strengthen ASEAN's response in addressing disasters

**BERAKAS, November 27** - Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Kerna Dato Seri Setia (Dr.) Haji Awang Abu Bakar bin Haji Apong, Minister of Home Affairs joined the 8<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management (AMMDM) and the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (COP to AADMER), which were held virtually.

ASEAN Ministers responsible for disaster management attended meeting themed "Advancing transformation towards a safer, adaptive, inclusive and resilient

ASEAN and realising our vision as the global leader in disaster management".

The Meeting discussed approaches in further strengthening ASEAN's response in addressing disasters and assessed the implementation of ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) towards realising the aspiration of building a safe and disaster resilient community.

The Community Based Disaster Risk Management programme conducted since 2010 will continue along with the public health safety and security programmes

at the CAE Multi-Purpose Training Centre (MPTC).

By conducting these programmes, we can build a greater disaster-resilient community and become better prepared to face disasters.

The Minister said the forum and workshop sought to address the growing concern of climate change and the need to synergise climate change adaptation initiatives with disaster risk reduction to mitigate its impacts as well as the importance our youths play in these initiatives.

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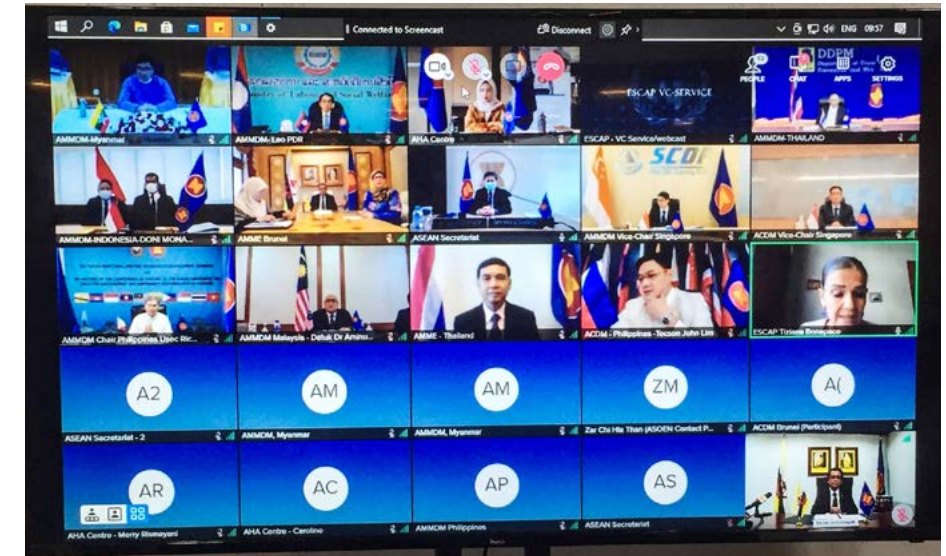


Yang Berhormat Minister of Home Affairs during the 8<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management (AMMDM) and the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (COP to AADMER) held virtually.

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The second edition of ASEAN-ESCAP Joint Study on Drought: Ready for the Dry Years: Building Resilience to Drought in South East Asia was also launched.

The document was one of the studies carried out by ASEAN with cooperation of



the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) aimed at assessing the impact of drought to the socio economy in the region.

ASEAN Ministers responsible for the environment attended the launch, joined by Dato Seri Paduka Ar. Awang Haji Marzuke bin Haji Mohsin, Deputy Minister

of Development, representing Brunei Darussalam.

The meeting also saw the approval of the AADMER Work Programme 2021-2025, a regional framework document for cooperation, coordination, technical assistance and mobilisation of resources disaster management for the coming five years.

## Brunei Committed to tackling climate change



Yang Berhormat Minister of Energy at the 3<sup>rd</sup> East Asia Energy Forum.

Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage (CCUS)/Carbon Recycling in ASEAN/East Asia' and focused on the role of this clean energy technology in tackling the global climate challenge.

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mat Suny bin Haji Md. Hussein, Minister of Energy, represented Brunei Darussalam at the 3<sup>rd</sup> East Asia Energy Forum, which was held via video conference and streamed online on November 17.

The Opening Address was delivered by His Excellency Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary General of ASEAN. The forum highlighted that ASEAN Member States must tackle the challenge of climate change, by not only penetrating renewable energy, but also through promoting the use of CCUS/Carbon Recycling.

