



# Increment in pension rate announced

**BERAKAS, September 9** - An increase in the rate of pension given under the Old Age and Disability Act was announced by His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in a *titah* to commemorate the revelation of the Al-Quran. The ceremony took place at the International Convention Centre.

His Majesty in the *titah* also said Al-Quran is a revelation from Allah and it contains many teachings and is rich in knowledge. Allah the Almighty said His Majesty, blessed Prophet Adam with knowledge that made him respectable among the angels and later was given the task to become Allah's caliph.

Realising the importance of knowledge, His Majesty said, the government has provided different facilities and encourages all to obtain success at the highest level.

"Choose the appropriate field that is suitable based on your talent and abilities," and "Improve the quality with better training and by performing good deeds," said His Majesty.

In Brunei, added His Majesty, we have seen the continuous blessings from Allah, particularly in the security and prosperity of the nation. The monarch said all these are blessings from doing good deeds at all levels, especially among our elders. They are remembered and will continue to be remembered because they have contributed greatly to our nation. Because of this and as a mark of appreciation, His Majesty announced an increase in the rate for old pension.

Present at the ceremony were His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office, His Royal Highness

Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, His Royal Highness Prince Haji Sufri Bolkiah, His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen.

The highlight of the ceremony was the presentation of prizes and souvenirs to the participants of the Memorisation of Al-Quran

Verses and Selected Surahs Competition.

In category 'A' for participants aged 10 years and below was won by Syafiqah Haji Ayop .

Category 'B' for participants aged between 10 to 15 years was won by Siti Nurul Hafizah Mohd Zin.

\* Continue on page 3



His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam delivers a *titah*.



Established on November 18, 1975, Royal Brunei Airlines is an independent corporation wholly owned by the government of Brunei Darussalam. Seven days after the incorporation, the Board of Directors approved the purchase of two Boeing 737-200 aircraft to start up the fleet. Six months later, on May 14, 1975, one of the B737s, bearing the nation's colours, thundered down the runway of the similarly new Brunei International Airport en route to Singapore, Royal Brunei Airline's first-ever scheduled service. To date, Royal Brunei provides scheduled services to 21 destinations across Asia, the Middle East, Australasia and Europe. As an added convenience to its passengers, the airline has code-share agreements with Singapore Airlines, Malaysia Airlines, British Midland, Philippine Airlines and Dragon Air of Hong Kong, allowing passengers to co-ordinate flights for seamless travel to a wider choice of destinations. Currently, Royal Brunei operates a fleet of six Boeing B767-300s, two Airbus 320s and 2 Airbus A319s. (photo shows of the plane owns by Royal Brunei at the Brunei International Airport)

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## **BRUNEI DARUSSALAM NEWSLETTER**

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His Majesty presents a prize to Awang Amirul Nabiollah, the first runner up of category 'B'.

\* From Front page  
(Nuzul Al-Quran)

Category 'C' for participants aged 30 years and below was won by Nor Hafizah Haji Jahari.

And category 'D' for participants of all ages memorising 22 verses of the Quran was won by Mohd Yaasir Haji Ibrahim.

This year's event was jointly organised by the Royal Customs and Excise and the Ministry of Finance. The theme is "Appreciating Islam in Improving the Nation's Competitiveness" or "*Menghayati Islam Dalam Mempertingkatkan Daya Saing Bangsa.*"

One of the participants reciting parts of Quran verses. (left)



## Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade receives audiences

His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade on October 11, received in audience at the Balai Penghadapan of Bukit Kayangan, from His Highness Shaikh Salman bin Khalifah Al-Khalifa, the Chairman of Bahrain Petroleum Company. His Highness was in Brunei for a four-day visit.



His Highness Shaikh Salman presents a gift to His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah.

### CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES

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

- His Excellency Hu Jintao, President of People's Republic of China and His Prime Minister, His Excellency Wen Jiabao in conjunction with the republic's 57<sup>th</sup> National Day on October 1.
- His Excellency Roh Moo-hyun, President of the Republic of Korea and his Prime Minister, His Excellency Han Myung-sook in conjunction with the republic's 58<sup>th</sup> National Foundation Day on October 3.
- His Excellency Horst Kohler, President of Federal Republic of Germany and His Excellency Angela Merkel, the Federal Republic of Germany's Chancellor in conjunction with the republic's 15<sup>th</sup> Reunification Day on October 3.
- His Majesty King Juan Carlos I, the King of the Kingdom of Spain and his Prime Minister, His Excellency Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero in conjunction with the kingdom's 514<sup>th</sup> National Day on October 12.

# Commemorative Summit Marking the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations:

Brunei Darussalam satisfied with overall progress and achievements



One-to-one meeting, His Majesty and Prime Minister of Thailand, His Excellency General Surayud Chulanont.



His Majesty with His Excellency Prime Minister of China prior to bilateral meeting



His Majesty receives in audience, Prime Minister of Lao's People Democratic Republic, His Excellency Bouasone Bouphavanh.



His Majesty at one of the sessions.



His Majesty receives Governor of China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, His Excellency Lu Bing.



Planting of trees to mark the end of the summit.

**NANNING, October 30** – His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam expressed his satisfaction with the overall progress and achievements of the ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations and acknowledged that the history ASEAN and China shared over the last 15 years was meaningful.

His Majesty made the remarks during the closed session of the Commemorative Summit Marking the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations at the International Convention Centre at Liyuan Resort.

ASEAN and China, stated His Majesty, had achieved many successes despite facing challenges such as financial crisis in 1997, major health problems and constant concerns about terrorism.

"These have been testing moments for any form of regional cooperation. Yet, they have never prevented us from working positively and successfully together, sharing ideas and emerging with our partnership not only intact but greatly strengthened," said His Majesty.

