

Brunei Darussalam National Day

Well-educated population ensures future prosperity

Mahamud Ahmad
AMBASSADOR OF BRUNEI
DARUSSALAM

On the auspicious occasion of the 32nd National Day of Brunei Darussalam, it is with great pleasure that I convey warm greetings and best wishes from the government of His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and the people of Brunei Darussalam to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, members of the Imperial family and the government and people of Japan.

This year also marks the



Brunei 32nd National Day logo EMBASSY OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM



Aerial View of Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin Mosque EMBASSY OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

32nd anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Brunei Darussalam and Japan and I am certainly pleased to witness

the continued growth and strengthening of this partnership since it commenced over 40 years ago when we delivered the first cargo of Liquefied

Natural Gas (LNG) to Japan on Dec. 15, 1972.

For this year's National Day celebrations, we have once again adopted the theme of "Generasi Berwawasan," or "Generation with a Vision," demonstrating the continued commitment to the "Wawasan Brunei 2035" strategy developed to ensure the future prosperity of the country through a well-educated and highly skilled population, an improved quality of life and a dynamic and sustainable economy.

Brunei Darussalam is known as a country rich in oil and gas reserves that have contributed to the country's development over the past decades. As our largest trading partner, Japan is greatly appreciated for its continued support in the energy sector and we remain committed to providing a reliable and stable supply of LNG. Recognizing the impact of global financial uncertainty and a decline in oil and gas prices, the government of Brunei Darussalam has renewed



Jame'Asr Hassanil Bolkiah Mosque EMBASSY OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

its commitment to diversify the economy and focus on its sustainability through the expansion of the non-oil and gas private sector. This includes the development of small and medium enterprises (SME), expansion of the export market and attracting large-scale foreign

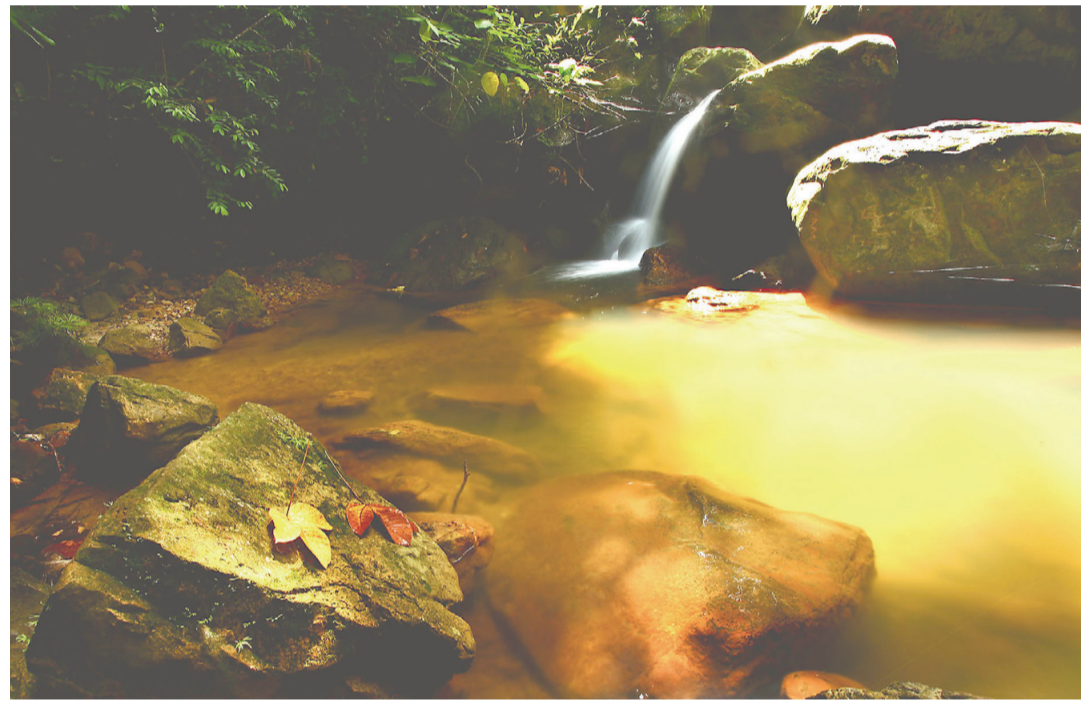
direct investment (FDI) to achieve the country's long-term goal of raising the economic growth to 5 to 6 percent by 2035.

To facilitate this, the government is currently exploring ways to improve the ease of doing business; investing in in-

frastructure; reforming regulatory and legal frameworks; increasing human capital; promoting SME creation and development through industrial clusters and business parks; and attracting FDI in other sectors such as finance, logistics and IT. Brunei Darussalam

looks forward to working with Japan toward restructuring the economy with diversification as a priority, as well as further developing bilateral industrial cooperation.

Another area of focus for the government is the tourism



Waterfall at Wasai Wong Kadir EMBASSY OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Enjoying a prosperous bilateral relationship

Tsuyoshi Okamoto
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-BRUNEI
FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

On behalf of the Japan-Brunei Friendship Association (JBFA), I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, the government and the people of Brunei Darussalam on the occasion of their 32nd National Day. At the same time, I would like to express my deep appreciation for the sultanate's longstanding and stable supply of energy to our country.

