



**24<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL DAY ROYAL SPEECH**

# HM: Focus on youth development agenda imperative



PHOTO: MASR OSMAN

His Majesty delivers the National Day's *titah*.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 22** – It is vital to focus on youth development agenda as the youth are the nation's asset. Furthermore, the youth that have been developed will reflect future leadership. If they are good, we can be happy for it but if they become people without morals, the country will shouldering their burden.

These were highlighted by His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkhiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in a *titah* (royal speech) in conjunction with the 24<sup>th</sup> National Day of Brunei Darussalam.

Earlier on in his royal speech, His Majesty spoke on the theme of this year's National Day celebration which is "Tunas Bangsa". "Tunas" refers to growth, hence "Tunas Bangsa" refers to a group of young people or the nation's youth.

The sovereign also expressed his concern on the worrying trend of today's youth where statistics have shown an increase in criminal and juvenile activities involving the youth.

The concern monarch advised that we must not be comfortable when mentioning these crime statistics and boast the slogan "Tunas Bangsa" but what is important is that we must get rid of the crime in whatever form for the peace and prosperity of the citizens and residents, so that tourists and investors will not be afraid of coming to this country.

While the "Tunas Bangsa" must seriously become healthy youths who will work towards making Brunei Darussalam free of crime, said His Majesty.

Brunei Darussalam celebrates its National Day every February 23 where the celebration will start with a mass Maghrib and Isyak and thanksgiving prayers at all mosque throughout the nation on the eve of February 22. A mass gathering showcasing various performances from all walks of life involving the public and private sectors including students will be held on the morning of February 23 at the Taman Sir Muda Omar 'Ali Saifuddin in Bandar Seri Begawan.

## \$486,000 for flood victims



PHOTO: RAMLI TENGAH

The sovereign visits one of the affected areas.

**TEMBURONG, February 14** – The Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam have contributed a sum of \$486,000 for flashflood victims at the Temburong District.

In light of the situation, His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam consented to visit affected areas and presented the donation.

Two hundred and forty three heads of families received the donations from His Majesty in a ceremony held at Sultan Hassan Secondary School in Bangar. The donations presented also included \$120,200 from the Brunei Islamic Religious Council which were collected from tithe (zakat) and Baitul Mal.

At the ceremony, His Majesty



PHOTO: AMPUAN HAJI MAHMUD AMPUAN HAJI TENGAH

The State Legislative Council building was officially opened by His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam on March 4, 2008. The four-storey building which costs more than \$60 million was built on 26 acres of land at Jalan Kebangsaan.

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## His Majesty receives in audience King of Cambodia

**ISTANA NURUL IMAN, March 24** – His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam received in audience His Majesty the King of Cambodia Preah Bat Samdech Preah Boromneath Norodom Sihamoni who were in the sultanate for a three-day state visit.

Also present were His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah and His Royal Highness Prince `Abdul Malik.

His Majesty The King of Cambodia was accompanied by Her Royal Highness Samdech Reach Botrei Preah Anoch Norodom Arunrasmy, who is also the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Cambodia to Malaysia.



PHOTO: ABDULLAH HAJI AWANG DAWIT

Both leaders in discussion during the audience at the Istana Nurul Iman.

## Brunei-Cambodia share warm bilateral relations

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 24** – Brunei Darussalam wish to share with Cambodia its experience as a nation that has deep traditions which form part of the rich pattern of the region's history. Brunei hopes to share the experiences that link Brunei and Cambodia as friends and partners in the modern Southeast Asia.

These were said by His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at a state banquet at the Istana Nurul Iman in honour of the official visit of His Majesty King Norodom Sihamoni of the Kingdom of Cambodia to Brunei Darussalam.

"As I said last year, many of these join our governments in one common endeavour as fellow members of ASEAN.

"This is the primary task of ensuring that our people can meet the challenges and hope that is based on their own knowledge, practical skills and talent.

"Providing the opportunities for them to do this lies at the heart of all our programmes of cooperation.

"Those are practical task, Your Majesty, and we are delighted to be

sharing them with our friends and colleagues in the Kingdom of Cambodia," said His Majesty.

The sovereign further added that many of them involve the future. But there are many other things that we already share and we are equally delighted to have the opportunity that Your Majesty's visit offers to express and re-affirm them, he said.

They are less tangible than formal programmes of cooperation but in some ways are even more important. They reflect the modern region – the friendship we share; the desire we have to work together and help one another; the wish to learn more about each other and to understand each other well; and perhaps above all else that quality that underpins all others in a modern region, respect of each other.

This respect includes the respect



PHOTO: HAJI SAHRIN HAJI ASMAT

His Majesty delivers titah at the royal banquet.

for our rich diversity of background, faiths, cultures and historical experience; and especially respect for our people's individual strengths, talents and abilities.

Diplomatic relation between Brunei Darussalam and Cambodia was established on June 9, 1992. On February 28, 1997, Brunei Darussalam set up its mission in Phnom Penh.

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam received in audience His Excellency Yang Jiechi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China on February 2.



PHOTO: RAMLI TENGAH



PHOTOS: RAMLI TENGAH

**Her Majesty Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha on February 12 received separate audiences at the Istana Nurul Iman from:**

- ❶ Mrs. Samira M. H. Makknaty, spouse of the Saudi Arabian Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Brunei Darussalam.
- ❷ Mrs. Khatthaoudone Bounkhoun, spouse of the Lao People Democratic Republic Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Brunei Darussalam.



PHOTO: MASRI OSMAN

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office received in audience His Excellency Phithak Phrombubpha, the newly-appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Thailand to Brunei Darussalam at the Istana Nurul Iman on February 4.

### HM sends condolences to China

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam sent condolences to His Excellency Hu Jintao, President of the People's Republic of China following the loss of lives and widespread devastation caused by recent snowstorms in the country on February 1.

In the message, His Majesty and the people of Brunei Darussalam expressed support for efforts in overcoming these extreme difficulties.

His Majesty also sent his deepest condolences to the Government and people of the People's Republic of China, especially to the bereaved families.

#### \* From frontpage (Flood victims)

also presented land grants under the Temporary On Lease (TOL) land scheme to 35 recipients; and 27 recipients for the resettlement scheme of Kampong Senukoh, Mukim Labu. Both schemes are based in the Temburong District.

His Majesty also took a closer look at

the Sultan Hassan Secondary School; followed with a visit to Temburong's Disaster Operation Room at the Temburong District Office.

The sovereign also visited several homes that were affected by the flash flood and the badly affected Bokok Primary School.

Temburong District was badly hit by the flashflood due to heavy

rain on February 8 and 9. More than 1000 people from 243 families suffered damages to their homes and properties. Government offices, schools, mosques, quarry sites and private building were also hit by the flood.

A relief fund was also launched to collect donations in the bid to assist the flood victims.

### New princess named

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 2** – His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has named his daughter - Her Royal Highness Princess Ameerah Wardatul Bolkiah.

Her Royal Highness was born on Monday, 19 Muharam 1429 Hijrah corresponding to January 28, 2008, at 4.21pm.

To honour the joyous occasion, a 21-gun salute was fired from the cannons at the vicinity of the Istana Nurul Iman.

### Congratulatory messages

**His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam sent congratulatory messages to;**

- His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, The President of the Islamic Republic of Iran in conjunction with the Republic's 39<sup>th</sup> National Day on February 11.
- His Majesty Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Emir Kuwait and his Prime Minister, His Majesty Sheikh Nasser Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on the occasion of the Kingdom's National Day on February 25.
- The Right Honourable Dato' Seri Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi, the Prime Minister of Malaysia on his re-election as the Prime Minister of Malaysia on March 10.
- The President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, His Excellency Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister of the Caretaker Government of Pakistan, His Excellency Mohamadmmain Soomro on the occasion of Pakistan Day on March 23.
- The President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, His Excellency Professor Iajuddin Ahmed, and the Chief Adviser of the Bangladeshi Caretaker Government, His Excellency Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed on the occasion of the Independence Day of Bangladesh on March 26.