His Majesty also touched on the

idea of an ASEAN-China Centre and offering full support on this proposal.

"I see it as a symbol of all we are trying to achieve not only in trade and investment but also in cultural affairs and in simple, day-to-day human contacts," added His Majesty.

His Majesty also expressed appreciation for all China's support to ASEAN and also welcomes the various proposals raised during the Summit.

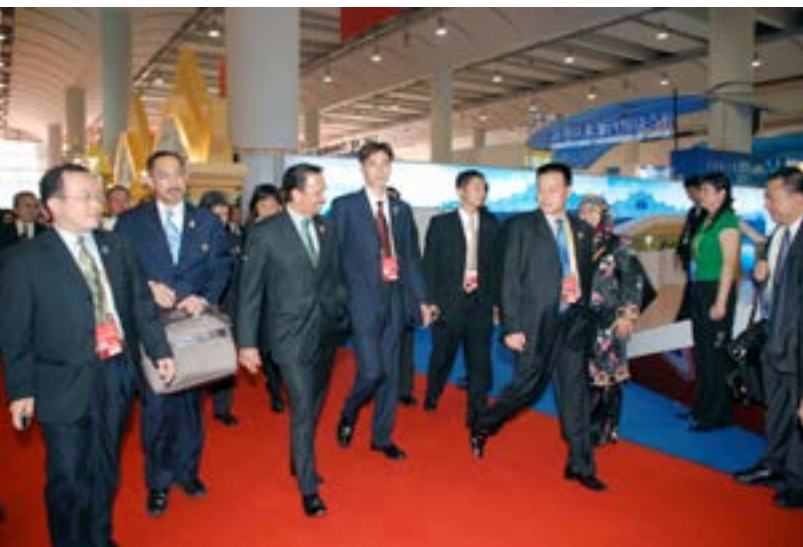
His Majesty further stated that Brunei Darussalam would do everything it can as the coordinator of the ASEAN-China Dialogue over the next three years. Brunei Darussalam also felt privileged to be closely involved in the immediate future of ASEAN-China relations and are excited at the prospect.

Later in the day, the Leaders signed the Joint Statement of the Commemorative Summit which outlined the overall progress of ASEAN-China relations, its past achievements and proposals.

The end of the summit was marked with the planting of trees by each of the leaders. In the evening, His Majesty attended a welcoming banquet at the International Convention Centre.



His Majesty with leaders of other ASEAN member countries and Prime Minister of China in a group photo after planting of trees.



His Majesty during the visit to Third China-ASEAN Expo (CAExpo).



Part of Brunei Pavilion at the Third China-ASEAN Expo (CAExpo).

## Third China-ASEAN Expo attracts more participants

**NANNING, October 31** - His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam attended the Official Opening Ceremony of Third China-ASEAN Expo (CAExpo) at the Nanning International Convention and Exhibition Centre.

After the opening ceremony, His Majesty went to visit Brunei Darussalam's Pavilion which exhibited local products and also an exhibition by the Brunei-China Friendship Association.

Also present were His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Pehin Dato Lim Jock Seng, Second Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

This was the third time China and ASEAN organised the expo in Nanning as part of the economic cooperation and close trade relation of China and ASEAN. Brunei Darussalam had participated since the first CAExpo and China-ASEAN Business and

Investment Summit.

The CAExpo attracted more than 1,000 participants from this region. The number of participants from Brunei has also increased that is from six participants during the first expo, to 98 during the second expo and the latest, attracted 126 participants.

His Majesty also held bilateral meetings with few leaders that attended the summit.

His Majesty held a bilateral meeting with the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, His Excellency Premier Wen Jiabaou at the Liyuan Resort. Both leaders discussed on bilateral relations and ways to strengthen the relations in the fields of foreign investment, defence, education and culture. In effort to enhanced high level relations, His Excellency Wen Jiabaou welcomed His Majesty to visit China again, while His Majesty extended an invitation to His Excellency to visit Brunei.

His Majesty also held a bilateral meeting

with the Prime Minister of Thailand, His Excellency General Surayud Chulanont. At the meeting, both leaders discussed on bilateral relations and ways to further enhance the existing relations and cooperation. Also discussed was a proposed visit of His Excellency to Brunei Darussalam.

His Majesty also received the Governor of China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, His Excellency Lu Bing. During the audiences, His Excellency briefed His Majesty on the development of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

His Majesty then held a bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister of Lao People's Democratic Republic, His Excellency Bouasone Bouphavanh. Both leaders discussed on ways to further strengthened relations and cooperation of both countries.

## Royalty joins *Terawih* prayer

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, October 19** - His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam joined his subjects in performing the mass *isyah* and *terawih* prayer at the Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque in the capital.

With His Majesty were His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik.

On October 14, His Majesty and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam went to Mohamed Bolkiah Mosque, Kampong Serusop, Jalan Muara to performed the mass *Isya* and *terawih* prayer.



His Majesty, His Royal Highness Crown Prince and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik receives greetings from public.



His Majesty and male members of royal family joined scores of Muslims for the *Aidil Fitri* prayer.

## His Majesty joins citizens performs Sunat *Aidil Fitri*

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, October 24** - Brunei Darussalam celebrated the first of Syawal by performing the Sunnat *Hari Raya Aidil Fitri* prayers held at all mosques and *suraus* in the country.

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-

Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam joined his citizens in performing the prayer at the Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque in the capital.

Also present were His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-

Muhtadee Billah, His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad Bolkiah, His Royal Highness Prince Haji Sufri Bolkiah, His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen and other members of the royal family.

## Royalty attends *tahlil* for late parents

**JALAN TUTONG, October 28** - His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam attended a *bertahlil* ceremony for His Majesty's late parents at the Royal Mausoleum in Jalan Kubah Makam Diraja in Jalan Tutong.

