

Brunei Darussalam national day

Significant exchanges at all levels

Mohamad Alias Serbini
AMBASSADOR OF BRUNEI
DARUSSALAM

First, I would like to thank The Japan Times for giving me the opportunity to say a few words and to the sponsors for their generous support.

Almost a year has passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami, the international communities still and will always remember the strength of "kizuna" (bonds) and "gaman" (endurance) shown by the Japanese people in facing the challenges. I have no doubt that with the resilience of its people, the country will overcome and recover from these great challenges.

Despite these circumstances, we appreciate the Japanese government for continuously playing an important role in-



ternationally. Bilaterally, Brunei Darussalam's relations with Japan are becoming stronger. Along with celebrating our national day, we are also celebrating the 28th year of our friendship with Japan. Thus on this auspicious occasion, I would like to convey on behalf of the government of His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and the people of Brunei Darussalam, our respectful greetings and best wishes and health to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, members of the Imperial Family, and to the government and people of Japan.

Since the early 1970s, our trade ties with Japan have seen significant development. Japan is an important trading partner and one of the major sources of foreign direct investments for Brunei Darussalam. The current liquefied natural gas contract is set to expire next year, and ar-

angement is under way for the extension of the contract, paving the way for a mutually beneficial partnership in the long run. Brunei Darussalam has been and will continue to become a reliable and stable supplier of LNG.

The exchange of high-level visits over the years further bolstered the bilateral relations. The recent visit of Brunei Energy Minister the Hon. Pehin Dato Yasmin Umar to Japan last December upon the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reaffirmed the warm and cordial friendship that both countries enjoy. During the visit, the minister reemphasized Brunei's commitments to continue supplying LNG to Japan.

There have also been a significant number of exchange visits at all levels among the officials, private sectors and youth. Among them, the continuous exchanges of students from Universiti Brunei Darussalam with other institutions and universities in Japan. For

the years to come, Brunei Darussalam is also placing high emphasis toward building up the strong partnership that both countries have enjoyed so far in all areas and levels. Collaboration between both countries beyond the energy sector has also increased in recent years. Cooperation in the medical field, such as between Brunei Cancer Research Centre and medical institutions in Japan, and in the field of agriculture are expanding. It is also the hope that other cooperation in terms of research and capacity building will also be further enhanced.

In an effort to expand its economy, Brunei Darussalam strongly aspires to diversify its economic activities by undertaking various endeavors related to non-energy related projects. The Brunei government has identified several key industry clusters to bring value-added activities to the country. With the readily available industrial sites, the Brunei government is

inviting potential investors to set up businesses in pharmaceuticals, food and food ingredients, renewable energy, information and communication technologies (ICT), supporting industries and emerging, new technologies. The embassy, doing its part in collaboration with relevant agencies in Brunei, will continuously undertake projects and programs in Japan to complement the effort by partaking in various promotional exhibitions and business meetings with potential partners all over Japan. At the same time, the embassy is also identifying potential markets in Japan for Brunei products from small and medium-size enterprises. Hopefully, in the coming years, several of these SMEs' products will have a market in Japan.

The Japan-Brunei Parliamentarians' League, Japan-Brunei Friendship Association and Kyushu-Brunei Darussalam Club have also respectively played their part in strengthening the



Friendly ties: Brunei's Energy Minister Pehin Dato Mohammad Yasmin Umar is greeted by economy minister Yukio Edano in Tokyo during his visit to Japan in December. HIROSHI OKOUCHI

bilateral relationship between both countries. To that end, we would like to commend their

worthy contributions. Lastly, we look forward to continuing the strong partnership between

both countries on many levels and the cooperation for years to come.

Hoping to help expand relations beyond the economic

Kozo Watanabe
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-BRUNEI PARLIAMENTARIANS'
LEAGUE FOR THE PROMOTION OF FRIENDSHIP

On the occasion of the 28th National Day of Brunei Darussalam, I would like to convey on behalf of the Japan-Brunei Parliamentarians' League for the Promotion of Friendship my heartfelt felicitations to His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah and the people of his state.

Last year on March 11, our country was devastated by a natural disaster of unprecedented proportions. The magnitude of the earthquake that struck Japan was a "once in a thousand years" event. It is projected that it will take many years for the disaster-struck regions to completely recover. In the wake of this untold disaster, there was one thing that was highly reassuring. This



was the messages of compassion that Brunei and countries around the world sent to Japan as Japan faced its most trying hour. May I take this opportunity to thank the people of Brunei Darussalam from the bottom of my heart for having Japan in their prayers.

Japan and Brunei are two countries that share a strong interdependence based firmly on trade in the natural resources sector. I believe that it is important for both countries to develop their relations beyond the current solid economic relationship — into spheres including human resources and culture.

I will endeavor to achieve such goals in lock-step with other members of the Japan-Brunei Parliamentarians' League for the Promotion of Friendship.

Lastly, I sincerely would like to extend my best wishes to Sultan Haji Hassanal and the people of Brunei Darussalam for their future prosperity and development.

Brunei preserves habitats for its rich, unique biodiversity

Besides natural resources, Brunei Darussalam is also blessed with rich and unique biodiversity. About 70 percent of its land is covered by tropical rain forest of which 58 percent has been des-



Indigenous fish: Brunei beauty (*Betta macrostoma*) males have a deep red color. HAJI BAHARUDDIN

ignated under the Heart of Borneo initiative.