The sovereign delivers his *titah* at the new conference hall.



His Majesty officially opens the State Legislative Council Building.

## State Legislative Council: Call to develop agricultural sector

**JALAN KEBANGSAAN LAMA, March 4** – Agriculture has been identified as a crucial field in economic diversification. All countries worldwide depend on agriculture because of its role in providing food, be it through self-producing or by importing.

The objective of agriculture is to fulfil the needs of the population while at the same time, it can be traded locally and globally, in the form of commercial agriculture.

These were highlighted by His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at the opening of the first meeting for the fourth session of the State Legislative Council.

“Our issue is, to what extent is our nation’s agricultural growth? Are we experiencing a positive growth or vice versa?”

“Once in awhile, I see through the

media, there are leaders and other government officials together with the community going out to paddy fields.

“What did we conclude from such experience? For instance, have the infrastructure of our paddy fields and plantations achieved the developed standard?”

“If yes, encouragement should be given for its enhancement and sustainability and if not, guidance is crucial,” said His Majesty. The sovereign believed that the Council members would be able to look at this issue and discuss it together.

Earlier in his royal speech, His Majesty said that history was made in the development of the State Legislative Council as the meeting was held at the State Legislative Council’s new building.

“This new building becomes the symbol of pride and unison between

the government and the people in fulfilling their responsibilities formally and in a proper manner. It is here where the representatives can contribute ideas to the development and progress of the nation,” said His Majesty.

His Majesty also spoke on the long-term development plan entitled *Wawasan Brunei 2035*. The plan outlines policies and nation’s development strategies for the next 30 years.

The sovereign expressed his hope that with this *Wawasan*, the objective to generate highly knowledgeable and skilled Bruneians can be achieved, while also achieving a lasting and dynamic economy, which has become the main objective that we can benefit from.

## 24<sup>th</sup> National Day’s congratulatory messages

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 23** – His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam received congratulatory messages from heads of state and foreign dignitaries in conjunction with the 24<sup>th</sup> National Day of Brunei Darussalam.

They were from: His Majesty Al-Wathiqu Billah Al-Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin, Yang Di-Pertuan Agong of Malaysia; His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Guardian of the Two Mosques; His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein, King of Jordan; His Majesty Carl XVI Gustaf, King of Sweden; His Majesty King Albert II, King of Belgium; His Majesty Norodom Sihamoni, King of Cambodia;

Also sending congratulatory messages were; Their Excellencies President S.R. Nathan of Singapore; Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of Union of Myanmar; President Choummaly Sayasone of the Lao’s People’s Democratic Republic; President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo of Philippines; President Nguyen

Minh Triet of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; Colonel Muammar Al-Gadafi, Leader of the Great Al-Fateh Revolution, Great Socialist People’s Libyan Arab Republic; President Horst Kohler of Germany; President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation; President Pratibha Devisingh Patil of India; President General Pervez Musharraf of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Their Excellencies Major General Michael Jeffrey, Governor General of Australia; The Right Honourable Michaele Jean, Governor General of Canada; President Stjepan Mesic of Croatia; President George W. Bush of the United States of America; President Lech Kaczynski of Poland; President Roh Moo-hyun of Korea; President Kim Yong Nam of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and Professor Dr. Iajuddin Ahmed of Bangladesh.

Their Excellencies President Hu Jintao of China; President Nicolas Sarkozy of France; President Nursultan Nazabayev of Kazakhstan; President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia; President Anibal Cavaco Silva of

Portugal; President Viktor Yushchenko of Ukraine; President Felipe Calderon Hinojosa of the United Mexican States; President Pascal Couchepin of the Swiss Confederation; President Karolos Papoulias of the Hellenic Republic of Greece; President Heinz Fischer of the Federal Republic of Austria and President Mary McAleese of Ireland.

The Right Honourable Dato’ Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Prime Minister of Malaysia; Their Excellencies Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of Singapore; General Thein Sein, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar; Bouasone Bouthavanh, Prime Minister of the People’s Democratic Republic of Lao; Samdech Hun Sen, Prime Minister of Cambodia; Nguyen Tan Dung, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; Yasuo Fukuda, Prime Minister of Japan; Mohammedman Soomro, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; Mohamed Ghannouchi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Tunisia, and Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed, Chief Adviser to the Non-Party Caretaker Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh

His Majesty holds a bilateral meeting with His Excellency Abdoulaye Wade, President of Senegal.



Brunei's delegation led by His Majesty.



PHOTOS: RAMLI TENGAH

Group photo of the heads of state and country leaders attending the 11<sup>th</sup> OIC Summit.

## 11<sup>th</sup> Organization of Islamic Conference Brunei Darussalam continues assist programmes to reduce poverty

**DAKAR, March 14** – Brunei Darussalam will continue to assist programmes which are hoped to reduce poverty. The Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) is an immediate aspect which can help member countries to achieve economic and social development.

This was stated by His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at a closed door deliberations at the 11<sup>th</sup> Islamic Conference held in Dakar, Republic of Senegal on March 13.

He added that the people of Brunei Darussalam have been truly encouraged by the vision of the

programmes in the 10-year OIC Action Plans; a united *ummah* dealing with determination and purpose, the many complex challenges facing us all in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

At the 11<sup>th</sup> OIC, the sovereign attended the Opening Session of the 11<sup>th</sup> Session of the Islamic Summit Conference together with other OIC Heads of State and Government.

He also held separate bilateral meetings on March 13 with His Excellency Abdoulaye Wade, the President of the Republic of Senegal and His Excellency Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed, the Chief Advisor (Prime Minister) of the Caretaker Government of Bangladesh. His

Majesty exchanged views with both leaders on ways to further strengthen the bilateral relations in various field of cooperation; and also discussed regional and international issues concerning the Islamic *ummah*.

His Majesty then attended the second day of the summit held at the Hotel Meridien le President Dakar. At the closing session, the summit approved a Communiqué which reiterated the commitment of member countries to implement the OIC 10-year Plan of Action adopted by the heads of state and government during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Extraordinary Summit of Islamic Conference in Makkah Al-Mukarramah 2005.

## Hard work to develop nation needed



PHOTO: HAJI MASMALEH HAJI MOHD ALI

Hard work and determination are essential for a developing nation

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 20** – Hard work is needed to develop the nation. Everyone, particularly the young generation as *tunas bangsa* must be diligent and determined as they are the axis to big beneficial changes. For this, they must be religious, moral and knowledgeable. With these elements, it will enable the youth to become strong, brave and skilled.

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam said these in his *titah* (royal speech) to commemorate the birthday of Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wassalam (1429 Hijrah).

The sovereign also said that we need a young generation who are strong, not those who are weak

physically and spiritually. Hence, in conjunction of commemorating the birthday of Prophet Muhammad, His Majesty reminded all members of the society, particularly the young generation, to continuously protect the quality of life by following and obeying all of the teachings brought by the Prophet.

The birthday of Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wassalam falls every 12 Rabiulawal of the Islamic calendar and it is celebrated nationwide with mass gatherings at various focal points in each district. A fortnight prior to the 12 Rabiulawal, *dikir* and *selawat* were held at all mosques, *suraus* (worshipping halls) and prayer rooms.

## RBAF 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion receive royal visit

**LUMUT, March 27** –The Royal Brunei Armed Forces' (RBAF) 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion received a visit from its Minister and Supreme Commander, His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam.

His Majesty's visit began with an inspection of the guard-of-honour comprising of 96 personnel from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion.

During this visit, His Majesty took a closer look at Company C barrack that houses the administration office and living quarters of the soldiers.

The Supreme Commander also toured around the cookhouse, *surau* (worshipping hall) of Lumut Camp, Quartermaster office, sports complex, Married Quarters, the Medical Health Centre and the Officers' Mess.

The battalion has been relocated to Lumut of the Belait District on June 21, 2007 from its original base in Penanjong Garrison in the Tutong District.



