

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM



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The Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque dominates the skyline of Brunei's capital, Bandar Seri Begawan, which is further enhanced by a 30 foot frame making it a perfect backdrop.



Brunei champions economic diversification while preserving its rich natural heritage



Innovation fuels Brunei's long-term economic resilience

Brunei is known for its oil and gas industry, which has driven our economy for decades. However, to create a more dynamic economy, we need to develop other sectors.

Brunei is redefining its economic landscape under the ambitious Wawasan Brunei 2035 vision, championing a dynamic and sustainable economy through

strategic diversification. At the helm of this transformation is the Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Minister of Finance and Economy II, Yang Berhormat Dato Dr. Amin, whose efforts have yielded major progress across sectors ranging from energy and aquaculture to IT and green development.

"Brunei is known for its oil and gas industry, which has driven our economy for decades," the minister explained. "However, to create a more dynamic economy, we need to develop other sectors to provide diverse job opportunities beyond oil and gas."

This strategy, guided by the Brunei Darussalam Economic Blueprint, focuses on five priority sectors: downstream oil and gas, food, tourism, ICT and services. Collectively, these are steering the country

Dato Dr. Amin



Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Minister of Finance and Economy II

toward economic resilience.

"We are leveraging Brunei's stringent Halal certification and coordinating efforts between government-linked companies and the private sector," the minister noted. The success of local aquaculture — particularly prawn and shrimp farming — has attracted foreign investors, while efforts in paddy plantation and food processing continue to advance. A key enabler of these ambitions is Brunei's investment

in digital infrastructure. "We introduced 5G and expanded coverage to 99% of the population, including remote areas," said Dr. Amin. These efforts underpin Brunei's growing data economy, with a Tier 3 data center and AI applications already transforming the healthcare sector. Meanwhile, tourism offers a niche,

eco-conscious alternative to mass tourism, capitalizing on Brunei's pristine rainforests and biodiversity. "We are proud of our rainforests," he says, citing growing interest in eco-tourism in districts like Tutong.

Substantial progress already made

Economic diversification is already bearing fruit. "Our GDP growth last year was 4.2%, the highest since 1999," he highlighted, noting a sharp drop in unemployment and an historic shift: Brunei now exports more non-oil and gas products than oil and gas. "This shows our diversification efforts are working," he adds. Brunei's future, according to the minister, lies in blending economic innovation with national values. "People are friendly and welcoming. These unique qualities make Brunei special," he concluded. As the country moves towards 2035, its blend of stability, vision and opportunity is positioning it as one of Southeast Asia's most promising emerging economies.

Five priority sectors driving Brunei's transformation



Digital economy: advancing smart infrastructure, e-payments and digital services.



Islamic finance: expanding syariah-compliant banking and Takaful to position Brunei as a finance hub.



Diversifying energy sources and investing in green technologies to reduce reliance on hydrocarbons.



Halal industry: promoting halal food, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics as part of an Islamic economic strategy.



Tourism & services: developing sustainable tourism and enhancing logistics to attract visitors.




Ambuyat is Brunei's national dish and is eaten with any number of spicy and fruity sauces.



Proboscis monkeys are native to Borneo and inhabit mangrove forests and coastal regions.

Advancing tourism and health sectors

 Brunei is building three centers of excellence, in cancer, neuroscience, maxillofacial and reconstructive surgery

 The government is aiming to attract 1 million visitors to Brunei

Brunei isn't trying to compete with the mass tourism of Singapore or Kuala Lumpur, it has its own pillars: culture, nature and adventure.

Brunei's tourism development is focusing on quality, sustainability and niche offerings. While still emerging compared to the country's dominant oil and gas sector, its potential is increasingly evident.

The sector "has traditionally been underdeveloped compared to regional competitors. However, the government has identified tourism as a key area for growth in its Wawasan Brunei 2035 vision, which aims to transform the country into a high-income, sustainable and globally recognized destination by 2035," said Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism, Abdul Manaf Metussin, noting that 2019 marked a peak year with more than 340,000 air arrivals and over 4 million land entries.

Since the pandemic, Brunei has emphasized what makes it unique: "We can't compete with the mass tourism of Singapore or Kuala Lumpur, so we focus on three pillars — culture, nature and adventure." The country offers rainforest trekking, diving, birdwatching and educational tourism. The government aims to boost visitor numbers, targeting 1 million tourist arrivals and \$1.2 billion in receipts by 2035. As sustainability becomes a global standard, Brunei is well-positioned. Interest in its ecotourism offerings has grown, with increased bookings for Ulu Temburong and mangrove river tours in the Brunei Muara District, Metussin said.