In his video message, Brunei Darussalam's Minister of Energy shared that the United Nations Environment Programme's 2019 Emissions Gap Report indicated that by 2030, emissions would need to be reduced by 25 per cent from 2018 levels to ensure global warming remains below 2 degrees.

The Minister then stated that CCUS technology can potentially play an

important role in decarbonising the energy sector, especially as the ASEAN region continues to consume fossil fuels such as natural gas in order to meet growing energy demand.

Brunei Darussalam's efforts in climate change include reducing carbon emissions from the energy sector through more efficient power generation, deployment of renewable technologies and addressing venting and flaring from oil and gas production, as detailed in the Brunei National Climate Change Policy which was launched in July 2020. The country is also exploring the potential of CCUS in order to further mitigate industrial emissions from the oil and gas sector.

The East Asia Energy Forum is an annual forum held back-to-back with the ASEAN Ministers of Energy Meeting (AMEM) and the ASEAN Energy Business Forum (AEBF). The Forum is annually participated by Energy Ministers, government officials, research institutes and private sector representatives from ASEAN Member States and its Dialogue Partners.

The conference aims to raise awareness on the latest trends in the ASEAN and East Asia energy market, with an objective to champion regional energy security and sustainability targets under the ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation (APAEC) 2016 - 2025.



## Combatting transnational criminal activities



Yang Berhormat Second Minister of Defence as Chairman of the National Security Committee attending the 14th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) virtually.

### BANDAR SEI BEGAWAN, November 26

– Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd. Yussof, Second Minister of Defence as Chairman of the National Security Committee attended the 14th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), chaired by His Excellency General To Lam, Minister of Public Security of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. The meeting was held virtually at

the Prime Minister's Office building.

The 14th AMMTC came to a close with a handover of the chairmanship of the AMMTC from the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to Brunei Darussalam.

The Meeting theme "Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN Against Transnational Crime" brought together ministers and high level representatives of all ASEAN Member States to discuss the changing

trends in transnational crime and criminal activities in this region.

Brunei Darussalam will focus its efforts on identifying opportunities and challenges in fighting transnational crime in the post-COVID 19 era.

The Second Minister of Defence emphasised the need for AMMTC and ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) to adopt the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic into their future plans. This includes the SOMTC Work Programme 2019-2021 which will be reviewed during Brunei Darussalam's chairmanship next year.

The Minister shared Brunei's efforts in combatting transnational criminal activities such as joint operations to prevent the movement of illicit drugs and other contraband through the country's borders and waterways.

The Minister also shared Brunei Darussalam's efforts to combat transnational criminal activities include joint operations by Brunei Darussalam's security and enforcement agencies to prevent the movement of illicit drugs and other contraband items through the country's land borders and waterways.

## Holistic solidarity important, efforts must achieve global health goals



Yang Berhormat Minister of Health during the 3rd ASEAN-China Forum on Health Cooperation.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 25** - Comprehensive cooperation and solidarity are important as the world is currently facing the COVID-19 pandemic, and efforts must achieve the global health goals.

This was stated by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Md. Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health at the online 3rd ASEAN-China Forum on Health Cooperation's Plenary Session. The forum held on November 24 to 25, organised by

the National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China was officiated by His Excellency Dr. Ma Xiaowei, Minister

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of the National Health Commission at the People's Republic of China, and was attended by ASEAN Health Ministers; Secretary-General of ASEAN; World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Director for the Western Pacific; senior officers as well as health experts from ASEAN Member States and the People's Republic of China.

Themed "Building an ASEAN-China Community of Health through Solidarity

and Cooperation", the forum focused on cooperation among ASEAN and the People's Republic of China's especially by implementing activities under ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development Agenda (2016-2020).

The Minister of Health also shared on the implementation of the Brunei Vision 2035 through the Ministry of Health's Strategic Plan 2019-2023, where it is currently implemented through the Whole of Nation Approach specifically for issues pertaining to ageing population, lifestyle related

diseases, and health monitoring through digital technology.

At the end of the plenary session, ASEAN Health Ministers at the People's Republic of China adopted the 3rd ASEAN-China Forum on Health Cooperation Initiative which underlines the agreement between ASEAN and the People's Republic of China in further strengthening cooperation in managing the COVID-19 pandemic, and exchange information on non-communicable diseases, traditional medicines, health care, and food safety.