Inspecting items to be used.

PHOTO: HERNIE SUJANA HAJI OTHMAN

## Royalty attend Chinese New Year celebration



PHOTO: HAJI SAHRIN HAJI ASMAT

Their Majesties and members of royal family attending the Chinese New Year Celebration hosted by the Chinese community in Brunei.

## Royalty attend Chinese New Year celebration

**BERAKAS, February 16** – His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Negara Brunei Darussalam attended a Chinese New Year celebration hosted by the Chinese community held at the International Convention Centre.

Accompanying His Majesty to the annual event were Her Majesty Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha; His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah and Her

Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah; His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah and Her Royal Highness Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Zariah; His Royal Highness Prince Haji Sufri Bolkiah and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen.

Thousands of people from the Chinese community attended the event. The highlight of the ceremony

was the spectacular acrobatic performances by a specially invited troupe from Shanghai, China. The performance was divided into four segments of acrobatic moves. In addition, there were also traditional Chinese cultural dances from students of Chung Hwa Middle School from the capital and Chung Hua School of Kuala Belait.

## Receptions to celebrate His Royal Highness' birthday anniversary

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 18** – His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office attended a reception in conjunction with His Royal Highness' 34<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. His Royal Highness was accompanied by Her

Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik at a reception hosted by senior officers and officers of the Royal Brunei Police Force on February 17.

On February 18, Their Royal Highnesses also attended a high-tea

reception in conjunction with His Royal Highness' 34<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration organised by the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF).

The reception presented by RBAF took place at the Officers' Mess in Penanjong Garrison.

## Her Majesty graces event to celebrate Maulidur Rasul

**BERAKAS, March 29** - Her Majesty Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha attended a Special Convention for Women to mark the Maulidur Rasul celebration for the year 1429 Hijrah. The event was held at the International Convention Centre in Berakas.

Also present were Her Royal Highness Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Zariah, Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Hafizah Sururul Bulqiah,

Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Amal Umi Kalthum Al-Islam and Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Noor Ehsani.

The ceremony also featured a special forum entitled "Cabaran keluarga dalam Membentuk Tunas Bangsa Berakhlak Al-Quran" or "Family Challenges in Shaping the Nation's Youth with the morals of Al-Quran".

The highlight of the celebration was

the announcement of the recipients for the Anugerah Bakti Hijrah Khas Wanita.

The awards were given to selected females in appreciation for their active involvement and contribution to the society, particularly in the religious aspect, since the Islamic year of 1423 Hijrah (1992). Her Majesty then consented to present the awards to the two selected recipients.

## Construction of Methanol Plant commences

**MUKIM LIANG, February 11** – The construction of the first ever methanol plant in this country has begun with a foundation laying ceremony. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office consented to lay the foundation at the Sungai Liang Industrial park site.

This plant will be operated by Brunei Methanol Company (BMC) with cooperation from two Japanese companies – Mitsubishi Gas Chemical Company and ITOCHU Corporation who hold 50 per cent of the total shareholders, 25 per cent from Petroleum Brunei

and 25 per cent from the first industry that will set up their operation at this site.

The construction of this world-class methanol plant is another milestone in Brunei's history where it is predicted to produce an estimated 850,000 tonnes metric of methanol annually. The \$400 million plant is expected to produce 2,500 tonnes metric of methanol per day besides providing a broader scope of business opportunities for existing local small-and medium-enterprises (SMEs), create spin-off industries and generate employment opportunities for locals.

This plant is expected to start its commercial operation in the first quarter of 2010.



His Royal Highness the Crown Prince lays the foundation stone of Brunei's first methanol plant.

PHOTO: MASRI OSMAN

## Crown Prince on a working visit



His Royal Highness inspecting the guard-of-honour.

**RIMBA, March 11** – His Royal Highness Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and General of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces conducted a working visit to the Royal Brunei Air Force based in Rimba, Gadong.

This was the second working visit made by His Royal Highness after a visit to the Royal Brunei Navy early this year.

At this working visit, His Royal Highness observed closely the daily operations of the Royal Brunei Air Force; and toured around the Air Operations Centre, Current OPS room, Future OPS room and the Flight Coordination Centre. His Royal Highness was also given a short tour of the air base and was shown some of the new infrastructure that had been built.

His Royal Highness also boarded a Blackhawk to fly to Bukit Agok Firing Range in the Tutong District. Here, His Royal Highness witnessed a live-firing of the Mistral air defence missile system and various aerial displays of Multi Rope Absell and Jungle Line Re-supply of the Operations Wing

PHOTO: MASRI OSMAN

## Brunei hosts 6<sup>th</sup> Borneo Global Issues Conference

**BERAKAS, March 1** – One of the main issues we face now is how to generate development that can accommodate human life and at the same time, eases the pressure faced by natural resources and the environment.

This was said by Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Sarah at the official opening of the Sixth Borneo Global Issues Conference organised by the International School Brunei (ISB).

Earlier on, Her Royal Highness said that as the population increase, the need for water will be further emphasised as an essential resource from the earth; and similar development will be seen for other resources – be it food,

accommodation or land resources.

The Borneo Global Issues Conference is a three-day, student run Model United Nations (MUN) conference that brings together secondary school pupils from around the region to discuss major global concerns of the day. Participants will debate key issues and produce resolutions on these issues in a mock United Nations simulation.

The objective of the conference is to encourage international cooperation, understanding and world citizenship among young adults at a time of increasing globalisation.

This year's theme focused on "Water" as a valuable resource. This year's conference saw a participation of nearly 300 students from 20 schools that include Malaysia, Thailand, Republic of Indonesia, Republic of Singapore, and the United Kingdom.



Her Royal Highness highlights the important of youth involvement in dealing with global issues in her sabda.

PHOTO: HALIM HAJI SULAIMAN

## Royalty at Charity Concert

**JERUDONG, February 2** - Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah graced the "Institute of Medicine Charity Evening 2008 for SMARTER Brunei" at the Jerudong Park Amphitheatre.

The event which was themed "Reach Out, Touch a Heart", was organised by the students of UBD's Institute of Medicine in collaboration with PhuturePhase Productions.

At the event, Her Royal Highness presented certificates of appreciation to sponsors of the event such as Brunei Press, b.mobile and Cool Tones.

SMARTER's children who suffer from autism stole the hearts of the audience when they performed onstage and recited a poem entitled "Please Don't Shut Me Out Just Because I Have Autism".



## Enhance knowledge and skills to be successful in career

**BERAKAS, March 8** – Women should be more positive and prepared, and smart in identifying and choosing career choices based on knowledge and skills. It is essential that for women to be successful in their careers to enhance their knowledge in various fields including the skills needed in the career.

These were highlighted by Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Rashidah Sa'adatul Bolkiah at the official opening of the 'Women and Career Conference' held at the International Convention Centre.

According to Her Royal Highness, Brunei Darussalam became a member of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women on May

24, 2006. This Convention gives serious attention to several fundamental issues including the right for women to work, obtain work and equal work opportunities like men.

The one-day 'Careered Women for the Country's Development' seminar was organised by the Women Graduates Association of Brunei Darussalam (Persatuan Siswazah Wanita Negara Brunei Darussalam) with cooperation from the Da'wah Islamiah Centre, Ministry of Religious Affairs. The conference was attended by more than 500 people comprising of civil servants, members of women's association, academic institutions, private sector, and individuals.



**Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Rashidah Sa'adatul Bolkiah at the opening of Women and Career Conference.**

PHOTO: MOHD. ZUL-IZZI HAJI DURAMAN

## HM's message on Commonwealth Day

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 10** – His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in his *titah* (royal speech) stressed that to sustain human security and economic well-being, we must ensure that the environment is well protected.

According to the monarch, this can only be done if we work together and do all we can to help sustain a healthy and productive environment in our own countries and regions and throughout the world.

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam stressed the matter in his Commonwealth Day's messages.

Brunei Darussalam became the member of Commonwealth Organization after it achieved

independence on January 1, 1984.

