

BRUNEI, FRANCE PLAN TIP COLLABORATION

Ambassador of France to Brunei Darussalam Louis Le Vert on Tuesday disclosed that the sultanate and his country plan to co-operate more to help victims of trafficking in persons (TIP).

He said during a Royal Brunei Police Force special training course that the issue is very important, stressing that children in particular have to be treated differently.

"Not just to make sure that what they have witnessed or what they have suffered is described accurately, but also to avoid putting undue stress on them, especially when they have been victims and already mistreated," Le Vert added.

Government launches new prisoner transfer laws

The government on Thursday unveiled new laws that will facilitate the transfer of prisoners between the sultanate and countries with or outside the Commonwealth.

Reports said the laws' main aim is to allow Bruneians imprisoned in other countries to serve their sentences at home.

The International Transfer of Prisoners Order 2011 will also allow foreigners in Brunei's prisons to serve their sentences in their home countries if their terms are longer than six months.

NCC to research on breast, lung cancer

Lung and breast cancers will be researched more thoroughly, Brunei National Cancer Centre (NCC) head Mohd Syafiq Abdullah said on Saturday.

He disclosed that the NCC and the Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) are working closely to determine causes, prevention and survival trends.

"We want to look at the epidemiology of lung cancer, what causes lung cancer in Brunei and the risk factors (involved) and the survival rates of lung cancer in Brunei," Mohd Syafiq said.

He revealed that finding the causes of cancer and finding appropriate solutions will be a priority.

Hong Kong seeks closer ties with Brunei, ASEAN

Hong Kong is putting more focus on ties with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), amid the regional bloc's growth and rise as a major trade partner of the Chinese territory.

"One fact is that in 2010, ASEAN has become Hong Kong's second-largest trading partner, surpassing the European Union and the United States, and we have been seeing tremendous growth in this region over the past few years, which has been growing rapidly," said Fong Ngai, the new director of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (HKETO) in Singapore, during a recent visit to Brunei.

"One year ago, hardly anybody knew what ASEAN was, and then in 2010, they became the second largest trading partner with Hong Kong, with Singapore making up 40% of total trade," he added.

Fong said ASEAN trade volume jumped about 15%, with growth in some of the ASEAN

member countries being as high as 30%.

Hong Kong is also looking at closer ties with Brunei.

"We are here in Brunei now because we want to see more growth between Hong Kong and Brunei so that's what we are here for to see what opportunities we can facilitate to create the awareness of Hong Kong business people," Fong said.

He said that with the private sector driving this growth, and with the opportunities they have seen in the ASEAN region, the expansion of trade volume naturally followed.

Fong indicated that HKETO is just taking the cue from the private sector.

"The Hong Kong government is a small government and relies on the private sector to take up initiatives. We do not pick 'winners'. We will see and ask the market to pick 'winners', so it is up to the companies in Hong Kong to decide and we facilitate," he said.

Fuel supplies to remain normal despite Shell fire

Brunei Shell Marketing (BSM) on Saturday assured customers that petrol supplies will not be affected by the fire in Shell's Singapore refinery last week.

"Brunei Darussalam fuel's supply will not be disrupted after the shutdown of the Shell Pulau Bukom refinery in Singapore following safety precautionary measures, after a fire broke out in its Pulau Bukom Manufacturing Site on September 28," BSM said in a statement.

His Majesty urges UBD to release research results

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam on Thursday called on Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) to release the results of its various research projects.

The monarch, who is also the university's chancellor, stressed that the school can get international recognition if it publishes top-notch research findings.

Major housing project exceeding expectations

A major housing project in Mentiri-Mengkubau is ahead of schedule, UEM builders managing director Mohd Razin Ghazali said on Friday.

He is relieved that recent bad weather did not set back the 4,000-house project of the Brunei Economic Development Board and that managers want to increase productivity.

"We are ahead of time, by about two months, but we are not taking it lightly, we are moving our resources more, we in fact are planning to increase our form system of work," Mohd Razin said.

Contractors urged to fulfil agreements

Acting Public Works Department Director-General Marzuke Hj Mohsin last Wednesday reiterated to contractors that they must honour agreements to improve public services.

"We do hope they (private contractors) will fulfil their obligations as part of the contract," he said.

"And it is very important to have a good working relationship between our department and the contractor to ensure we render the best service to the public," the official added.

Cebu Pacific to increase flight frequency to Brunei

The Philippines' Cebu Pacific will increase flight frequencies and seat capacity to select international flights in January next year to meet travel demand.