## COVID-19: 2 new cases recorded in August



Yang Berhormat Minister of Health during a press conference on the latest COVID-19 situation in Brunei Darussalam at the Ministry of Health's (MoH) Al-Afiah Hall.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 30** – In November, Brunei Darussalam recorded two new COVID-19 cases bringing the total number of confirmed cases to 150.

Case 149 is a woman aged 37 years old,

who arrived in Brunei Darussalam on Royal Brunei B1874 flight on November 11, 2020 via Kuala Lumpur from India.

Case 150 is a 37-year old man who arrived in Brunei Darussalam on Royal Brunei B1874 flight on November 13, via

Kuala Lumpur from Egypt.

Both cases showed no signs of infection and are currently being treated at the National Isolation Centre. Contact tracing has identified all the contacts, in which all of them have undergone the swab test and were confirmed negative for COVID-19.

These were announced by Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Haji Mohd. Isham bin Haji Jaafar, Minister of Health during a press conference on the latest COVID-19 situation in Brunei Darussalam on November 23 and 24.

As of today, Ministry of Health in its press release stated that the total COVID-19 cases remains at 150. There are currently 541 individuals are undergoing mandatory self-isolation at government monitoring centres after arriving from abroad and the number of people who have completed it since March was 8,603. Three hundred and eight samples have been tested for the SARS-CoV-2 virus in the past 24 hours and carried out 77,394 tests since January.

## Continue to explore new economic activities



Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy speaking at the forum held at Baiduri Bank Headquarters.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 7** - Companies in the country are encouraged to develop their business by exploring new economic activities, including working closely with the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and export market potential.

This was stated by 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 at a forum entitled "What's Ahead After COVID-19: A Dialogue With 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", held at Baiduri Bank Headquarters.

The Minister reiterated the need for

productivity growth in all sectors and the development of a vibrant private sector as the driving force for economic growth.

At the forum, the Minister also thanked members of the French-Bruneian Business Association (FBBA) for their contribution towards economic development, in particular, providing business opportunities to local Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and job opportunities to locals.

Also present at the forum were Dato Seri Paduka Dr. Haji Abdul Manaf bin Haji Metussin, Deputy Minister of Finance and Economy (Economy); Dr. Hajah May Fa'ezah binti Haji Ahmad Ariffin, Permanent Secretary (Economy) at the MoFE; the Diplomatic Corps and FBBA members.



## ABAC Brunei presents ABAC Report



Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy receiving the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) Report from members of ABAC Brunei Darussalam.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 16** - Yang Berhormat Nik Hafimi binti Abdul Haadi and Pengiran Azaleen bin Pengiran Dato Haji Mustapha, as members of the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) Brunei Darussalam, presented the ABAC Report, carrying the theme "Integration, Innovation, Inclusion: Moving Towards Economic Recovery and Resilience" to Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd. Amin Liew bin Abdullah, Minister and the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy.

The report highlights the work undertaken by ABAC throughout the year and its recommendations against the backdrop of 2020, a pivotal moment in history given the unprecedented challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

ABAC believes that the region must respond boldly as the world faces the greatest health and economic crises of the last hundred years.

Adding to the difficulty are the obstacles of a world that is riskier, less stable and more divided than in decades.

Our greatest strength will be collaboration and cooperation – the hallmark of APEC for 30 years and the collective efforts towards deeper regional economic

integration have helped to lift millions out of poverty and improved the lives of many millions more. Thus ABAC stands firm that continuing to work closely together will be key to APEC's future prosperity, stability and well-being.

The ABAC 2020 report sets out a comprehensive report which looks to the future, and to the formidable task of economic rebuilding and revitalisation drawing on the lessons of the pandemic in relation to ABAC's priorities for 2020 of Integration, Innovation, Inclusion and Sustainability.

Some key highlights included 'Integration': ABAC urged APEC Economic Leaders to prioritise pro-trade and pro-investment policies, including enhancing open, secure and stable supply chains.

The recent signing of the RCEP signals a very strong commitment by economic leaders toward a potential Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP).

The second key highlight is 'Innovation': ABAC calls on Leaders to ensure that digital infrastructure, including broadband, is accessible even in underdeveloped areas; and that the regulatory and technological environment is open, non-discriminatory and coherent across

APEC to enable innovation, interoperability and more rapid digitalisation for all.