His Majesty said that the adverse climate change is the result of human activity. The rise in sea-levels threatens to inundate low-lying island nations and coastal areas. Changes in rainfall distribution and extreme temperature variations similarly threaten agriculture and future supplies of food. They thus intensify the problems of poverty and hunger that are sadly faced by many of our fellow Commonwealth citizens. These threats therefore affect us all. This is why we have a collective responsibility for the environment, both as individual nations and as international partners.

Today, we celebrate Commonwealth Day in the spirit of friendship that we in Brunei Darussalam have shared with our fellow members

for the past 24 years.

The theme of this year's Commonwealth Day, "The Environment, Our Future", is therefore extremely important.

In encouraging its member states to discharge this responsibility well, The Commonwealth has always committed itself to improving the quality of life for the people it represents and this year's theme stresses the need to ensure that our future generations will enjoy healthy, safe, clean and productive lives.

For many years, this has been the great concern of the Commonwealth and our fellow members. Although we are at different stages of development, we all face similar challenges and these can only be met successfully, if we work together.

Brunei Darussalam thus joins its fellow members in reaffirming this commitment and the critical responsibilities it demands of us all.

## iCentre to help Bruneians explore business opportunity

**BERAKAS, March 26** - His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade in his *sabda* said the iCentre's central role is to help the people in the country to explore opportunities and forge success through the facilities provided and advice that is world standard.

His Royal Highness stated the matter at the official opening of Brunei's first Info-Communications incubator, iCentre at Anggerek Desa.

"It's a very special project and it's for a very special group of people in giving great ideas and lots of courage who want to prove themselves in the business world," said His Royal Highness.

His Royal Highness said that there is nothing small or medium about Small and Medium Enterprise but they are an important part of our country's future and admire their determination and hard work.

"I know that they can't be left to work alone. They must be helped in the best possible way. They don't need government protection and they don't need words and speeches. They need facilities. They need knowledge. They need research and they need world class advice, both from within our country, and from high-level professionals overseas," said His Royal Highness.

The launching ceremony was also attended by Yang Amat Mulia Pg. Anak Mansurah Izzul Bolkiah.

The iCentre is equipped with fully wired plug and play work spaces which can accommodate up to 16 full-time and five virtual small companies at one time. It also provides common office facilities including meeting rooms, a boardroom, an auditorium, as well as a cafeteria.

## Tafsir Darussalam publish in phases

**BERAKAS, February 13** – The publication of Tafsir Darussalam and Huraian Tafsir Darussalam is a 10-year project and will be published in phases.

The Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs, Pehin Udana Khatib Dato Paduka Seri Setia Ustaz Haji Badaruddin, who is also the Deputy Chairman of the Executive Committee for the publication of Tafsir Darussalam stated the matter at the first meeting of the panels to discuss the current status of the project held at the Islamic Da'wah Centre in Kampong Pulaie.

Tafsir Darussalam is scheduled for publication in July this year in conjunction with His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam's 62<sup>nd</sup> birthday anniversary.

The decision to publish Tafsir Darussalam and Huraian Tafsir Darussalam, another related project, was made after His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam's call for the Ministry of Religious Affairs to prepare Brunei's version of the interpretation of the Quranic verses.

# SERUSOP

For this edition, In Brunei will bring you to Kampung Serusop, one of the villages under Mukim Berakas 'A'. With an area of 1.8788 km<sup>2</sup>, the village is a home for more than 2,300 people. The village is only a five-minute drive from Brunei International Airport and about 10 to 15 minutes from the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan.

Kampung Serusop is one of the fast growing villages in Mukim Berakas 'A'. From a residential area, Kampung Serusop had become one of the booming business sites in the country. Like other villages in the nation, Kampung Serusop received amenities like water and electricity, telephone lines and well-built roads.

The village is also equipped with a mosque (Mohammad Bolkiah Mosque), four schools including religious and private schools, technical college and government offices. Commercial buildings that hosts various types of services and business establishments are also available.

Looking back to the 1970's, the village is one of the centres for education as it hosted three prominent educational institutions, namely Berakas Secondary School, Paduka Seri Begawan Sultan Science College and Sultan Saiful Rijal Technical College (MTSSR). All of these institutions still exist until now.

The buildings of Berakas Secondary School in its early establishment were used as the Brunei Teachers' Training College. Later in 1971, Berakas English School was established with 318 students enrolled for Form One classes. In 1985, the school was renamed as Berakas Secondary School.

During the olden days, the school buildings were separated into two sites; Site A and Site B. Classes for different levels and also administration blocks were divided into these two sites.



Mohammad Bolkiah Mosque.

But under the Brunei's Fifth National Development Plan (1986-1990), the construction of more blocks at Site B was done.

In 1991, the school building blocks were all gathered at one compound. At the moment, besides classes and admin blocks, Berakas Secondary School is also completed with a multi-purpose hall, running track and football field. An overhead bridge was also provided for the safety of the students commuting to the opposite side of the road.

While for the Sultan Saiful Rijal Technical College (Maktab Teknik Sultan Saiful Rijal - MTSSR), the

institution was only established in 1985 as a result of a merger between two institutions. The institutions were Sekolah Bangunan Sultan Saiful Rijal (Sultan Saiful Rijal School Building) which opened in 1970 and Pusat Latihan Teknikal Brunei (Brunei Technical Training Centre) in 1977.

Now, the technical college is a full-fledged premier technical institution offering a wide range of courses in vocational and technical fields. Currently, it offers 13 National Diploma courses and four Pre-National Diploma courses. MTSSSR also offers part-time courses.

Another educational institution



Paduka Seri Begawan Sultan Science College.

Sultan Saiful Rijal Technical College.

PHOTOS: HAJI ARIFFIN MOHD. NOOR



Well-built roads connecting Serusop to the other areas.

is the Paduka Seri Begawan Sultan Science College (Maktab Sains Paduka Seri Begawan Sultan – MSPSBS) or locally known as MS. Established in 1969, the college is the only science school in the country. This school host classes for Secondary One to Upper Sixth students.

In the mid 1990's, MS was moved temporarily to Kampung Rimba as the school buildings were undergoing renovation. After the renovation was completed, the school moved back to the existing campus in Kampung

Serusop. The college is also equipped with a student hostel.

In order to complete the local educational system which includes religious education, the government provided one religious school at the village. The Pengiran Anak Puteri Mutawakillah Hayatul Bolkiah Religious School was opened in mid 80's and runs in two sessions; morning and afternoon.

By early 2000, commercial buildings were built in phases at one of the areas at the village. Now, blocks of

businesses stand closely next to each other. The area never fails to attract customers as it serves various form of businesses ranging from financial institutions, private telecommunication companies, restaurants and fast food outlets, bakeries, departmental stores, bookstores, textile shops, boutiques and saloons.

Among the attractions for this commercial area are the wide range of dining places. Customers can choose from fried or grilled chicken from fast food outlets; local dishes, and also Asian cuisines at reasonable prices.

This commercial area is also a favourite for ladies as many textile shops are available here.

The rise of commercial establishments hopes to bring advantages like job opportunities to the people especially the residents of the village.

In the future, Kampung Serusop is expected to be not only a comfortable residential area but also a centre for excellent education and business.



Blocks of businesses offering various products and services.



## Did you know that...

The Ministry of Defence was established in January 1984. The establishment marked the beginning of the nation to be responsible in handling its own defence matters.

The Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) was formed on May 31, 1961 with the named Askar Melayu Brunei (Brunei Malay Regiment). On May 31, 1965, the regiment was honoured with the royal title 'Diraja' and become Askar Melayu Diraja Brunei (Royal Brunei Malay Regiment). On April 1, 1984, Askar Melayu Diraja Brunei (Royal Brunei Malay Regiment) was renamed as Angkatan Bersenjata Diraja Brunei (Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF).

