

Brunei on journey towards sustainable economy

By Haji Shahbudin Haji Musa
Ambassador of Brunei Darussalam

On the occasion of the 39th National Day of Brunei Darussalam, I am pleased to convey the greetings of His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and the people of Brunei to Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress, members of the Imperial family, the government and the people of Japan.

The theme of this year's National Day is "Succeeding in the Vision of the Nation," which represents our aspirations in achieving Brunei Vision 2035 as we journey towards the goal of developing highly educated, skilled and accomplished people; increasing quality of life; and establishing a dynamic and sustainable economy. The support and assistance from the government of Japan during this journey is very much appreciated and we look forward to a continuous collaborative relationship with Japan and others towards a peaceful and prosperous region.

Over the past 50 years, relations between Brunei Darussalam and Japan have been characterized by close economic cooperation and deep friendship, underpinned by trade in oil and gas and people-to-people contact. In December, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the first delivery of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Brunei to Japan. Our commitment to ensuring a reliable supply of LNG to Japan will continue, while also welcoming exploration in wider areas such as downstream oil and gas, agriculture and aquaculture, tourism, and other sectors of mutual benefit. In this regard, we encourage more Japanese companies and individuals to participate in Brunei's economic diversification efforts through further foreign direct investments (FDIs).

Brunei was honored to be invited to participate in the



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18th West Pacific Naval Symposium and International Fleet Review (IFR) 2022 in Yokohama and Sagami Bay in November last year on the occasion of the 70th anniversary commemoration of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force in Yokohama. It was also a source of pride to see our naval ship the KDB Darul Ehsan participating alongside other naval ships in the fleet review in Sagami Bay, which marked the Royal Brunei Navy's inaugural deployment to Japan. Exchanges and cooperation in the field of defense, such as the visits of naval ships and exchange of personnel, provide excellent opportunities for enhancing further cooperation in the coming years.

Equally important is the promotion of our people-to-people ties. In this regard, the reopening of borders in both our countries following pandemic restrictions allowed for the resumption of air connectivity between Bandar Seri Begawan and Tokyo (Narita) in the fourth quarter of 2022, which has been met with much enthusiasm by Bruneian travelers. National carrier Royal Brunei Airlines has now reinstated its four-times-weekly direct-flight service to and from Bandar Seri Begawan. The relaxed border controls have facilitated many Bruneians making year-end holiday trips to Japan and made visiting Brunei easy and convenient.

While Japan has always been a popular destination for Bruneians, we in turn very much welcome our Japanese friends to visit Brunei and enjoy all that the country has to offer, including great food, pristine nature and peaceful surroundings.

Moreover, it has been very encouraging to see that ties continue to be fostered between the younger generations of our countries. We very much appreciate that exchanges and initiatives such as the Ship for Southeast Asian Youth Programme and the Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youth project will be reverting from online interactions to physical encounters, as they are excellent opportunities to promote greater understanding of our respective cultures, traditions and heritage amongst the youth of Brunei and



Courtesy of Embassy of Brunei Darussalam

The 30-kilometer long, dual-carriageway Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Bridge opened in March 2020 and connects the Temburong district to Brunei Darussalam's mainland.

Japan. It will be through initiatives such as these that friendships will be forged to carry on maintaining and building on the close ties that our countries share.

Brunei Darussalam and Japan's cooperation in the field of education is another area that has excellent prospects for growth. To date, we have been pleased to witness the excellent relationship between our educational institutions through exchanges and research collaboration, as well as greater interest among Bruneian students regarding their pursuit of higher education at Japanese universities. As the world gradually returns to normalcy following the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is very much our hope too that we can fully resume the range of activities that can contribute to our stronger mutual growth, whether it be in the trade, economic and cultural fields, or bilateral relations in general.

In conclusion, we would also like to convey our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the Japan-Brunei Friendship Association and the ASEAN-Japan Centre



Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Mosque — built in 1958 at the heart of the country's capital, Bandar Seri Begawan — is named after the 28th Sultan of Brunei.

for their active promotion of our bilateral cooperation, as well as The Japan News and the sponsors for their contributions.

Congratulations

on the Occasion of the 39th National Day of
Negara Brunei Darussalam



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to the People of
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as They Celebrate Their

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