Also in attendance were His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah; His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah; His Royal Highness Prince Haji Sufri Bolkiah; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik and His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen.

At the ceremony, His Majesty sprinkled '*Ayeng Asah-Asahar*' or scented water on the tombs of His Majesty's late parents followed by other members of the royal family.

Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien passed away on September 7, 1986 and Al-Marhumah Duli Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Damit passed away on September 13, 1979.

Also present at the *bertahlil* ceremony were Pengiran-Pengiran Cheterias, cabinet ministers, deputy ministers and state dignitaries.



His Majesty sprinkles scented water over the tombs of his late parents.



Male members of royal family at the *bertahlil* ceremony.



Credit to Balai Kenangan Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien, Pejabat Kebawah Duli Yang Maha Mulia.

His Majesty delivers his speech at the Istana Nurul Iman.

## Avoid debts and being excessive

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, October 23** – Members of the public are reminded not to go overboard in their preparation to celebrate Hari Raya Aidil Fitri. Purchasing items leading to debts are not encouraged as the burden is not only felt today but also in the life hereafter.

This was highlighted by His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in a *titah* in conjunction with Hari Raya Aidil Fitri 1427 Hijrah.

Eventhough Hari Raya is a joyful day, a day when we wear new clothes, it does not mean that we should go overboard and be wasteful. His Majesty said we must do it as appropriately and fittingly with our abilities.

"In our clothing, drinks and food, we must not compete to outdo one another. This competitiveness is prohibited except for competing in doing good deeds," said His Majesty.

Debts, noted His Majesty, could lead to a myriad of problems, difficulties and hardship. In this case, said His Majesty, seek prosperity through living a simple life. Income should be saved for the future of the family as there is still a long path for us and our children to go which entails proper planning.

With that His Majesty said, proper upbringing and education for our children should be a priority and avoid mistakes that might happen.

"Today, we may be able to say that we are safe and peaceful. But on other days, we might not be able to say so except for us to only smile or cry,

"That is the future which is full of questions. Do not ask what will happen in the future but think and plan for a better tomorrow," said His Majesty.

His Majesty, His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah and His Royal Highness Prince Haji Sufri Bolkiah with local dignitaries.



His Majesty in conversation with one of Brunei-based foreign diplomats.

# Diplomats, VIPs greet royal family

**ISTANA NURUL IMAN, October 24**

– His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, Her Majesty Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha and Her Royal Highness Pengiran Isteri Azrinaz Mazhar received Hari Raya greetings from state dignitaries, senior government officers and foreign diplomats at the Istana Nurul Iman.

Present were His Royal Highness Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah and Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah, and other members of the royal family.



Her Majesty The Raja Isteri, Her Royal Highness Pengiran Isteri and Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah receive female guests.



Her Majesty The Raja Isteri (photo right) and Her Royal Highness Pengiran Isteri (photo left) with female guests during the Hari Raya session with state dignitaries and foreign diplomats.





His Majesty and male members of royal family receives greetings from uniform personnels.



Her Majesty The Raja Isteri and Her Royal Highness Pengiran Isteri and female members of royal family receives greetings from female and children visitors.



His Majesty's grandchildren also present during the ceremony.



Female members of royal family receive women uniformed personnel.



# Istana Nurul receive 102,

**ISTANA NURUL IMAN, October 27** – Brunei Darussalam received 102,599 visitors during the **Raya Aidil Fitri** on October 24. The Istana was the venue for the **ziarah** (revered greetings) ceremony to His Majesty Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei Darussalam and members of the royal family.

The palace was opened from the October 25 to 27 (the eve of **Aidil Fitri**). At the **junjung ziarah** (revered greetings) ceremony, members of the royal family received the male visitors. While the Sultan's consort, Hajah Saleha, Her Royal Highness Pengiran Isteri Hajah Saleha, and other members of the royal family received female and children visitors.

A sum of 102,599 visitors was recorded for this year, which is shown an increase compared to last year which recorded 95,000. The visitors include Brunei citizens and tourists.

Madam Pole Martin from the Republic of Philippines visited Brunei as they got chances not only to visit places of interest and greet Her Majesty, Her Royal Highness Pengiran Isteri Hajah Saleha and other members of the royal family. Her mother, Madam Velasco Shok Hia, accompanied her to the Istana Nurul Iman.

"The revered greetings were a lovely occasion for us to visit and greet the royalty," said Madam Pole Martin.

While for Dr. Oduola Abiola, this year's revered greetings ceremony at the Institute of Medicine of Universiti of Brunei Darussalam was held for five months. He went to the palace with UBD's staff.

"The revered greetings are a good practise and a good opportunity for us to visit and greet the royalty. **Hari Raya Aidil Fitri** falls on month of Syawal and is celebrated nation-wide, celebrating the success of the nation and a public holiday was announced for the first time in the history of Brunei Darussalam."





# Thanksgiving prayers for Her Majesty's 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday

**BERIBI, October 7** – Thanksgiving prayers were held in conjunction with Her Majesty Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary.

The ceremony was organised by spouses of cabinet ministers, deputy ministers,

permanent secretaries, deputy permanent secretaries, confidential secretaries and BESTARI association at the residence of Minister of Religious Affairs in Beribi.

Prior to that, on October 6, Brunei's Women Council also organised a similar

ceremony at the Jame 'Asr Hassanil Bolkiah Mosque. Another thanksgiving prayer was also held by welfare association of wife and family of Royal Brunei Police Force (PEKERTI) at the Rumah Aman in Gadong.

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## China-ASEAN Women's Forum promote cooperation among women

**NANNING, October 31** – The First-China ASEAN Women's Forum will act as an inspiration for cooperation among women. This was said by Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Masna, Ambassador-at-Large at Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade at the First China-ASEAN Women's Forum in Nanning, China.