Dayang Hajah Zohrah binti Haji Sulaiman, Universiti Teknologi Brunei's vice-chancellor, hopes to attract more international students, especially from the U.S. "We are interested in research partnerships because their science and technology research is very advanced." She added: "We focus on building human capital in high-tech fields to support the nation's aim of becoming a skilled, educated society with a dynamic, sustainable economy."

Brunei's healthcare transformation

One of Brunei's most valuable assets is its healthcare system. Under the leadership of Dr. Isham Jaafar, it is undergoing a

Dato Dr. Abdul Manaf Metussin



Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism

Dato Dr. Isham Jaafar



Minister of Health and Chairman of JPMC

quiet revolution — blending world-class care, digital innovation and strategic partnerships to build a resilient, sustainable model. As chairman of the Jerudong Park Medical Centre (JPMC), Dr. Isham Jaafar has guided its transformation from a modest outpatient facility into Brunei's premier private hospital. "We laid a strong foundation where patient safety is the central focus," he said. The integration of Pantai Jerudong Specialist Centre further streamlined services, positioning JPMC as a regional hub for medical tourism.

A milestone came in February with Brunei's first successful living donor liver transplant. "That kind of progress doesn't come overnight," he said, citing international partnerships and local talent development. Brunei's healthcare workforce now includes 128 local

specialists — up from 30 just 15 years ago — thanks to major investment in training. Gleneagles JPMC, the national cardiovascular center, also plays a vital role. "From day one, we had interventional cardiologists on-site. Today, we perform around 1,200 angiograms annually," said CEO Dr. Peter Tay.

Digital health is expanding through the BruHealth app, which lets citizens manage appointments, view results and join health studies. "We aim to motivate users to take ownership of their health," Dr. Isham Jaafar said. The system supports AI-driven screening for diseases such as cancer and diabetes. "We can predict future disease burdens and prepare now."

Hazri bin Haji Kifle, vice-chancellor of Universiti Brunei Darussalam, noted: "Health sciences enable us to work closely with the Ministry of Health. We focus on AI, biodiversity, renewable and sustainable energy to help diversify the economy."

Dr. Isham Jaafar envisions Brunei as a regional model for health resilience, emphasizing collaboration in AI, biotech and precision medicine. Ultimately, he said, Brunei's health strategy is about balance — ensuring access while embracing innovation. "There is no point in pursuing medical tourism if our own population cannot access services easily. We are building a system that works for everyone." Through technology, collaboration and learning from best practices, Brunei's healthcare is forging ahead.

Fertilizers fuel domestic and global growth

 BFI has a urea production capacity of 1.36 million tons — the largest single-train facility in SE Asia

 BFI's diverse workforce is 22% female and 77% Bruneian

This is more than a fertilizer project, it's a platform for growth and energy transition.

Under the leadership of CEO Harri Kiiski since 2022, Brunei Fertilizer Industries (BFI) has rapidly evolved into one of Southeast Asia's most successful industrial enterprises. From its initial commissioning to full commercial operations, BFI has already exported over \$500 million worth of fertilizer products to over 20

countries — including growing volumes to the U.S.

"Our success is rooted in diversity," said Kiiski. "BFI brings together 14 nationalities and 77% of our employees are Bruneian. We have unified global experience into what we call the 'BFI Way of Work – WOW.'" This inclusive and high-performance culture has been central to BFI's ability to scale rapidly and deliver exceptional results, with safety performance far exceeding global norms — over 3 million working hours without a single accident.

BFI operates the largest single-train fertilizer plant in Southeast Asia, with a daily production capacity of 3,900 metric tons of urea and 2,200 metric tons of ammonia. The plant uses cutting-edge European carbon and ammonia technologies and is powered by world-class systems.

Harri Kiiski



CEO, Brunei Fertilizer Industries

"Our urea production relies on cutting-edge European carbon technology," Kiiski explained. "Our patented rotainer technology allows loading rates of up to 20,000 metric tons per day — among the highest globally."

Strategically located in Brunei's Sungai Liang Industrial Park, the company benefits from logistical advantages few global producers can match. "Shipping to San Francisco from Brunei is 30%

shorter than from the Middle East," he noted. This efficiency is helping BFI deepen market penetration in the U.S., Oceania and across Southeast Asia.

Aligned with Wawasan Brunei 2035

Beyond fertilizer exports, BFI is a catalyst for Brunei's economic diversification — a key pillar of Wawasan Brunei 2035.