Numerous policies have been introduced to conserve and protect its biodiversity, rain forest and other natural habitats. Sev-

eral forests were identified and more are being proposed for conservation.

Among them is Bukit Teraja Forest Reserve, with a relatively small area of 27.11 sq. km, but a significantly valuable and unique area that boasts a vast range of species of insects, other animals and plants that are uniquely only found here. The forest reserve has varieties of habitat including 40 waterfalls, peat swamps, ridges, rocks and streams, which make it an ideal home for a diverse range of unique and endangered flora and fauna.

So far about 36 species of frogs have been recorded including four species that are new to Brunei. The area also shelters 19 plant species that are only known to be found in Brunei. Six

new species recently discovered are in the process of being described. There are also 233 butterfly species, including two that are protected species under the CITES treaty. But there are also other animal and plant species yet to be discovered.

The Panaga Natural History Society (PNHS) is one of the non-governmental organizations that play an important role in conservation and protection of biodiversity, specifically in conserving the Bukit Teraja Forest Reserve. The PNHS is actively conducting surveys, information gathering and educational programs to teach the importance of conserving the area. It recently organized jungle trekking for foreign diplomats in Brunei Darussalam.

Further information about Bukit Teraja is obtainable from the following websites,



Regional butterfly: The male Horsfield's baron (*Tanaecia iapis*) has a bright blue border on its black wings. HANS DOLS

<http://sites.google.com/site/pnhsteraja/pnhsteraja-survey> and http://www.panda.org/what_we_do/where_we_work/borneo_forests/?uNewsID=201060

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as They Celebrate
Their 28th National Day

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on the Occasion of
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Local species: Female black-spotted rock frogs (*Stauroids guttatus*) are larger than males. HANS DOLS

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Brunei Darussalam national day



Pristine: The Ulu Temburong National Park is an untouched jungle of 50,000 hectares. BRUNEI TOURISM DEPARTMENT

Fostering interactions between our nations

Kunio Anzai
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-BRUNEI
FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

On behalf of the Japan-Brunei Friendship Association I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei Darussalam, the government and the people of the sultanate on the occasion of their 28th National Day. At the same time, I would like to thank the people of Brunei for their continued, long-term stable supply of natural energy to Japan.



Looking back upon the milestones of the last year, I am happy to announce that Dato Hamdillah H. A. Wahab, the former deputy minister of industry and primary resources, and an advisor to the Brunei-Japan Friendship Association, was recognized for his distinguished service over the years and was awarded the Foreign Minister's Commendation this past October. In addition, there were reports last month that both Brunei and Vietnam expressed their support for Japan in joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership, in negotiations that were held in advance of talks concerning Japan's participation. There are expectations that economic and interpersonal exchanges will increase in the Asia-Pacific region, and it is the hope of the Japan-Brunei Friendship Association that Japan and Brunei continue to develop their prosperous relationship.

In an effort to promote mutual understanding, the Japan-Brunei Friendship Association has been inviting a number of Bruneian students to Japan every year since 2007. Last year, we could not invite students from Brunei due to the impact from the Great East Japan Earthquake, but this year we plan to invite students to give them a firsthand view of how the natural gases of Brunei are being used in Japan, as well as giving them a glimpse of Japan's high-tech industries. In addition, in light of how an experience of Japan's agriculture held last December was well received, we would like to present

opportunities for presenting both the cultures of Japan and Brunei in an effort to deepen mutual understanding. I am confident that activities such as these, even if they are modest, will encourage our young people to act as a bridge between the two cultures through continuing interactions, thus deepening the bonds of friendship between our two nations further in the future.

Negara Brunei Darussalam — the country of Brunei Darussalam, abode of peace — is a sovereign state situated on the northern shores of Borneo blessed with abundant natural resources, including oil and natural gas. As the name suggests, it is a peaceful and tranquil nation with a genuinely friendly and hospitable population grounded in noble Islamic traditions. In addition, the country boasts beautiful mosques and various other tourist destinations such as Kampong Ayer (literally, "water village"), one of the biggest above-water villages in the world, and the Ulu Temburong National Park, an untouched jungle that spans 50,000 hectares. The Brunei Tourism Board has been working toward increasing the number of tourists to the country to above 400,000 by 2016, and has been strengthening its tourist attraction policies. Several packages, such as experiencing Islam, a homestay experience surrounded by Brunei's scenic nature and diving tours geared toward foreigners have been put together. For these packages, the Brunei Tourism Board won a tourism award from a tourism agency last year. I hope to see an increasing number of Japanese people who visit and explore this wonderful country.

Our two nations have enjoyed a strong and enduring friendship for many years. The Japan-Brunei Friendship Association remains committed to the deepening of that friendship and will continue to promote amicable relations between the two nations through various activities.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my sincere and cordial wishes to His Majesty the Sultan and the people of Brunei Darussalam for their continued and further prosperity on the occasion of Brunei's National Day.

**Congratulations
on the Occasion of
the 28th National Day of
Negara Brunei Darussalam**

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on the 28th National Day of
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