The forum was held as part of the Commemorative Summit marking the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations. The forum took place at the Nanning International Conference and Exhibition Centre

Her Royal Highness said that the forum would act as a friendship bridge in connecting various women's institutions aligned with the theme 'Strengthening Women's Cooperation, Promoting Common Development'.

"The forum which has the potential to establish as a mechanism for exchange and cooperation would enable women to share and exchange

experiences in areas mutual," said Her Royal Highness.

Her Royal Highness further said that the Women's Forum could play an important role in supporting and mainstreaming women through their participation in the Plan of Action to implement the 'Joint Declaration on ASEAN-China Strategies Partnership for Peace and Prosperity'.

Prior to the forum, Her Royal Highness made a courtesy visit to Madam Gu Xiulian, Deputy Chairwomen of Standing Committee of National People's Congress and Patron of All Women's Federation and Patron of China-ASEAN Association. In the evening, Her Royal Highness attended a reception and the Guangxi International Folksong Fiesta.

Meanwhile on October 30, Her Royal Highness visited Guangxi Zhuang Nursery located at the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.



On arrival at Nanning International Airport, Her Royal Highness greeted by the Ambassador of People's Republic of China to Brunei, Her Excellency Yang Yanyi.



Her Royal Highness at the Guangxi Zhuang Nursery.



Group photo of Her Royal Highness, Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Lela Cheteria Sahibun Najabah Pengiran Anak Haji Abdul Aziz and Brunei's entourage at the Guangxi Zhunag Nursery.

# Business Council Submits APEC Recommendations

**SUBOK, October 4** - Committee members from the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) issued the proposal for supporting the development of small and medium enterprises (SME) where ABAC will continue to give pressure to avoid obstacles that prevented SMEs' development. The proposal is also to provide them easier access to information, finance and technology in the effort to increase its competitiveness and SMEs capability.

The proposal to the APEC leaders was an effort hoped to help the increase in the promotion of development business. It was also to increase networking in distributing information and the policy which give pressure toward SMEs importance at bank side and financial institute.

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade II (Second), Pehin Dato Lim Jock Seng receive the ABAC reports from representative of ABAC members, Haji Ahmad Bostamam, Director of Brunei Shell Petroleum. The reports were also efforts to enhance participant financial sector in supporting commercial scheme and development capability credit study which are relevant with SMEs.



Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade II (Second), Pehin Dato Lim Jock Seng (left) receives ABAC reports from representative of ABAC members, Haji Ahmad Bostamam.



SEA Write Award 2005-2007 recipient, Haji Shawal bin Rajab.

## Local receives SEA Write Award

**BERAKAS, October 3** - Retired Senior Language Officer at the Language and Literature Bureau, Haji Shawal bin Rajab received the SEA Write Award 2005-2007 in Thailand.

A book with the title "Value of Humanity", written by Haji Shawal was selected for the SEA Write Award this year, selected out of 15 books. This is not the first time he has been awarded for his literary endeavours.

He was awarded the honorary prize in General Article Competition or *Peraduan Rencana Umum*; honorary prize in Short Story Writing Competition or *Peraduan Menulis Cerpen*; and the honorary prize in Journalism Course or *Kumpulan Akhbar Cemerlang*, Universiti Malaya. He also came in first in the Poetry Writing Competition or *Peraduan Menulis Sajak* in conjunction with Nuzul Al-Quran 1400 Hijrah.

## RIPAS Hospital conducts feasibility study

**BERAKAS, October 9** - A report containing the outcome of a four-month long study on patient data from 2005 until 2020, as well as a proposal for the future development of the Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleh (RIPAS) Hospital and plans for the National Isolation Centre was handed over to the Ministry of Health.

Professor Tan Ser Kiat from the Group CEO of Singapore Health Services and CEO Singapore General Hospital, handed over the report to the Minister of Health, Pehin Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang Suyoi.

Singapore General Hospital was appointed as the consultant to help the Ministry of Health to implement the study.

The study included outlining current and future healthcare demands, defining the roles of RIPAS Hospital and National Isolation Centre (NIC) determining the concept of operations for RIPAS Hospital and NIC, as well as reviewing existing and future space utilisation and requirement.

Based on the outcome of the study, the SGH project team will propose a conceptual master plan for RIPAS Hospital and NIC. About 60 units and departments from the hospital took part in the study comprising divisions of surgery, medical, diagnostics, women and children, critical care medicine, accident and emergency as well as support services.



Minister of Health, Pehin Dato Haji Awang Suyoi (right) and Professor Tan Ser Kiat.

## Fishery sector: \$400 million in 2023

**BERAKAS, October 9** – Fisheries sector could achieve total receipts of \$400 million in 2023. Out of this figure, \$200 million could come from aquaculture and another \$113 million from prawn breeding.

This was the outcome from the research conducted on resources and fisheries' potential where the fisheries industry has a potential to contribute towards economic diversification, steering away from heavy dependence on oil and gas.

Minister of Industry and Primary Resources, Pehin Dato Seri Setia Doctor Awang Haji Ahmad highlighted the matter during a dialogue session with the aquaculture (prawn) industry entrepreneurs.

Towards meeting this target, the department has implemented international aquaculture technology verification projects which have been developed to be used by local entrepreneurs in producing high quality aquaculture products, which is on



Minister of Industry and Primary Resources, Pehin Dato Dr. Awang Haji Ahmad (front row: fourth from left) and officials from the ministry during the dialogue with aquaculture's entrepreneurs.

par with international markets.

One of the efforts undertaken to boost production is by acquiring an aquaculture expert to help the department in improving the prawn "seeds" and improving prawn growth rate.

The dialogue was held in order for the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources

to hear issues, ideas and problems faced by entrepreneurs. The ministry will also give support to the entrepreneurs in upgrading and developing their businesses to be more productive and of high quality in order to compete in the international market.