Around 70% of its service value is sourced locally, supporting sectors from logistics to catering. "This is more than a fertilizer project — it's a platform for future growth and energy transition," said Kiiski. The company is exploring green and blue ammonia, particularly for maritime fuels, and has partnered with ThyssenKrupp Uhde on next-phase development studies.

Sustainability is embedded in BFI's business model. It produces enhanced efficiency urea with inhibitors and micro-nutrients that help reduce emissions and improve soil health. It also leverages solar energy and optimized transport logistics to minimize its carbon footprint. BFI was recently named an industry stewardship champion by the International Fertilizer Association.

"BFI, like Brunei, is small but impactful," said Kiiski, "we are not just promoting our products, we are putting Brunei on the map — not just as an oil and gas nation, but as a provider of quality."

Making a Difference, With Bruneian Roots.




Brunei Fertilizer Industries is home to Southeast Asia's largest single-train fertilizer plant. BFI's state-of-the-art plant sits on a 136-acre site in Sungai Liang Industrial Park in the Belait District, and is the country's premier ammonia and urea plant.

Scan the QR code to find out more.



Leveraging Brunei's strategic location

 **Royal Brunei plays a major role in the country's tourism and economic growth**

 **It operates a remarkably young fleet of aircraft, at just 8.5 years**

Royal Brunei Airlines is growing strategically and has impeccable levels of quality and service.

Under the dynamic leadership of CEO Sabirin Abdul Hamid, Royal Brunei Airlines (RB) is scaling new heights. With a modern fleet, including newly ordered Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners alongside its Airbus A320neo short-haul planes and a renewed strategic focus, it is redefining what a small flag carrier can achieve on the world stage.

"When I assumed leadership, we refined our strategy, vision and mission to focus on what matters most: simple, purposeful connectivity," said Hamid. RB swiftly recovered from pandemic disruption, increasing frequencies and catering to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) market of 600 million people. Its small airport enables seamless transit experiences, as Hamid highlighted: "We offer convenient transit times, a compact airport and a seamless experience that's becoming a competitive advantage. Our size allows us to be nimble and efficient."

Furthermore: "Our airport is modern and efficient and we have well-maintained roads and growing accommodation options, including international hotel brands and locally owned hotels," highlighted Salinah Salleh, the acting director of the Tourism Development Department.

RB's cabin crew has been crowned the world's best for a remarkable five consecutive years, although they are not slowing down. "Winning the World's Leading Cabin Crew award five years in a row is a proud achievement. However, more than that, it reflects our deep commitment to service excellence and Brunei's national aspirations as outlined in Wawasan 2035. Our focus has never been on winning awards — it's always been about winning the hearts of our passengers," Hamid emphasized.

RB's customer experience strategy is also underpinned by a culture of continuous improvement. The airline actively monitors passenger feedback through post-flight surveys, using it to inform staff training and service enhancements. This approach has helped RB maintain high satisfaction ratings and improve loyalty. Food is also a part of this — the general manager of Royal Brunei Culinary, Jeff Hadiman Danial, which supplies the airline's onboard catering, notes that RB is "the first impression many visitors get when arriving in Brunei — so a lot of opinions are already being shaped by the hospitality on the flight, including our food."

BIMP-EAGA and regional air hub

RB's ambitions align with Brunei's role in the Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malay-



Royal Brunei Airlines was voted World's Leading Cabin Crew by World Travel Awards for five consecutive years.

sia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) initiative. "We aim to deepen connections across BIMP-EAGA and support Brunei's rise as a hub for both passengers and cargo," explained Hamid. "Our newest route to Balikpapan is strategic, not only because of Indonesia's capital relocation to Kalimantan, but also because it provides better access to healthcare and commerce." By linking Borneo's major cities, RB is fast becoming a regional aviation hub. The airline is also expanding accessibility via partnerships like AirAsia MOVE, enhancing visibility and booking flexibility.

Regional collaborations promote Borneo tourism under the One Borneo banner. "It's time for more people to experience Brunei," said Hamid. "From our lush rainforests to our modern facilities, it is an ideal destination for travelers and investors

Sabirin Abdul Hamid



CEO, Royal Brunei Airlines

alike." A growing number of visa-free travel agreements with other countries illustrate Brunei's support for tourism and investment growth.

RB's future is anchored in sustainable innovation. The airline has participated in global dialogues around aviation decarbonization and more fuel-efficient operations as it prepares for the introduction of new aircraft.