In 1987, the Ministry was divided into civilian and military. The battalion of the Gurkha Reserve Unit, formerly under British Government was placed under the Brunei Ministry of Defence, through a defence pact signed between Brunei and British Government.

Later in September 17, 1991; RBAF re-organised its structure and divided into Royal Brunei Land Force, Royal Brunei Navy, Royal Brunei Air Force, Royal Brunei Services Force, and Royal Brunei Armed Forces Training Centre.

In order to assist the flow of the Ministry and RBAF, nine directorates are set up; that is Operation, Intelligence, Personnel, Logistic, Development and Work Services, Finance and Acquisition, Administration and Manpower, Defence Policy and Force Capability Development.

Currently, the Ministry is lead by His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam as the Minister. His Majesty himself is also the Supreme Commander of Royal Brunei Armed Forces.

On March 25, 2004; His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah was conferred with the rank General of the RBAF by His Majesty.

More information on the Office is available at <http://www.mindef.gov.bn>.

## >> BRUNEI IN BRIEF

- Official name is Negara Brunei Darussalam.
- Capital is Bandar Seri Begawan.
- It is located on the north-west of Borneo Island in Southeast Asia.
- Land size is 5765 sq. km
- Population is estimated at 390,000 people (2007)
- It is divided into four districts – Brunei Muara, Tutong, Kuala Belait and Temburong.
- Malay is the official language but English is widely spoken.
- Islam is the official religion and it allows other religions to be practiced.
- National carrier is Royal Brunei Airlines.
- It has an equatorial climate, a uniform temperature, high humidity and heavy rainfall.

**Public Warning:** The trafficking of controlled drugs carries the death penalty in Brunei Darussalam

## >> HOW TO GET TO BRUNEI DARUSSALAM?

### There are a number of ways to reach Brunei.

- By air - Brunei's national carrier, Royal Brunei Airlines travels to more than 20 destinations around the world. The airline also has worldwide office for you to book return flights to Brunei (to know the nearest RBA offices at your place, please log on [www.bruneiair.com](http://www.bruneiair.com))

International airlines such as Singapore Airlines, Malaysia Airlines and Thai Airways also fly frequently to Brunei. Beginning July 2006, Air Asia, Malaysia's lowest airfare carrier also has direct flights from Kuala Lumpur to Brunei.

Arrival by plane would land you to Brunei International Airport (BWN), the sole airport in the nation.

- For those who enjoy journey by sea, you can reach Brunei by boat or ferry. The main ferry terminal in Brunei is the Serasa Ferry Terminal at Muara. You can catch a ferry from Labuan, Sabah or Lawas and Sundar, both in Sarawak, a state of the neighbouring country, Malaysia. Another option is via a boat from Limbang, Sarawak which will arrive at the jetty around Jalan Residency area in the Capital.
- You would have two options of entry point to Brunei by land transport. You can enter through the Sungai Tujoh Immigration Control Post in Belait District or the Kuala Lurah Immigration Control Post in Brunei Muara District. The Sungai Tujoh Immigration Control Post in Belait is the entry point for those from Miri, Sarawak. While the Kuala Lurah Immigration Control Post is the entrance for those coming from Limbang, Sarawak; Kota Kinabalu; and Kalimantan.

# Chronicle of Islamic Finance in Brunei Darussalam

The nation marked its first milestone in Islamic finance with the establishment of Tabung Amanah Islam Brunei –TAIB (Brunei Islamic Trust Fund) in 1991. The establishment was a response to His Majesty's titah (royal speech) at the Majlis Ugama Islam Brunei - MUIB (Brunei Islamic Religious Council) meeting on September 1990, which touched on the Islamic financial system and the popularity of Islamic Banking. In the titah, the monarch expressed view that it was a must for each country to have and Brunei was not excluded.

Two years later, in 1993 another Islamic Bank was introduced. The bank was Bank Islam Brunei – IBB (Islamic Bank of Brunei) which was formerly known as International Bank of Brunei Berhad. Within the same year, two takaful (Islamic insurance) companies were also set up; namely Takaful IBB Berhad and Takaful TAIB Berhad.

In 2000, Brunei had its third Islamic Bank, a conversion of the International Development Bank of Brunei Berhad to Bank Pembangunan Islam Brunei – IDBB (Brunei Islamic Development Bank). The country also launched the Brunei International Financial Centre (BIFC) as an effort to create Brunei as a regional financial hub including for Syari'ah based finance.

A book on Isu-Isu Kewangan (Financial Issues) was also published in this year in conjunction with The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Meeting in Brunei Darussalam. The book was published jointly by the State Mufti Office and IBB.

In order to expand the scope of Islamic Finance in the country, in 2001 the Universiti of Brunei Darussalam (UBD) through its Business Management Division, Faculty of Business, Economic and Policies Studies introduced a minor program on Islamic Banking and Finance.

Brunei Darussalam showed its commitment by becoming one of the sponsors for the Islamic Finance Service Board (IFSB), the international standard-setting organization on global Islamic finance in 2002.

This year also witnessed Brunei's participation into the International Islamic Financial Market (IIFM), the institution that focuses on the development of International Islamic finance markets. The institution is based in Bahrain.

The third takaful (Islamic insurance) was introduced in 2003 known as Takaful IDBB (Takaful Bank



One of Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam (BIBD) branch located at Kiulap commercial area.

Pembangunan Islam Brunei Berhad).

In 2004, the Brunei Islamic Development Bank (IDBB) launched its first Syariah compliant Mastercard. The card was recognised by more than 32 million businesses worldwide. The card is also interest-free.

The nation through BIFC grants an Islamic banking license to the Commerce International Merchant Bank (CIMB) Malaysia and the Overseas Chinese Banking Corporation (OCBC) Singapore. Both licenses were granted in 2005.

On October 8, Brunei's first Syariah compliant co-branded card was launched. The co-branded card was a collaboration between Mastercard International, by IDBB Card and Mulaut Abattoir Sdn Bhd (MASB). Mulaut Abattoir is one of the prominent companies selling meat and poultry needs.

As an effort to strengthen the Syari'ah frameworks and to enhance the credibility of the Islamic finance sector particularly in the aspect of Syari'ah Governance; in 2006 Brunei Darussalam formed the Majlis Pengawasan Syari'ah Dalam Kewangan (Syari'ah Financial Supervisory Council). Also announced was the establishment of the Syari'ah Financial Supervisory Order 2006.

Another event took place this year; on January 31, two Islamic banks, IBB and IDBB were merged. The bank is now known as Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam - BIBD (Islamic Bank of Brunei Darussalam Berhad). The merger hopes to provide more contributions towards enhancing the country's economy particularly in the sector of Islamic finance and banking.

One of the highlights in Brunei Islamic finance was the introduction of Short-term Sukuk Al-Ijarah on March 14. The issuance of the Sukuk

Al-Ijarah was the product of strong collaboration between the Brunei Government through the Ministry of Finance and the private sector.

Among the main objectives of the issuance of the Sukuk was to provide Islamic investment instruments to the public financial institutions and also as early steps in developing the nation's capital market. The issuance of the Sukuk Al-Ijarah will also contribute to the development of the nation's Islamic finance besides strengthening Brunei Darussalam's monetary policy.

The official establishment of the Centre of Islamic Banking, Finance and Management (CIFBM) at UBD also took place this year. The Centre also offered course modules and training on Islamic Finance; and Masters of Islamic Banking and Finance programme.

Currently more financial products and schemes based on Islamic finance have been introduced to the market by Islamic finance institutions in the country.



The Islamic banks actively promote their products through roadshows.

## Brunei Forum introduce country as investment and tourist destination

**SINGAPORE, February 20** – Political stability, a harmony and peaceful nation, high literacy rate, an abundance of unique natural environment and a quality education system are among those highlighted in the bid to introduce the nation as an investment and tourist destination at the Brunei Forum.

These were discussed at the Brunei Forum held from February 19-20 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel. The event was co-organised between the Brunei Economic Development Board (BEDB) of Brunei Darussalam and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) of Singapore.