The dialogue was held for the first time and attended by 13 prawn entrepreneurs.

## Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade II visits India

**HYDERABAD, INDIA, October 10** - Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade II (Second) made a working visit to the Republic of India from October 10 to 12. During the visit, Pehin Dato Lim Jock Seng held bilateral discussions with his counterpart His Excellency E. Ahmed, Minister of State for External Relations of the Republic of India at Hyderabad House.

He also held meetings with India's Minister of Defence and Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology. He also had discussions with members of the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FICCI). The discussions were aimed at promoting economic cooperation between Brunei Darussalam and the Republic of India.



Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade II (Second) in a meeting with India's Minister of State for External Relations, His Excellency E. Ahmed.

## New rates under the Old Age Pension and Disability Act

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, October 11** - A circular stating new rates for old age pension and allowances paid under the Old Age Pension and Disability Act was issued by the Prime Minister's Office. The change was announced by His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in a *titah* at the Nuzul Al-Quran celebration marking the Revelation of the Quran on October 9, 2006.

The new old age pension is \$250, an increase of \$50 over the previous rate of \$200. Pension for the blind, and allowances for lepers or sufferers of Hansen Disease and the unsound or insane, have also been increased from \$200 to \$250. Meanwhile, the allowance for dependents that are below 15 years old has been increased from \$90 to \$113. Dependents aged 15 and above who previously received \$150 will now receive \$188 each. Disabled persons, who previously received \$200 allowance, will now get \$250 each.

The new rates of the old age pension and allowances paid under the Old Age Pension and Disability Act took effect on October 1, 2006.

## New CEO PetroleumBRUNEI

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, September 30** - The Brunei National Petroleum Company Sdn Bhd, PetroleumBRUNEI have appointed Haji Mohd Jaafar bin Haji Bakar as their new Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Haji Mohd Jaafar, who currently holds the position of Manager for Hydrocarbon Processing and Infrastructure Asset in Brunei Shell Petroleum Company Sdn Bhd will be seconded to PetroleumBRUNEI to take up the post of CEO. The appointment will take effect from October 2, 2006.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Reduan bin Haji Mohd Yusof, General Manager Business Development and New Venture who is currently Acting CEO of PetroleumBRUNEI has been appointed as the Deputy CEO of PetroleumBRUNEI's Methanol project joint-venture company, Brunei Methanol Company Sdn Bhd. His appointment took effect since June 1, 2006.

## \$489 million to build defence

**GADONG, September 13** – His Majesty's government has committed to spending up to around 3.3 per cent of GDP on defence in 2005. The Minister of Defence stated the matter at the opening session of the Understanding Public Private Partnerships workshop at Rizqun International Hotel in Gadong.

According to the Deputy Minister of Defence, Pehin Datu Singamanteri Colonel Retired Dato Seri Paduka Haji Mohammad Yasmin, the government has allocated some \$489 million for the Ministry of Defence

for the fiscal year 2006. This is meant to develop the next generation of Royal Brunei Armed Forces over the next five years or so.

The minister added in supporting His Majesty's titah on economic diversification, and also in line with the ministry's 'Defence White Paper', the Ministry of Defence is looking for the provision of various products and services using public-private partnership arrangements, those that can be provided by the private sector including maintenance and logistics services, training and e-government.



Deputy Minister of Defence, Pehin Colonel (Rtd) Dato Haji Mohammad Yasmin delivers opening remarks.



In discussion, Brunei's entourage is lead by Minister of Communication, Pehin Dato Awang Haji Abu Bakar (left side) while Mr. Kanichiro Aritomi lead Japan's entourage.

## Brunei-Japan discuss on internet connectivity

**JERUDONG, September 17** - Brunei held discussions with Japan on Internet connectivity using the latest "Fibre-To-The-Home" (FTTH) technology necessary for ensuring efficient, reliable and high quality broadband services in the country.

It was one of the issues discussed during a bilateral meeting between the Minister of Communications, Pehin Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abu Bakar and Japanese Vice Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications, Kanichiro Aritomi. The meeting was at held at the Empire Hotel & Country Club.

During the meeting, both countries exchanged views on the current development and future plans of both countries and later discussed on areas of mutual interest for both countries including the discussion on Internet connectivity using FTTH.

The meeting also discussed on the development of telecommunications industry particularly on the participation of both countries in the upcoming World International Telecommunication Union (ITU) 2006 to be held in December in Hong Kong.

## Brunei establish diplomatic relations with Moldova and Angola

**NEW YORK, October 18** – The Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam established diplomatic relations with the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Government of the Republic of Angola with effect from October 18, 2006.

The signing of the Joint Communiqué took place at the office of the Permanent Mission of Brunei Darussalam to the United Nations in New York.

Brunei Darussalam was represented by His Excellency Haji Emran bin Bahar, Ambassador of Brunei Darussalam to the United Nations (UN) in New York.

His counterparts were His Excellency Alexey Tulbure of Moldova and His Excellency Ismael Abraao Gaspar Matins of Angola. They are the Permanent Representatives to UN for their respective countries.

## PetroleumBRUNEI - JBIC sign MoU

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, October 30** – PetroleumBRUNEI and Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for cooperation on the project's financing as well as knowledge transfer. The signing of the agreement will make Brunei's methanol project a step closer to reality.

The signing of the MoU was witnessed by Second Minister of Finance, Pehin Dato Seri Setia Haji Abdul Rahman, who is also the Deputy Chairman of PetroleumBRUNEI.

Signing on behalf of PetroleumBRUNEI was its Chief Executive Officer, Haji Mohd Jaafar while his counterpart was JBIC Senior Executive Director, Mr. Junichi Kondo.



Second Minister of Finance (middle) witness the signing of MoU between PetroleumBRUNEI and JBIC.