The third key highlight is 'Inclusion and Sustainability': As we rebuild our economies post-pandemic, we must address issues of more equitable sharing of the opportunities in and benefits of trade and regional prosperity, including by ensuring that Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), women, indigenous communities and the youth are not left behind.

Responding to the health and economic consequences of the pandemic, either collectively and individually, will have a far-reaching impact on the world for generations to come.

The responsibility to be decisive, to take immediate steps to recover and rebuild our region, also offers enormous opportunity – to act with forward thinking purpose, to create a better version of our region and ensure we are prepared for the future shocks which we know will inevitably come.

There is the possibility to now deliver a more peaceful and prosperous region, as envisaged when APEC was created. Combatting COVID-19 will require working collaboratively to re-open travel through risk-based border management and revive our economies.

ABAC applauds the Brunei Government's decisive and collective action in tackling COVID-19 pandemic since the outbreak through swift policy actions and initiatives. Today, Brunei is among the few economies in APEC and in the world that has continuously been able to contain the pandemic and speedily resuscitate the economy.

In support of MSMEs, we are pleased to report that ABAC Brunei has co-led and facilitated the "Digitisation of Micro and Small Enterprises" through a Global Pilot initially within BIMP-EAGA, launching the research programme in Brunei in 2020 and aimed at attaining insights to enabling effective digital solutions to resolve the issues of commercial resiliency for MSMEs.

As part of APEC's collective effort to build back better, we must seize the opportunity to make tackling climate change an explicit goal as APEC should ideally be a resilient, sustainable and seamless region in which it is as easy for all to work, live and do business in any one part of the region as any other.

## Royal Brunei Airlines (RB) wins World's Leading Cabin Crew Award



Yang Berhormat Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy in his capacity as Chairman of RB Board of Directors presenting an appreciation plaque to a representative of Royal Brunei Airlines (RB).

**JERUDONG, November 28** - Royal Brunei Airlines (RB) was announced the winner of the 2020 World's Leading Cabin Crew, announced at the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual World Travel Awards (WTA), held virtually on November 27, marking an incredible accomplishment for the airline's cabin crew, to be ranked ahead of world-class airlines.

The prestigious accolade was awarded to RB after the national carrier received the most number of votes in a worldwide poll from guests, travellers and travel professionals across the globe.

As the regional winner of Asia's Leading Cabin Crew was announced on November 3, RB progressed to the grand finale where winners of the prestigious World categories were unveiled.

This saw RB competing against 17 airlines including leaders of the industry.

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Mohd Amin Liew bin Abdullah,

Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and Second Minister of Finance and Economy in his capacity as Chairman of RB Board of Directors attended the RB Cabin Crew Appreciation Ceremony at the Royal Berkshire Hall of the Royal Brunei Polo and Riding Club.

"Today we celebrate an incredible achievement by our cabin crew on the global stage. The World's Leading Cabin Crew Award to RB shows what can be achieved with clear vision and through hard work," said the Minister at the PMO and Second Minister of Finance and Economy.

The Minister said, "They have set industry standards for the services they provide to millions of RB guests by carrying the embodiment of our Bruneian culture of warm hospitality at the heart of everything they do. RB's cabin crew and other frontliners have helped us achieve this and other notable awards including Skytrax 4-star rating and top 70 airline in the world. RB's cabin crew are great

ambassadors for the country."

He said that throughout RB's 46 years of establishment, the national carrier has brought pride to the country; being crowned the winner of World's Leading Cabin Crew brings joy to all Bruneians.

He added that RB will continue to improve its competitiveness and travel experience for guests as they navigate through these challenging times and support economic vitality with the connectivity RB provides.

"Our hearty congratulations to all RB's cabin crew and cabin services team. A well-deserved recognition for your exceptional service," the Minister added.

Meanwhile, in a video message, Karam Chand, RB's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) said that the award of the World's Leading Cabin Crew and Asia's Leading Cabin Crew by World Travel Awards is well earned and a reflection of RB's service strategy and single-mindedness in establishing RB as a well-respected global brand.

"The award demonstrates that we have won the hearts and minds of our guests and travel professionals worldwide and a stamp of approval of our hard work, dedication and world class service over a number of years," said the CEO.

