

# UPBEAT ON PROGRESS IN BORDER ISSUE

NST- 6/3/2019 pg. 4

Countries agree not to conduct any activity in areas where mutual border has yet to be finalised

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**M**ALAYSIA and Brunei have agreed not to undertake any activity in areas where joint demarcation and survey involving their mutual border have yet to be completed.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Sultan of Brunei Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, in a joint statement, yesterday said they welcomed the positive progress made by the joint technical committee on the demarcation and survey of the land boundary between Malaysia and Brunei.

"The leaders congratulated technical teams from Malaysia and Brunei for finding new ways to expedite survey and demar-

cation activities, especially in priority areas.

"In this regard, both leaders looked forward to the convening of the Malaysia-Brunei Darussalam Land Boundary Committee at the earliest possible opportunity, which will discuss the findings of the joint technical committee," the statement said.

The two leaders noted the ongoing discussions between officials from both countries on the provision of the exchange of letters related to maritime access.

"They encouraged their officials to explore innovative ways to develop maritime cooperation between the two countries.

"In this regard, the two leaders welcomed the ongoing discussions between their officials in this field with a view of having a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on maritime cooperation."

It said both leaders were satisfied by the continued progress made by Petronas and PetroleumBRUNEI through a collaboration in the commercial arrangement areas (CAAs) and production sharing agreements, calling for both parties to continue working together to com-

mercialise CAA discoveries at the earliest possible opportunity.

Earlier, Sultan Hassanal and Dr Mahathir had a meeting, which lasted for more than one hour, under the framework of the 22nd Malaysia-Brunei Annual Leaders' Consultation here.

It was held in a warm and constructive manner, signifying the close and special relations that bound the two countries together. Both leaders were pleased with the continued efforts made since their last meeting during Dr Mahathir's visit to Brunei on Sept 2 to 3 last year.

Both were satisfied by the continued progress in trade and investment cooperation, particularly with Sabah and Sarawak. They urged for more synergy in economic cooperation and promotion in the areas of transport, as well as infocommunications, energy, tourism, agriculture, livestock and fisheries.

"Brunei noted that Malaysia will put forward a proposed MoU relating to fisheries cooperation," the statement said.

The two leaders noted the ongoing negotiations pertaining to the MoU in the field of transport

and they looked forward to the conclusion of the deliberations on the said MoU at the earliest opportunity.

Dr Mahathir and Sultan Hassanal had witnessed the signing of a MoU relating to the transfer, escort of and movement of prisoners from areas between Sabah and Sarawak via Brunei and the movement of prisoners within Brunei via Sabah and Sarawak.

"Both leaders have agreed that the MoU will facilitate the transfer of prisoners between Malaysia and Brunei without compromising the security and safety of the prisoners, as well as the public," the statement said.

It added that Dr Mahathir anticipated the participation of Brunei in this year's Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition to be held from March 26 to 30.

The leaders said they looked forward to the renewal of the MoU in the fields of youth and sports to continue boosting sports training and youth leadership development of both countries.

They welcomed the good relations and encouraged regular en-

agements between the two countries' civil services and looked forward to the 17th Malaysia-Brunei Public Service Senior Officials' Exchange Programme to be hosted by Malaysia this year.

Dr Mahathir had also congratulated Brunei on its 35th National Day, celebrated on Feb 23. Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, in turn, congratulated Malaysia on the proclamation of inauguration of Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah as Malaysia's new king.

"Both leaders were pleased with the outcome of their meeting and looked forward to the implementation of the decisions reached for a much strengthened bilateral relationship and cooperation between Malaysia and Brunei.

"They reaffirmed their commitment to boost cooperation and collaboration in areas of mutual interest for the benefit of the people of both countries," the statement said, adding that the two leaders had agreed to hold the 23rd Annual Leaders' Consultation in Brunei in 2020.