# Brunei Malay's wedding, a tradition of elegance and ceremonials

Brunei Darussalam shares her own unique wedding tradition. Predominantly a Malay society, the Brunei Malay wedding is a full regal affair that intricately shares some similarities with the Malaysian and Singaporean Malay wedding. As an Islamic country, the wedding ceremonies are not only shaped through centuries of tradition and culture, but religion plays a vital role too. The solemnisation is the only must carry-out ceremony due to the Islamic Law of Marriage.

A week long of wedding ceremonies, in a number of stages, is a norm in this society where the ceremonies may vary according to the origin of the couple. Most of the ceremonial stages are just traditions that inherited from elderly.

The wedding ceremonials start with the ceremony locally known as **Berjarum-jarum**. This ceremony witness the groom's side to officially declare the intention of the groom-to-be in seeking the hand of the bride-to-be for marriage. The women's side will officially reply that they are aware of the man's noble intention. A list of items will be given to the groom-to-be that should

be delivered on a later date, which is usually during the **Bersuruh**. It usually consists of an amount of money and a ring is considered as the **Pembuka Mulut**.

A delegation from the groom-to-be's side will come on a later date bringing along an amount of money and a ring for the **Bersuruh** ceremony. At this pre-wedding meeting, the parents of both the bride and groom will also be determining the **mas kahwin** for the **akad nikah** (solemnisation), **belanja hangus** (dowry), and other articles that will be given to the bride. This is usually made as early as a year before the wedding, some six months, so that arrangements could be made in advance.

The **Bersuruh** ceremony is later followed by **Bertunang** or engagement ceremony. The ceremony is to formally certify the betrothal of

the groom to the bride. Engagement period may vary depending on the agreement reached by both families. Sometimes both ceremonies are held together at once.

The next stage is **Menghantar Berian**, whereby the groom's delegation will bring articles to the fiancée's house. The main items included in the articles are the wedding ring, a sum of money which is called as **Belanja Hangus** (may vary for each person depending on the request by the bride's family), **sirih junjung** (betel vine leaf and betel-nut decorates together), **kain jong sarat** (weaved cloth) and Al-Quran. In return, the bride-to-be will in return give articles which may vary from kain sinjang (weaved cloth) to toiletries.



Solemnisation ceremony, the most significant ceremony and carry out using Islamic teachings.

Today, it is common to see that the **Bertunang** (engagement), **Menghantar Berian** and **Majlis Akad Nikah** (solemnisation) ceremony held on the same day. It not only cut cost but has shortened the length of days for the wedding.

The most significant ceremony is the solemnisation ceremony which usually takes place at the bride's home. Some prefer to carry out the ceremony at the mosque. The solemnisation ceremony is carried out using Islamic teachings where it is normally presided by the bride's biological father or his representative who is a **kadhi**, a religious official from the **Syariah** Court. However, a brief lecture or briefing on marriage will be given by the **kadhi** prior to the ceremony for both the groom and bride.



The groom meets the bride after the *Majlis Akad Nikah* (solemnisation).

The **akad nikah** ceremony is in effect through a verbal contract between the bride's biological father or his representative (the kadhi) and the groom. At least two persons are required as witness to the ceremony. A small sum of money called **mas kahwin** will be described through the solemnisation which will seal the contract.

A sample of the verbal contract is as follows;

Kadhi: I marry you (name of the groom) to (name of the bride) with a *mas kahwin* of (amount)

Groom: I accept this marriage with (name of the bride) with the *mas kahwin* of (amount).

There is a difference between *mas kahwin* and *belanja hangus*. The small sum of money used for *mas kahwin* follows the Islamic teachings where it ensures that even poor people could marry where marriage is encouraged for all healthy Muslims. The *belanja hangus* however, is more customary and go into thousands of dollars.

Before the solemnisation ceremony, another mini event known as **Berbedak Mandi** is performed separately on both the groom and bride. It is only attended by close relatives and neighbours. At the ceremony the bride or groom's will be smeared by the **pengangun** (beautician) with special made powder call **Bedak Lulut** or **Lulur**. Later they would be showered by the *pengangun* witnessed by

Some of the common items for *Majlis Menghantar Berian*, *Belanja Hangus*, *kain jong sarat*, ring and Al-Quran.





young children holding candles. The art of **Berbedak Mandi** is believed to increase your aura as a newly wed person as well as to cleanse the body. It is believed that you will feel much cleaner and fresh after the ceremony.

Another two ceremonies will be held before the highlight of the wedding that is **Majlis Berbedak** and **Majlis Berpacar**. Both ceremonies are performed separately on both the groom and bride. At **Majlis Berbedak**, close relatives will perform the ceremony of applying the powder paste to the hand of the groom and bride. Meanwhile for **Majlis Berpacar**, it will involve the staining of the hands of the groom and bride with henna leaves paste by close relatives.



Seven colours powder paste use during Majlis Berbedak.

The highlight of the wedding ceremonials is the **Majlis Bersanding**, where the groom and his delegation will go to the bride's home. At the bride's residence, the couple will be seated on a dais.

During the **Majlis Bersanding** too, guests are feasted with an amount of food. The feast is often a lively affair where guests come with colourful traditional costumes. The feasts are given at both the homes of the groom and bride where often door gifts in various forms, as a personal gift from the groom and bride will be given to the guests as a way to appreciate their attending the ceremony.

Prior to the **Majlis Bersanding** at the bride's home, the groom with his close relatives will first greet their guests usually set up outdoor where a number of canopies have been set up. Both set of parents will be greeting their guests too – the father and male members of the family will greet the male guests while the mother and female members of the family will greet the female guests.

A unique practice is a sum of money sealed in envelopes where it may come in between \$10 to \$30 each are usually given at these greeting session. The money will be collected and given to the bride and groom.