Also congratulating RB for being voted World's Leading Cabin Crew was World Travel Awards founder, Graham E Cooke. "The entire team possesses an incredible passion for raising inflight services to an entirely new level, and I am delighted that this has been acknowledged by both the travel trade and consumers," said Graham E. Cooke.

The WTA brand, established in 1993, is regarded globally as the ultimate hallmark of industry excellence across all key sectors of travel, tourism and hospitality.

## Ensure resilience of ASEAN transport sector

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 25** - Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Awang Abdul Mutalib bin Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Setia Dato Paduka Haji Mohammad Yusof, Minister of Transport and Infocommunications as Chairman of the ASEAN Transport Ministers (ATM) Meeting for 2020, chaired the 26<sup>th</sup> ATM Meeting and Associated Dialogue Partner Meetings held via video conference on November 24 - 25.

The Meeting discussed policy measures to support the implementation of transport-related initiatives and programmes of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF), adopted by the 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit recently.

The Ministers also considered transport activities and programmes under the relevant cooperation initiatives to be

discussed with the dialogue partners.

The meeting also discussed specific initiatives to ensure the sustainability of the transport sectors in the ASEAN region, among them were to ease networks on the movement of essential goods, re-opening of the aviation sector in phases taking into





Yang Berhormat Minister of Transport and Infocommunications 26<sup>th</sup> ATM Meeting and Associated Dialogue Partner Meetings held via video conference.

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consideration the current developments of the COVID-19 pandemic; facilitation of travel between ASEAN Member States through initiatives such as 'Travel Bubbles' and also the management of crew change in the maritime sector during the pandemic.

The Meeting approved the adoption of the Brunei Declaration on Road Safety 2020 which also includes the need to achieve the objectives of engineering, education and enforcement, reducing injuries and fatalities on the road for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and people with disabilities through a holistic and safe system as well as awareness programmes on best practices in road safety.

The Meeting also launched the ASEAN Road Safety Video, which is a compilation of videos from each ASEAN Member State showcasing ASEAN's efforts in improving road safety and reducing the road fatalities in the region during the last decade.

Seven key deliverables were also adopted – Annual Priorities/Key Deliverables for 2021; Recommendations of the Mid-Term Review of the Kuala Lumpur Transport Strategic Plan (KLTSPP) 2016-2025 and the Revised Schedule of Actions of the KLTSPP 2016-2025; Implementing Protocol-2 (IP2); Aviation Training Organisations of

Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Flight Crew Licensing (MRA on FCL); ASEAN Air Navigation Service (ANS) Master Plan; ASEAN-wide COVID-19 Operational Guidelines; Guidelines for improving standard procedure for reporting road crashes in ASEAN member states based on UN standards; and ASEAN Land Transport Network Map.

The ASEAN Transport Ministers met with China at the 19<sup>th</sup> ASEAN and China Transport Ministers Meeting (19<sup>th</sup> ATM+China) under the co-chairmanship of the Minister of Transport and Infocommunications of Brunei Darussalam and His Excellency, Li Xiaopeng, Minister of Transport of the People's Republic of China.

The Meeting reiterated the commitment to strengthen collective response to COVID-19 pandemic in ensuring smooth transport and logistic services to support the COVID-19 recovery.

They also welcomed the initiative for both sides to jointly develop a five-year successor Action Programme (2021-2025) under ASEAN-China Transport Cooperation.

Meanwhile, the 18<sup>th</sup> ASEAN and Japan Transport Ministers Meeting (18<sup>th</sup> ATM+Japan) was held yesterday via video conference. The meeting was co-chaired by the Minister of Transport and

Infocommunications of Brunei Darussalam and His Excellency Iwai Shigeki, State Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism of Japan.

The ministers endorsed the AJTP Work Plan for 2020-2021 which would enhance regional connectivity. The ministers noted that the AJTP Work Plan for 2020-2021 included the three new initiatives.

Meanwhile, the 11<sup>th</sup> ASEAN and ROK Transport Ministers Meeting (11<sup>th</sup> ATM+ROK) was held via video conference yesterday. The meeting was co-chaired by the Minister of Transport and Infocommunications of Brunei Darussalam and His Excellency Myoung Soo Son, Vice Minister for Transport at the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, Republic of Korea.