Present to officially open the forum was His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Among the objectives of the Brunei Forum besides introducing Brunei Darussalam as a country worth investing and visiting, it also creates investment opportunities and makes cooperation between Brunei Darussalam and Singapore much easier. The forum also aimed to give opportunities for an exchange of experience and sharing of knowledge.

Five papers were presented by high ranking officials from the sultanate. The first day saw two presentations - Acting Chairman of BEDB, Dato Paduka Timothy Ong who discussed

on "Brunei's Changing Economic Landscape: New Opportunities for Business"; and "Brunei at the Heart of Borneo: What it means for ecotourism, the region and the world" presented by the Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, Dato Paduka Awang Haji Hamdilah.

The second day saw three presentations - "Developing Human Resources for the Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" by the Minister of Education, Pehin Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Abdul Rahman; "Managing Energy Resources in a Energy Scarce World" by the Minister of Energy at the Prime Minister's Office, Pehin Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Yahya; while the third paper was presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade II, Pehin Dato Seri Setia Awang Lim Jock Seng who discussed Brunei Darussalam's position in ASEAN.



His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade and His Excellency Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary-General of ASEAN.

## ASEAN Foreign Ministers's Retreat

**SINGAPORE, February 20** - His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade attended the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Working Lunch and Retreat at Sentosa, Singapore.

During the Retreat, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers discussed international and regional affairs, particularly the follow-up work on the ASEAN Charter.



Group photo of ASEAN Foreign Minister (photo right).

## Ministers attends receptions

The Second Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Pehin Dato Seri Setia Awang Lim Jock Seng and the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, His Excellency Abolfazl Khazaei Torshizi at a reception to celebrate the 29<sup>th</sup> Independence Day of Islamic Republic of Iran held at the International Convention Centre in Berakas on February 11.

While the Minister of Development, Pehin Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdullah and wife and the Pakistani High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam, His Excellency Major General (Rtd) Syed Haidar Jawed and wife attended a reception to mark Pakistan's 68<sup>th</sup> National Day on March 23 at the International Convention Centre in Berakas.

## Honorary Wing for Australia's Air Force Chief

**RIMBA, February 15** – The Chief-of-Air Force for the Royal Australian Air Force, Air Marshal Geoff Shepherd received the Royal Brunei Air Force Honorary Pilot Wing.

The award was conferred by His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei in appreciation and recognition of his contribution in enhancing cooperation between the Royal Australian Air Force and the Royal Brunei Air Force.

The presentation of the award was held at the Rimba Air Force Base.

The award was presented by Pehin Dato Lailaraja Major General Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi, the Commander of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces.

Air Marshal Geoff Shepherd was in the sultanate for an official visit from February 14 to 16.



PHOTO: AMPLIAN HAJI MAHMUD AMPLIAN HAJI TENGAH

The Second Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Pehin Dato Seri Setia Awang Lim Jock Seng and Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, His Excellency Abolfazl Khazaei Torshizi.



PHOTO: HAJI SAHRIN HAJI ASMAT

Minister of Development, Pehin Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdullah and High Commissioner of Pakistan, His Excellency Major General (Rtd) Syed Haidar Jawed.

## Symposium zooms in on immunisations

**TUNGKU, March 2** - The 6<sup>th</sup> National Perinatal Symposium was launched by the Minister of Health, Pehin Orang Kaya Indera Pahlawan Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Suyoi bin Haji Osman at the Chancellor Hall, Universiti Brunei Darussalam.

The one-day event, themed "Immunisations - Insurance for Mother and Baby", is a follow-up to the previous event on infection in the perinatal period.

The minister said, "In Brunei Darussalam, our interventions, which include family health, disease prevention and control, environmental sanitation and health education programmes, have resulted in good coverage of immunisation for children."

He also said, "The first vaccine given in Brunei was BCG for TB in 1951. Brunei Darussalam's Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) was first introduced in 1957, and since then nine other vaccines have been introduced, with the latest being the



Hib vaccine in 2002.

"Immunisation is also no longer voluntary. With the Infectious Disease Order 2003, immunisation is now mandatory for all children in Brunei Darussalam as laid down in Section 47 for the 4th Schedule of the Order."

The minister also noted that over the years, immunisation coverage in the country has consistently been well above 95 per cent.

The country was declared polio-free by the World Health Organisation

in 2000.

The minister highlighted that in September 2005, "the Regional Committee for the western pacific endorsed EPI goals, which include elimination of measles by 2012. As a member state, Brunei Darussalam is fully committed to achieving this goal, and between 2002 and 2006, there were 82 notified measles cases, 51 per cent of which occurred in children aged until four, and 76 per cent in children aged 14 and below".

## RBPF's members must enhance dedication through Strategic Planning

**GADONG, February 12** - All members of Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF) were urged to show their earnestness and dedication as policy, planning and initiatives' implementers through the Strategic Planning where it becomes the team's route to generate modernisation in new and challenging police force's environment.

This can only be fully achieved when all members of RBPF are able to show integrity and professionalism in implementing their task and responsibility with discipline and high values.

The Police Commissioner Pehin Dato Paduka Seri Awang Zainuddin stated the matters at a launching ceremony for RBPF Strategic Planning book held at the Rizqun International Hotel.

He added that in line with the launching of the strategic book and to ensure that all his officers fully understand the strategies laid out for them, several roadshows will be organised and implemented throughout all four districts and branches in the RBPF.

This will hopefully present a more focused explanation especially towards the initiatives and goals that the police force aim to achieve within the next 10 years.

## Prisons Department's 54<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 1** - The Prisons Department celebrated its 54<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its establishment with the opening of the Prison Gallery building at Jerudong Prison, by Minister of Home Affairs, Pehin Orang Kaya Johan Pahlawan Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Adanan.

The Prisons Department is responsible for the management and administration of prisons in Brunei. The department carries the vision to be an excellent rehabilitation institution while its mission is to protect society with secure, humane custody and ideal rehabilitation of offenders to become useful and responsible members of society.

Initially established on March 1, 1954, after being separated from the Royal Brunei Police Force, the department was administered by the British Assistant Resident and its staff of police personnel. On December 30, 1959, a local officer of the rank Superintendent was appointed as the Head of Department and the staff were converted to prison officers.

Today, the Prisons Department comprises of three main institutions directly responsible towards correctional management and rehabilitation centres at the Jerudong Male Prison, Maraburong Prison and the Jerudong Female Prison.

Towards achieving the goal of lowest possible recidivism, the department has planned and implemented effective and appropriate detention measures and rehabilitation programmes to create an excellent correctional system.

## Brunei and Oman sign pact on avoidance of double taxation

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 25** - The Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and the Government of the Sultanate of Oman have signed the Agreement on the Avoidance of Double Taxation in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman on February 25.

Signing on behalf of the Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was

Pehin Dato Seri Setia Lim Jock Seng, Second Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, while His Excellency Ahmed bin Abdul Nabi Macki, Minister of National Economy, Sultanate of Oman signed on behalf of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman.

The signing ceremony was witnessed by His Excellency Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Adam bin Haji Ahmad, Ambassador of Brunei

Darussalam to the Sultanate of Oman.

The signing of the agreement marked another milestone in the development of bilateral relations between both countries which forged diplomatic relations on March 24, 1984. The two countries have also signed the Agreement on the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Foreign Investment in 1998.

## Crown Prince CIPTA Award 2009 launched

PHOTO: MOHD. ZUL-IZZI HAJI DURAVAN



**TUNGKU, March 10** - The third Crown Prince CIPTA Award 2009 Competition was launched by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, Dato Paduka Haji Mohd. Hamid bin Haji Mohd. Jaafar at the Institut Teknologi Brunei (ITB), in Tungku, Gadong.

CIPTA, which stands for Creative, Innovative Products and Technological Advancements, is a competition that is open to the general public, including locals, permanent residents and foreign residents, as well as staff members and students of schools and technical or higher learning institutions from both the government and private sectors.