Once these greetings are done, the groom will then go the bride's home. Once seated, a prayer will be read to bless the newly-wed couple. Then the newly-wed couple will be greeted by family, relatives and friends.

For those that comes from the Tutong District, there is an additional ceremony after the **Majlis Bersanding** which is called



The bride's father applying powder paste during Majlis Berbedak.

**Berbasuh Kaki**. The ceremony will give a chance to family, relatives, friends and invited guests to shower the feet of the newly-wed couple with water and later they must give souvenir to the couple such as cash money and jewellery. The belief of **Berbasuh Kaki** is sort of a blessing for the newly wed couple who will venture into a new life together.

Later in the evening, another ceremony called **Berambil-ambilan** will be held at the bride's residence attended by close relatives and friends of the newly wed couple. For this ceremony, groom family member will bring some cooked-food from their home for the newly-wed couple to share during **Bersuap-suapan**. **Bersuap-suapan** is when the couple will feed each other with the food brought by the groom's side.

The final ceremony in the Brunei Malay wedding tradition is **Muleh** or **Balik Tiga** or **Tujuh Hari**. The intention of this ceremony performed three or seven-day after the bersanding ceremony, is to allow the groom to visit his parents. **Muleh** which means going back, is to celebrate the groom returning back after he has visited his parents. However today, more are seen to leave out this final ceremony and will end the wedding ceremonials after the **Berambil-ambilan**.

Brunei Malay wedding is unique on its own. It has been practiced for decades and the tradition remains strong. A unique



The bride with traditional wedding costume.



The new wed-couple on the dais.



Sirih junjung as part of the *Hantaran Berian*.





## RBA 'runner up' for 'Best Entertainment for the Main Screen'

**BERAKAS, October 2** - Royal Brunei Airlines (RBA) announced that RBA was 'Runner Up' to Hawaiian Airlines for 'Best Entertainment for the Main Screen' category. The winnings was determined by international media panels that evaluated in-flight audio, video, magazines, and interactive media from leading passenger airlines worldwide.

Besides that category, RBA was also nominated in other three categories; Best In-flight Audio Entertainment, Best Entertainment for the Main Screen, Best

Overall In-flight Entertainment (Small Fleet, 24 or fewer aircraft).

The Avion Awards which had been running for 18 years were sponsored by the World Airline Entertainment Association (WAEA), honours excellence in several categories of airline in-flight entertainment including audio, video, print media and the top awards of 'Best Overall'.

The in-flight entertainment entries were judged for originality, suitability, production value, content and balance. The 23-member international judging

panel evaluated more than 160 samples of in-flight audio, video, print and interactive media that appeared in 42 commercial worldwide during the period from June 1, 2005 to May 31, 2006.

RBA currently flies to 22 destinations in Europe, Middle East, Asia, South East Asia, Australia and New Zealand. The airline operates on Boeing 767s, Airbus 319s and 320s and had won several awards in the flight categories during recent years for service, magazine, meals and now entertainment.

## CPI – AUGUST 2006

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) in August 2006 had increased by 0.2 per cent from the previous month with an index of 102.4. The rise was partly attributed to some prices reverting to their original level after the end of the sales festival.

The cost of food and non-alcoholic beverages increased by 0.1 per cent due to higher prices of fresh prawn and other seafood, eggs, cheese, vegetables and fruit.

Higher prices of ready-made clothing and accessories, materials for male and female and footwear led an increase of 3.5 per cent in the cost of clothing and

footwear.

The cost of household goods, services and operation went up by 1.2 per cent due to higher prices of furniture, household furnishings, kitchen appliances and utensils, crockery and cutlery as well as household operations.

Lower prices of certain airfares meanwhile caused a decrease of 0.2 per cent in the cost of transport.

Communication costs went down by 0.1 per cent due to lower prices of instruments including accessories.

Due to higher prices of proprietary medicines and supplies; medical and health costs increased by 0.4 per cent.

The cost of recreation and entertainment fell by 1.7 per cent resulting from lower prices of holiday packages.

Higher prices of personal care and personal effects and other personal goods led to the increased in cost of miscellaneous goods and services by 0.6 per cent.

The costs of housing, water, electricity and maintenance and education meanwhile remained unchanged.

The CPI in August 2006 was 0.3 per cent higher than that of the same month in 2005.

## Briefly

### SHHB Foundation marks 14th Anniversary

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, October 4** - Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Foundation marked the 14th anniversary of its establishment with the holding of the Khatam Al-Quran and thanksgiving ceremony. The function was held at the Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Foundation Complex. Present at the ceremony were the foundation's board of directors, administrative officers, staff as well as teachers of the Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Foundation School.

Over the 14 years of its establishment, the foundation has successfully implemented a number of projects aligned to its policy of development in the field of Islamic religious knowledge, welfare, education and finance aimed at enhancing the prosperity of citizens of the sultanate.

### Brunei participates in 28 sports events

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, October 7** - Brunei will be participating in 28 sporting events in the 24<sup>th</sup> SEA Games which will take place in Bangkok, Thailand from December 6 to 15 next year.

It has been proposed by the Brunei National Olympic Council, BNOG and the Department of Youth and Sports during a meeting with the country's sports associations. Present to head the meeting at the Hassanal Bolkiah National Sports Complex was Awang Japar bin Bangkol, the Honorable Secretary of BNOG. It was attended by representatives from the several sports associations.

The 24<sup>th</sup> SEA Games sports are divided into three categories where a total of 40 sporting events will be contested and a total of 441 medals to be won.

The 28 proposed sports are athletics, aquatics which are in category one, badminton, basketball, billiards and snooker, bowling, boxing, canoeing, rowing, cycling, equestrian, fencing, football, golf, gymnastics, hockey, karate, rugby, sepak takraw, softball, table tennis, taekwondo, tennis, volleyball and wushu in category two while in category three are lawn bowl, pencak silat and traditional boat race.