Last year was a great year for Brunei Darussalam. Prince



Malik, the second son of H.M. Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah and his wife Queen Saleha, was married in April, and Crown Princess Sarah gave birth to her third child in June.

Additionally, in October, cabinet members changed for the first time in five years and the fifth time since the country's independence in 1984. In the new administration, His Majesty the Sultan took the post of minister of foreign affairs and trade II, in addition to his existing positions of prime minister and minister of finance and defense. Also, new positions were established, such as the minister of energy and industry at the prime minister's office and the minister of primal energy and tourism. I hope the new administration will help Brunei Darussalam prosper and

move the bilateral relationship with Japan forward.

Regarding diplomatic relations, Seiji Kihara, Japan's state minister for foreign affairs, visited Brunei Darussalam in October and met with H.E. Lim Jock Sen, vice minister of foreign affairs and trade II, for dinner, as well as Her Majesty Princess Masna. He held discussions with them and reaffirmed the two countries' efforts to strengthen the bilateral relationship and cooperation between Japan and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, for which Brunei Darussalam in August became the designated member to maintain the relationship with Japan.

Brunei Darussalam, a name meaning "peaceful homeland," is a sovereign state practicing Islam as a state re-

ligion off the north coast of Borneo that is blessed with a rich ecosystem and abundant oil and natural gas reserves. The country boasts a variety of tourist attractions, including beautiful mosques; Kampong Ayer, the world's largest water village; untouched rainforests; beautiful beaches; and diving spots. I strongly recommend more Japanese visit Brunei Darussalam so they can better understand the charm of the country.

As part of its efforts to foster amicable ties, the JBFA sponsors an annual program that brings Bruneian students to Japan, provides Japanese learning materials to high schools in Brunei Darussalam and provides Japanese people with information about the country. Last year, we invited five students from Brunei Darussalam and provided them a firsthand view of how liquefied natural gas from Brunei is being used in Japan, as well as a glimpse of Japanese high-tech industries. In addition, the students were exposed to Japanese culture and lifestyle through home stays with Japanese families.

The JBFA remains committed to the development of cordial bilateral relations through its activities and I am most grateful for continued support and cooperation.

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 good health and further prosperity on the occasion of their 32nd National Day.

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to the People of
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Darussalam
as They Celebrate
Their 32nd National Day

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TEL: 03-3210-8824

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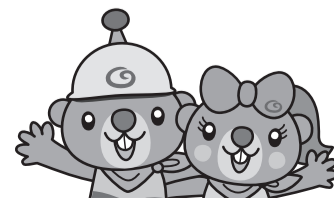
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President: Osamu Michigoe

Quarter House Bldg. 2F,
1-34, Akasaka 5-chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0052
Tel: (03) 5545-4467 Fax: (03) 5545-4468

Brunei Darussalam National Day



Bukit Shahbandar Forest Recreation Park EMBASSY OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Abundance of natural beauty

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industry. With its staunch protective efforts, the country has managed to preserve a wide array of unspoiled natural attractions that include pristine rainforests, untouched coral reefs and beautiful white sand beaches. Tourists are also able to experience the bustling night markets, enjoy a unique culinary experience with the local delicacies on offer and indulge in the country's rich cultural heritage and ceremonies. I hope Japanese tourists will take the opportunity to visit and enjoy the many wonders we have to offer.

Brunei Darussalam believes that youth is key to the success of our nation and achieving a well-educated and highly skilled population is a key point of "Wawasan Brunei 2035" strategy. The government has been steadfast in its efforts to ensure that all of the nation's youth, consisting of more than 50 percent of the population, have access to formal education. Beyond this, there is now renewed focus to increase and improve the labor force of the country, hence key initiatives have been put in place to improve innovation and technological adaptation, raise human capital quality and support a higher volume of research and development.

As a regional leader in promoting youth exchanges, Japan has developed many successful programs that have benefitted countries around the world. These include the Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths, the Ship for Southeast Asia Youth and many others. This is an area of cooperation that Brunei Darussalam hopes to see continue as these meaningful programs allow the youth from our countries to cultivate friendships with one

another, leading to a stronger sense of understanding and appreciation for each others' cultures. Such initiatives would allow a stronger bond to be forged among our young people and this would be one of the most important investments for the future of our relations.

Japan remains a very important partner to Brunei Darussalam and we greatly appreciate Japan's support and cooperation throughout the years. It is my hope that the friendship between our two countries will continue to strengthen through a wider range of cooperation with one another and through our people-to-people exchanges. In addition, Brunei Darussalam has been the country coordinator for ASEAN-Japan dialogue relations since the middle of last year and looks forward to working closely with Japan over the next three years to guide the course of the regional dialogue partnership.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the Japan-Brunei Parliamentarians League, the Japan-Brunei Friendship Association, the Kyushu-Brunei Darussalam Club and the ASEAN-Japan Centre for their continued efforts in strengthening and promoting the friendship and close ties between our countries. It is with great honor that we extend our sincere appreciation for their contributions.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank The Japan Times for giving me this opportunity to say a few words and also to the sponsors for their generous support. We look forward to continuing the strong partnership between Brunei Darussalam and Japan and we are confident that our relationship and cooperation will continue well into the future.



Empire Hotel and Country Club EMBASSY OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

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