The Ministers adopted the ASEAN-ROK Transport Cooperation Roadmap 2021 – 2025, which sets out the potential projects and activities of cooperation in the areas of human resources development, development consulting, infrastructure feasibility study, as well as technology and management. The Ministers tasked their senior officials to deepen cooperation for the implementation of activities under the new roadmap.

The meeting was also attended by the Secretary-General of ASEAN, His Excellency Dato Paduka Lim Jock Hoi.

## Realise a sustainable and resilient ASEAN

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 7** - The COVID-19 pandemic calls upon the need for an even stronger inter-pillar and cross-sectoral coordination among ASEAN, together with its stakeholders and partners. This was highlighted by Yang Berhormat Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Aminuddin Ihsan bin

Pehin Orang Kaya Saiful Mulok Dato Seri Paduka Haji Abidin, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports of Brunei (MCYS) at the 24<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Council Meeting, held via video conference.

The Meeting was chaired by His

Excellency Dao Ngoc Dung, Minister of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and was attended by ASCC Council Ministers, representatives and the ASEAN Secretary General.

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Yang Berhormat Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) of Brunei Darussalam during the 24<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Council Meeting via video conference.

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"The ASCC Council Ministers affirmed commitment for ASEAN Member States to move forward together in mitigating the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and towards post-pandemic recovery efforts," according to the Minister of MCYS.

ASCC Council Ministers noted that the sustained interventions and mechanisms of ASCC Sectoral Bodies in addressing COVID-19 through enhanced cooperation within ASEAN and with other sectoral partners; and further encouraged the operationalisation of ASEAN key initiatives such as ASEAN Strategic Framework for Public Health Emergencies and ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and its Implementation Plan.

The Minister also highlighted that under the soon-to-be adopted ASEAN ACRF, the important document will shape ASEAN's priorities in the coming years.

"Strategies to broaden social protection and social welfare as proposed in the ACRF can be extended by looking into more innovations through a Whole

of ASEAN Community Approach, particularly to reduce vulnerabilities of at-risk populations, while taking into consideration its long-term sustainability," said the Minister.

The Minister stated that the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the ASCC Blueprint 2025 has been invaluable to assess ASCC's progress nationally and regionally towards the implementation of the ASCC Blueprint 2025, and looked forward for the ASCC senior officials to take appropriate action on the recommendations, while sharing insights to allow ASCC to make informed decisions.

"On ASEAN's past declarations and statements, it is vital that ASEAN reaffirms these commitments by providing equitable opportunities, participation and effective engagement of its people, especially the youth, in the development and implementation of ASEAN work.

The discussions to have appropriate mechanisms such as crowdfunding during disasters, would allow the people and partners of ASEAN to contribute to the ASEAN Disaster Management and

Emergency Relief Fund. This will make ASEAN relevant in the livelihood of its people, as well as complement the ASCC proposed establishment of ASEAN aid," said the Minister.

The Minister also outlined priorities for Brunei Darussalam in 2021, where focus will be given to continue efforts of past years; for ASEAN to continuously forge ahead with its partners, in the spirit of a caring and sharing community that engages and benefits the people; and a community that is prepared, inclusive and sustainable in its actions.

The Minister looked forward to the continued support and contribution of ASEAN Member States to achieve and realise a sustainable and resilient ASEAN. The ASCC Ministers also adopted the report of the 24<sup>th</sup> ASCC to be submitted to the 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit, and endorsed in principle, the ASCC outcome documents for consideration of ASEAN leaders at the 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit.

The ASCC Ministers commended ASCC Sectoral Bodies for the active role and significant contributions in promoting the improvement in the quality of life of the people of ASEAN and strengthening social safeguards and resilience through regional cooperation.

They include progress in the implementation of the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the ASEAN Culture of Prevention (CoP) Declaration for a Peaceful, Inclusive, Resilient, Healthy and Harmonious Society; as well as the achievements of the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) in addressing violence against women and children, promoting child protection and spearheading regional efforts in gender mainstreaming and women, peace and security agenda.

Brunei Darussalam through MCYS as the National Secretariat for ASCC will take up the chairmanship of the ASCC Pillar next year.

## International cooperation remains key to youth empowerment

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, November 4** - International youth cooperation through ASEAN and Dialogue Partners continues to be a key factor for the continuous empowerment of Bruneian youths.