### HFMD update

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, October 17** - Ministry of Health reported that the total cases of Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD) in the country showed a decrease in October compared to the total

cases in the mid of September where a total of 142 cases were reported. From October 1 to 15, a total of 72 cases were reported where most of the cases (87.5 per cent) were treated as an outpatient and have totally recovered. Only 12.5 per cent from the total cases required ward treatment.

Despite a decrease in the total cases, public are still advised to be cautious and cooperate with the ministry and other government agencies in taking measures to overcome the disease.

### Raya gifts for 3rd RBAF IMT Contingent

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, October 19** - Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) personnel who are currently on duty in Mindanao, Philippines received Raya gifts from the the Commander of the RBAF, Pehin Dato Major General Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi.

The 10 RBAF personnel are currently on duty as the Team Site I (TSI) personnel in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Contingent of the International Monitoring Team (IMT) in Mindanao. The event was held at the residence of the TSI RBAF IMT.

The Raya gifts, which contained festive biscuits, dates, dried foods and Hari Raya cards, were contributed by RBAF personnel, the Welfare Body of Wives of RBAF Personnel (BAKTI) as well as families of the RBAF IMT.

### Recall on traditional medicines and Dried Fruit Products

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, October 11** - The Ministry of Health of Brunei Darussalam called for the public to surrender the three types of traditional medicines and 15 types of dried fruits products.

The traditional medicines recalled were:

1. 'Jamu Kapsul Gemuk Badan (Fattener) Untuk Pria dan Wanita' as it was found to contain Cyproheptadine, a substance controlled under the Poison Act;
2. Endopile Capsules with batch number 9016 because it contained an excessive amount of lead and mercury; and
3. 'Poh Kian Brand Pai Fong Wan' with batch number 13014 because the product was found to contain Total Aerobic Microbial Count above the permissible limit.

The announcement was made based on the report from the Drug Control Authority in Singapore. In Brunei, selling of any products containing a substance controlled under the Poison Act is an offence under Poison Act

1956 and penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$8,000 or imprisonment of six months.

Meanwhile, the recalled 15 types of dried fruit products (with different expiry date and packaging size) were of Sunbeam Foods Pty. Ltd, Australia. The recalled were due to the products most-likely contaminated with lead and mercury.

The ministry has urged importers and food retailers to recall the products following information obtained by WHO's International Food Safety Network, based on reports issued by the Australia-New Zealand Food Standard Agency. The agency stated that Sunbeams Foods Pty Ltd has made a voluntary recall on such products.

Under Section 9 (1) subheading (i) of the Public Health Act (Food) Chapter 182, anyone who provides sells or imports food that could jeopardise health is liable to five years' imprisonment or a fine or both upon conviction.

### Brunei Darussalam join SSEAYP

**BERAKAS, October 30** - Brunei Darussalam will be joining counterparts from ASEAN member countries for the 33<sup>rd</sup> Ship for Southeast Asian Youth Programme (SSEAYP).

Twenty seven Brunei youths departed to Singapore to take part in the program. From Singapore, the participants departed to Japan and boarded the Nippon Maru ship. The SSEAYP is expected to end on December 12.

SSEAYP is an annual programme sponsored by the Japanese Government and supported by the ASEAN member countries. The programme involves 300 youth from ASEAN countries and Japan where they will be on board the ship Nippon Maru for 50 days.

The programme started in January 1974 based on a Joint Statement between Japan and five ASEAN countries; Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Brunei Darussalam joined in 1985 followed by Vietnam in 1996, Laos and Myanmar in 1998 and Cambodia in 2000.

This program aims to foster friendship and greater understanding among the youths from Japan and ASEAN as well as to broaden their international outlook.

On board the ship, a number of activities will be lined up to cater for their more than one month stay. The programme during voyages includes discussions on social and youth matters, cultural introductions, sports, recreation and club activities. Activities at each port-of-call include interaction with the local youths, courtesy calls on dignitaries and institutional visits, as well as community service and homestay experience.

## Brunei In Brief

Official name: Negara Brunei Darussalam  
 Capital: Bandar Seri Begawan  
 Land size: 5765 sq.km  
 Geographical Position: North-west of Borneo Island in Southeast Asia  
 Population: 349,600 (2003 estimate)  
 National Carrier: Royal Brunei Airlines

Official Language: Malay  
 Official Religion: Islam  
 Official Website: [www.brunei.gov.bn](http://www.brunei.gov.bn)

# Ramadhan, a month of blessings

Ramadhan, the ninth month in the Islamic calendar; is an awaited month for Muslim around the globe. Considered as the month full of blessings, Ramadhan witness an increased of religious activities done by Muslim. It is a month when Muslims perform fasting and also pay zakat (alms). Ramadhan is also a month where the first revelation of the Al-Quran took place.

In Brunei Darussalam, **Tedarus** Ceremony (recital of Al-Quran) is the most common activity held everyday at mosques, private homes and also offices. The night scene in Ramadhan is highlighted with **Terawih** prayers, the special prayer only available during this month. Another religious event held is **tahlil** (recital of prayers) for the late families, friends and prominent leaders. Nuzul Al-Quran (a celebration in honour with the first revelation of the Al-Quran) is nationally celebrated every 17<sup>th</sup> day of Ramadhan in Brunei.

Government and non-government organisations also take the advantage to conduct welfare activities like cleaning the Muslim Cemetery area and presenting donations to orphans and less fortunate people. The working hours for government servants is also reduced from normal hours (8am to 2pm).

Business activities during the month also flourished. Ramadhan stalls are set-up at various areas throughout the country. Bazaar and trade fair for upcoming Hari Raya are also held plus attractive sales offer made by local business establishments.



Brunei Grand Sale  
15 September - 29 October

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