The objectives of CIPTA are to; inspire youth and public to develop creative products, processes or technology for national aspirations; encourage inventions and innovations in Brunei Darussalam; award and recognise creative talents in the country; promote the development of manufacturing processes and technological products in Brunei Darussalam.

The competition has two categories; category 1 is for new products, processes or technologies, while category 2 is for creative modifications to any existing inventions or processes that improve or enhance their function or quality.

For more information and the competition's application form, log onto [www.itb.edu.bn/cipta2009/default.asp](http://www.itb.edu.bn/cipta2009/default.asp). The closing date for submissions is October 15, 2008.

## Agriculture Department signs pact with SQW Consulting United Kingdom

**BERAKAS, March 10** - The Department of Agriculture, under the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, signed an agreement on the Agro Technology Park with SQW Consulting of the United Kingdom at the Agriculture Department headquarters.

Signing on behalf of the Department of Agriculture was Acting Senior Special Duties Officer, Pengiran Hajah Rosidah bte Pengiran Haji Metussin, while SQW Consulting was represented by its director, Dr Kathrin Peters.

The 263-hectare Agro Technology Park located in Tungku is one of the government's initiatives to diversify its economy. Upon completion, the park will create an exceptionally high-quality landscaped environment for international executives and their staff.

There will be opportunities for occupants to have preferential access to knowledge and technological services associated with Brunei Halal Brand.

The Brunei Halal Brand is committed to the obligation of "Fardhu Kifayah", with an effort to increase the number of halal food in the market amid the emergence of a variety of products containing non-halal ingredients.

The park will also attract research and innovative technological applications with a particular focus on science based activities in agriculture, fisheries, and forestry.

One of the first anchor developments will be a Halal Science Centre, a research institute designed to become one of the main global hubs of excellence in halal-related activities.

## Sweden explore business opportunities in Brunei

**JERUDONG, March 10** - Sweden will explore investment opportunities and cooperation in the areas of Information Communication Technology, health, banking, maritime, defence and academics.

These was stated by the Swedish Ambassador to Brunei Darussalam and Singapore, His Excellency Par Ahlberger in the press conference held at Empire Hotel and Country Club.

The Swedish Ambassador who led the Swedish business delegation were on a three-day visit to Brunei Darussalam to explore business opportunities in the country and at the same time to promote investment opportunities in Sweden. The delegates comprised of 24 representatives from 16 reputable organisations and companies in Sweden.

Commercial relations between Brunei and Sweden were strengthened last year with the establishment of a major Swedish investment in the Sultanate namely Ericsson Telecommunications Pte Ltd. Furthermore, areas of cooperation in the field of health have also been stepped up since Brunei's Minister of Health visited Sweden in May 2006.



PHOTO: HAJI MASWALEH HAJI MOHD. ALI

## Minister launches World Forest Day Celebration

**BERAKAS, March 21** - Brunei's forest conservation effort hit a high note with the successful implementation of its First Tree Felled Plant 4 policy to plant four new seedlings for every fallen tree.

The Minister of Industry and Primary Resources, Pehin Dato Seri Setia Dr Hj Ahmad Hj Jumat, launched the World Forest Day 2008 celebration at the Berakas Forest Reserve.

He disclosed that the programme implemented by the Forestry

Department since 1993 has covered around 7,300 hectares of tropical forest areas that have seen their timbers cut down.

He also highlighted that to ensure the project's continuation, the nation's youths or Tunas Bangsa, who will be the country's future leaders, should get early awareness and exposure, as well as having the proper knowledge, experience and expertise.

Also present at the launch were Dato Paduka Hj Hamdillah Hj Abd

Wahab, Deputy Minister of Industry and Primary Resources, Hj Saidin Salleh, Director of Forestry Department, and Pg Anak Hj Abd Wadood Bolkihah, Chairman of Sunshine Borneo Tours - a major sponsor of the Nature Camp 2008.

The theme for this year's World Forest Day is "Forests for Environment Stability" and some 100 students from 10 secondary schools took part in the camp.

PHOTOS: DK NOR ASRIAWATI PG. HAJI KAMARUDDIN



# CALAPA

*Calapa* is a traditional container commonly used to store items like *pinang* (areca nuts) and *sirih* (betel leaves), money and jewellery. However, *calapa* is most commonly associated as a container to keep *pinang* (areca nuts), *sirih* (betel leaves) and its associate items.

The origin of *calapa* is unknown but it is believed that *calapa* has a special role in Malay cultural ceremonies; like *Istiadat Bergelar* (conferment of title by His Majesty), wedding, and engagement. At these ceremonies, *sirih-pinang* (betel leaves and areca nuts) would be served to the



Areca nut  
(pinang)

oval, shell-shape and even bird-shape. But the most common shape is rectangular.

*Calapa* also always comes with a lid. Names are also given for the *calapa* based on its shapes. Some of the *calapa* are plain and some are engraved with motif design. Designs that are commonly engraved are plant motif like flowers and ferns, geometrical shapes, and animals.

The big-shape *calapa* is called '*calapa besar*' or '*indung calapa*' (the parent) which are divided into two sections or spaces. These two sections are used to store *calapa* associate items. The first section consists of four '*anak calapa*'; that is a smaller container and usually circle in shape. These *anak calapa* are made of brass or silver; and used to store areca nut, *kapur* (lime), *gambir* (gambier) and *sigup Brunei* (local cigar).

The second section is to store *kalakati* or *kacip* and betel leaves and sometimes *gucuh*. *Kalakati* or *kacip* is an instrument used to peel and cut the areca nuts. It is usually made of iron or brass. Some of the instruments have motif of bird or cock head.

as *gucuh* helps to reduce mincing process using the teeth.

There are also other traditional containers which serve a role as *calapa* such as *bakul* or *bayung pinang* (basket) and *tipa*. *Bakul* or *bayung pinang* (basket) is made of *mangkuang* leaves, rattan, or bamboo skin. Meanwhile, *tipa* is made of brass, silver and some are even gold-plated.

As both of *calapa* and *tipa* are made of same material and have similar functions, some think it is the same item where *tipa* is another name for *calapa*. However, *calapa* and *tipa* are different and can be differentiated by its physical shape. *Tipa* is rectangular in size and seldom comes with a lid but *calapa* have various shapes and always has a lid. In the olden days, *tipa* is commonly used by royalty. Other than *tipa*, *kaskol* and *langguai* were also used by royalty to store items.



Kalakati

Another reason for keeping *calapa* at home is because the associate items are useful. Betel leaves for instance besides eaten with

areca nuts, it can be used to stop bleeding nose, fight body odour, bad mouth breath and as part of an ingredient for post-natal treatment. The areca nut is believed to help to relieve toothache, while *kapur* can be used to reduce pain or swelling.

Nowadays, it is difficult to find people selling *calapa* and its associate items as the culture of eating *sirih-pinang* (betel leaves and areca nuts) has decreased over the years. Some modification has also been made to *calapa*, as some are now made using stainless steel rather than brass. This also happened to *anak calapa*, where materials are converted from brass into glasses.

guests.

It is believed that *calapa* was also used in other Asian countries where the culture of eating *sirih-pinang* (betel leaves and areca nuts) were practiced. *Calapa* is also known as *Tepak Sirih*; this name is commonly used in neighbouring country, Malaysia.

Long time ago, *calapa* was made from hard woods. But as the people had learnt to produce handicraft with metal/alloys, *calapa* is no longer made of woods. Most of the *calapa* nowadays are made of brass but there are also made of silver and some are gold plated.

There are various shapes of *calapa*; such as rectangular, circle, semi-circle,

While *gucuh* is an instrument used to mince the set of the betel leaves - areca nut (areca nut with *gambir* wrapped with betel leaves which smeared with *kapur*). *Gucuh* is divided into parts; the body (to store the set of the betel leaves - areca nut; and the *alu* or *batang gucuh* which are locally known as *penggucuh* - a stick with sharp end to grind the *sirih-pinang*).