In a statement released on Monday, the airline said it will increase flight frequencies in Singapore, Brunei, Beijing, Bangkok and Ho Chi Minh by January next year in time for the delivery of its more brand-new Airbus A320.

New building projects to focus on energy conservation

Acting Public Works Department Director-General Marzuke Hj Mohsin on Monday disclosed that new building projects will put an onus on energy conservation.

"In our view, it is also very important to look at the 'passive' approach," he said.

"Once a building is there, in whatever design, the way it is build, you are going to use up energy," Marzuke added.

Golden Churn deemed syubhah

The Brunei Islamic Religious Council has ordered a halt to all sales of the Golden Churn Pure Creamery Butter in the country because it is syubhah, or of doubtful halal nature.

Minister of Religious Affairs Pg Dato Seri Setia Dr Hj Mohammad Pg Hj Abd Rahman made the announcement on Tuesday.

"Based on the fatwa Mufti Kerajaan Siri Fatwa Bil: (30-2011) dated 25 Syawal 1432 corresponding to 24 September 2011, and based on new information and current development of the issue regarding the butter product Golden Churn Pure Creamery Butter, manufactured by Ballantyne Food Pty Ltd, New Zealand, therefore the Brunei Islamic Religious Council has agreed to determine that the product is in the position of syubhah according to Syara' (Islamic laws)," he said.

SPORTS NEWS

Cagers ditch China tourney

The national basketball team will not compete in the 2011 China-Asean CBO Male Basketball Invitational Games starting on October 23, coach Kevin Reece announced on Tuesday.

ULTIMATE FRISBEE TO BE PROMOTED

Ultimate Frisbee has been attracting more players in the past year, and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports intends to promote the sport.

The agency has already asked local clubs to demonstrate the sport, which is a cross between American football and rugby, in schools.

"This sport, is pretty fun to play. Children, teenagers and adults can play the sport, with the playing field being flexible. A small empty space is all that is needed, allowing it to be played in schools and fields," 'Have You Seen My Disc' club member Hafiz Haji Hassan said.

He said the unavailability of key players will not allow the team to showcase it improvements, forcing him to turn down the invitation.

"All the players on the team play a big role in our success. We're a unit and we can't work with certain pieces missing from the puzzle," Reece added.

Landa rests national swimmers

National swim coach Eric Landa has decided to rest his wards ahead of the seventh Asian Age Group Swimming Championships in Jakarta, Indonesia, this weekend.

He said on Tuesday that Md Bahrin Shah Behrom Shem, Anderson Lim Chee Wei, Christian Nikles and Muhd Isa Ahmad have been undergoing intensive training and some rest will do them some good.

"I think they're quite ready (for Jakarta), we had the Brunei 100m Sprint Swimming Championship on Sunday where the chosen four that was going to Jakarta did not take any rest at all. I know that some coaches sometimes say that their athletes haven't had rest, but these ones really didn't rest," Landa added.

Fauziah performs well in MSS

Driver Fauziah Hj Haziz earned the right to compete in the Sepang 1,000-kilometre race by yearen after performing well in the Malaysian Super Series (MSS) at the Sepang International Circuit in Sepang over the weekend.

It was essentially a tale of two races for the 26-year-old.

She stalled her car just 11 seconds into the first session but bounced back in a big way in the second.

"I braked too early and I realised the corner was still far away so I let go of the brake and had to brake again. I just panicked," Fauziah said.

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FINANCIAL NEWS

KEPPEL CORP STILL BULLISH ON BRUNEI

Singapore's Keppel Corp is still keen on investing in Brunei, particularly in the offshore and marine and infrastructure industries.

Keppel Offshore & Marine general manager of projects Yong Chee Min made the disclosure recently, saying offshore infrastructure will be a priority.

"With Keppel Offshore & Marine, our main activity is construction of offshore structures, rigs and so on. Many national oil companies are starting to own rigs nowadays, and that's one prospect we are looking at here," he said.

BPMC EYES SOLAR POWER

The Berakas Power Management Company Sdn Bhd (BPMC) is considering tapping renewable energy sources such as solar to broaden its supply grid.

Company director Hans-J Rauhudt said the firm is mulling renewables, but it will not account for a huge slice of the energy pie.

However, an engineer pointed out that solar power is dependent on the weather.

INNOVATIVE BIZ MODELS ADVISED

Business coach Richard Mak on Tuesday advised entrepreneurs to make creative and innovative business models to help them develop an advantage over competitors.

He said at a workshop at the iCentre that creative business models that emphasise value can provide a long-term edge to entrepreneurs.