This was highlighted by Yang Berhormat Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Aminuddin Ihsan bin Pehin Orang Kaya Saiful Mulok Dato Seri Paduka Haji Abidin, Minister of Culture, Youth and

Sports of Brunei Darussalam (MCYS), at the ASEAN Youth Leaders' Conference in line with the 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit held via Video Conference on November 3.

The conference was chaired by His Excellency Nguyen Anh Tuan, Chairman of the National Committee on Youth of Viet Nam, Permanent Secretary of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, and was attended by ASEAN Ministers

responsible for youth affairs and their representatives as well as the Secretary General of ASEAN.

During the conference, the Minister of MCYS shared the views about youth development in Brunei Darussalam whom

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Yang Berhormat Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports of Brunei Darussalam (MCYS) during the ASEAN Youth Leaders' Conference, in line with 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit, which was held via Video Conference.

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are more empowered, opinionated, bolder and action-oriented, reflected through their successes in many fields including a variety of professions, entrepreneurship, creative arts, digital economy, volunteerism and active contribution in nation building.

The youth have also been involved at the strategic level particularly in the formulation of national-level policies such as in the review of Brunei Darussalam National Youth Policy, the National Climate Change Policy and the Digital Economy Masterplan 2025.

He also emphasised that in terms of the youth's empowerment, what is important, is to translate their ideas and recommendations into practical actions.

He further called for ASEAN to move forward together with strategic partners to expand digital access, promote digital skills, and provide essential funding support to enable all ASEAN youth to embrace the new normal and become future-ready, in line with the ASEAN Work Plan on Youth.

The Minister also reiterated the importance of international youth cooperation through ASEAN and Dialogue Partners as a key factor for the continuous empowerment of youth.

The three key areas where regional cooperation and connection have contributed towards the development of the youths, and subsequently the communities namely firstly, continuous engagement of youth directly at the

grassroots level through volunteerism in the country as well as in the region and international arena to be further encouraged, in line with ASEAN priority to develop a caring ASEAN Community.

Secondly, the importance of digital transformation to enable youths to embrace the new normal, nurture a growth mindset and become adaptable, such as the "Go Digital ASEAN" initiative that aims to equip 4,000 micro-entrepreneurs and under-employed youths with technological skills and tools in Brunei Darussalam and ASEAN; the role of youths in setting up virtual markets in the country as well as the drive towards 'gig economy'. These initiatives are consistent with the findings of the 'ASEAN Youth Survey 2020' conducted by the World Economic Forum.

Thirdly, giving vulnerable youths the correct capacity building platforms and support so that they are not left behind by building on current initiatives. Both Government and Non-Government Organisations have and will continue to provide lifelong learning, skills training, entrepreneurship development programmes as well as creating accessible platforms to produce self-reliant and resilient youths capable of seizing and maximising all opportunities as well as to overcome any challenges they face.

In concluding his statement, the Minister also urged for ASEAN to collectively move forward together with ASEAN's strategic partners in expanding digital access, promote digital skills, as well as provide essential funding support to enable all ASEAN youths to embrace the new normal and become future-ready,

in line with the ASEAN Work Plan on Youth. During the conference, ASEAN Ministers and representatives responsible for youth adopted the Joint Statement of ASEAN Youth Ministers on Enhancing Youth Cooperation for a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN Community, for notation of the 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit to be held in November.

The Joint Statement which, among others, stated their commitment to work hand in hand with the ASEAN Youth to unleash the opportunities created by the new normal so the youth may continue to contribute in developing each nation and ASEAN as a whole; increase the multilateral and bilateral dialogues, meetings and forms among ASEAN youth agencies and organisations in all levels; effectively implement the ASEAN Work Plan on Youth 2021 – 2025 which focuses on Education, Health and Well-being, Employment and Opportunity; Participation and engagement; and ASEAN Awareness, Values and Identities.

The Ministers are also committed to focusing on nurturing volunteerism and creativity and innovative mindsets among youths through Youth Entrepreneurship; as well as ensure inclusivity and sustainability in skills developments in preparation for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

The Ministers look forward to the ASEAN Youth Development Index Phase II and the ASEAN Work Plan on Youth 2021 – 2025 as a holistic approach to prepare ASEAN youth for the challenges brought about by 4IR in the post-pandemic era through transformative approaches in human resource development.