The body of *gucuh* is usually made of bamboo, iron or brass while the *penggucuh* is made of wood for its top (to hold) and iron for the stick part. This instrument is usually used by an elderly who has loose teeth



Gucuh



PHOTOS: HAJAH ZAIANIT HAJI NOORKHAN

## Lauk Masin Masak Lemak (Salted fish with coconut milk).

### Ingredients:

- 600g of salted fish
- Three pieces of onion (cut into thin slices)
- Two table-spoons of chilli paste
- One teaspoon of shrimp paste
- 500 ml of coconut milk
- Five pieces of asam aur-aur (dry)

### Steps:

- Cut the salted fish into desired pieces, clean with water and drain.
- Put all the ingredients into the cooking pot. Bring to boil.

## 1730 receive State Honorary medals

**ISTANA NURUL IMAN, February 20** – A total of 1,730 people were awarded the State Honorary Medal in a span of three days as a part of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam's 61<sup>st</sup> birthday anniversary celebrations. The ceremony was held at Balai Singgahsana Indera Kenchana at the Istana Nurul Iman.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office awarded the recipients on behalf of His Majesty.

On February 16, the first day of the ceremony, a total of 505 recipients received their medals. On February 19, the second day of the ceremony, a total of 627 recipients received their medal. And on February 20, the third and last day, a total of 598 recipients received their medals.

The medals presented were Pingat Jasa Kebaktian (Meritorious Medals); Pingat Indah Kerja Baik (Medal of Service to the State) and Pingat Kerja Lama (Long Service Medals). Among the recipients were government servants from various ministries and departments, and members of uniformed establishments.

Among those present at the ceremony were the nobilities, state dignitaries, Cabinet Ministers, Members of Councils, and Deputy Ministers. Also present were foreign diplomats, Permanent Secretaries and heads of department.

## Longest pizza in Brunei

**GADONG, February 29** - The Rizqun International Hotel celebrated the 24<sup>th</sup> National Day by coming up with a 258-feet long pizza, said to be the longest pizza in Brunei.

The guest of honour, Dato Paduka Awg Hj Jemat bin Hj Ampal, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, launched the longest pizza, which weighed 572 kilos.

The event is not only to mark the record breaking event in Brunei Darussalam and celebrating the 24<sup>th</sup> National Day, it is also inviting the public to join, encourage and understand the hotel career. Twenty chefs put in 140 working hours of preparation to produce Brunei's longest pizza, which was sold at \$5 per square feet.

## Local medical student wins Asean Speaking Contest

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 29** - Jonathan Lim Kok Haw, a third year medical student at Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) won the Asean Youth Extemporaneous Speaking Competition by defeating nine contestants from Asean member countries. The competition was held at Dewan Raya Radio Televisyen Brunei.

The first runner-up was Jordan Kate Herrera Bakani from the Philippines and the second runner-up was Su Win Htike from Myanmar. Other contestants comprised of youth leaders of Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The prizes were presented by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Dewa Major General (Rtd) Dato Seri Pahlawan Awang Haji Mohammad.

The competition was a project of the National Anti-Drug Association of Brunei Darussalam (BASMIDA) and the National Youth Council of Singapore, which was funded by the Singapore-A lean Youth Fund.

The theme of this year's event was "Do Drugs Control Your Life? Your Community, No Place For Drugs", which was also the official theme of the United Nations International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (IDADAIT) last year.

## Girl Guides Association Observes Thinking Day

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 2** - The Girl Guides Association of Brunei Darussalam commemorated the 2008 Thinking Day with this year's theme, 'Think about Water' held at the Girl Guides Headquarters in Kampong Anggerek Desa.

Present as the guest of honour was Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Anak Hariisah Widadul Bolqiah.

The Thinking Day celebration, usually held on February 22, is aimed at providing awareness about the importance of water in daily lives and also to train oneself to be responsible and show concern for others.

To commemorate the day, stickers with advices and quotes such as 'Girls Worldwide Say Save Water', and 'Save Water' were pasted on a wall led by the guest of honour.

The guest of honour presented prizes to the winners of the poster-drawing and colouring contests.

## Brunei - Singapore exercise begins

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, March 4** - About 400 personnel from the Third Battalion of Royal Brunei Land Forces (RBLF) and 140 personnel from 3S1R Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) are engaged in a five-day 'Maju Bersama Exercise' which will be held until March 8.

The bilateral exercise between the RBLF and SAF is aimed at fostering good relations between the two armies and enhance skills, as well as professionalism of the soldiers.

The exercise focuses on brigade operation, which deploys one battalion for counter-insurgency warfare supported by the Royal Brunei Navy, Royal Brunei Air Force and (Royal Brunei Armed Forces) (Support Services).

The official opening ceremony for the 6<sup>th</sup> Exercise Maju Bersama was held yesterday morning at the Civic Centre Field in Temburong District.

The Exercise Maju Bersama was officiated by the Commander of the Royal Brunei Land Forces, Colonel Pengiran Dato Paduka Haji Rosli bin Pengiran Haji Chuchu.

## Telbru signs MoU with BEDB

**BERAKAS, March 21** - Telekom Brunei Berhad (TelBru) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Brunei Economic Development Board (BEDB) as part of its initiative to support the development of budding and talented ICT entrepreneurs in the country.

Signing on behalf Telbru was its Managing Director Song Kin Koi while Vincent Cheong represented the BEDB. The signing ceremony was held at the iCentre in Anggerek Desa

The ceremony was witnessed by Telbru Corporate Strategy General Manager, Julianah binti Haji Ali Ahmad and BEDB SME Development Unit Manager, Abdurahman bin Abdul Aziz.

## New e-Govt Centre established

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, 31 March** - A new government department called e-Government National Centre has been formed.

The formation of the new department is part of the continuous effort by the Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Dipertuan of Brunei Darussalam to upgrade the effectiveness in providing efficient and effective civil service in a dynamic environment through the use and enhancement of info-communication technology.

The main task of the national centre is to provide services in terms of operation, acquisition and human resource development in the field of info-communication technology (ICT) related to e-government initiatives, especially in civil service.

The centre, which began its operations on April 1 2008, is under the jurisdiction of the Prime Minister's Office.

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, February 23** – Brunei Darussalam marked its 24th National Day with a grand parade and colourful and vibrant field performances held at the Taman Haji Sir Muda Omar 'Ali Saifuddien in the capital.

The field performance was participated by more than 7,000 people comprising of the private and public sectors, including about 1,400 primary school students. While the grand parade involved more than 100 teams with 18,000 people ranging from students, uniformed personnel, civil servants and representatives from the private sector.

Present to witness the ceremony His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and other members of the royal family.

Prior to the mass gathering, a thanksgiving prayer was held at all mosques and *surau* (worshipping halls) throughout the nation with the Jame' 'Asr Hassanil Bolkiah as the focal point. This was held on the eve of the National Day.

Among those present to attend the mass prayer were His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince, His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik, His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen and other members of the royal family.

The religious gathering began with a mass *Maghrib* and *Sunat Hajat* prayers followed with the recital of *Surah Yassin* and thanksgiving prayer.

The National Day celebration began on February 11 with the hoisting of the giant national flag at the foyer of the Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Foundation Complex. The 24 feet by 12 feet giant flag was hoisted atop the 110-foot tall flagpole.

It is a custom for every citizens and residents of this country to raise the national flag in their respective houses and business premises around the country.

To further enhance the spirit of the National Day, a total of 30,000 mini national flags were distributed for free to vehicles at various designated areas nationwide. This has been an annual project which was first started

# Brunei Darussalam celebrates 24<sup>th</sup> National Day



The sovereign at the 24<sup>th</sup> National Day celebration.



His Majesty inspecting the guard-of-honour.

back in 2000. This received overwhelming response as various vehicles could be seen adorned with the mini national flag.

Various programmes and activities have been planned for the celebration. More details of the activities are available at [www.nationalday.org.bn](http://www.nationalday.org.bn).