Royal Brunei's brand is rooted in its service philosophy: 'Ikhlas from the Heart', which continues to resonate globally. This ethos guides every new initiative — from digital partnerships to network expansion, even as the airline celebrated its 50th anniversary last November. Hamid concluded: "With the right mindset, teamwork, and Brunei's supportive ecosystem, we continue to overcome challenges and grow not just in size, but in quality and reputation."

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Maritime future poised for success

 **Brunei is positioning itself as a regional hub where shipowners find speed, safety and certainty**

 **Brunei's Maritime Advantage: Fast, digital and investor-friendly**

The whole island of Borneo is set to benefit from Brunei's maritime advancements.

The transformation is underway. Under the Maritime and Port Authority (MPABD), the country is digitizing services across the entire port community from customs to cargo handling so that ships, agents and logistics players operate on a single digital platform. "Our goal is to make Brunei the most reliable and technologically advanced maritime gateway in Borneo," says Zil Husam Abd Rahman, chief executive of MPABD. Hydrographic surveys at Muara and Kuala Belait, combined with a phased rollout of the Vessel Traffic Management System,

will raise navigational predictability. Phase 1 goes live this year, with full compliance targeted by March 2026.

Time is money and Brunei delivers. The Maritime Single Window, launched in 2025, has reduced port-call processing from days to less than 24 hours. Faster approvals and automated workflows free shipowners from delays, while lowering costs across the supply chain.

Capacity expansion already underway

Muara Port Company is extending its pier to double container handling capacity from around 200,000 TEUs to 500,000 TEUs annually. This is only the beginning. A wider feasibility study is already in progress, aiming at even greater throughput and long-term infrastructure that positions Brunei as a serious contender in regional container transshipment.

Feasibility studies are also exploring free ports and free trade zones to attract transshipment, manufacturing and value-added logistics. Plans include developing new passenger ferry routes to boost connectivity and actively pursuing more port calls from global carriers, creating new shipping routes that anchor Brunei on the regional trade map.



The Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien Bridge is 19 miles long, the longest in Southeast Asia.

MPABD is shaping Muara Port into a one-stop maritime hub by offering bunkering services for visiting fleets; waste management systems aligned with industry best practices; efficient logistics to reduce dwell times and improve turnaround; and ship-to-ship and lay-up operations supported by clear regulations.

Brunei's ship registry is being strengthened with transparent compliance, competitive fees and digital access for owners. The Brunei Flag offers security, white-list recognition and alignment with global conventions such as the Hong Kong

Zil Husam Abd Rahman



Chief Executive, Maritime and Port Authority

Ship Recycling Convention (accession targeted by March 2026). A green port policy and ship-emissions monitoring system are also in development, enhancing Brunei's appeal for ESG-focused investors.

MPABD has streamlined permits, digitized approvals and built clear partnership pathways with local operators. For investors and shipowners, that means lower entry risk and faster go-to-market. "Brunei may be small in size, but we are building a maritime system that is world-class in reliability and efficiency," emphasizes Zil Husam Abd Rahman.

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Brunei Darussalam Maritime Week 2026 is a premier platform for international collaboration and dialogue. This event is a must-attend for professionals seeking to network with key stakeholders, explore investment opportunities, and stay ahead of emerging trends in the maritime sector.

For more information and to stay updated, please visit:
www.bruneimaritimeweek.com



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Empowering Brunei's industrial evolution

Exceltech drives Brunei's digital transformation and energy diversification

Brunei aims to generate 30% of its power from renewables by 2035

Exceltech Solutions is a model for Brunei's future, with digitization and diversification at its core and leveraging geography as its future.

Since its founding in 2012, Exceltech Solutions has become a leading force in Brunei's energy and industrial technology landscape. Under the leadership of Managing Director Hafriz Fayadh, the company has evolved from a three-person team into a multi-award-winning enterprise employing more than 150 professionals.

"We started in 2012, around the time of the oil and gas downturn," Fayadh recalled. "It was quite a challenge for us in the beginning as a startup." By 2018, however, the company had begun to gain traction, securing major contracts and building a reputation for technical excellence across oil and gas, utilities and infrastructure.

Between 2020 and 2022, Exceltech entered a new growth phase — expanding into cybersecurity, telecom instrumentation and smart utilities. "Oil and gas remain our core," he explained, "but we have diversified into several service streams. That's the

direction we are heading."

Exceltech's ability to transfer skills across industries has been a catalyst for success. "Because of our roots in oil and gas, many of the skills we have developed are transferable to other sectors," Fayadh noted. "That has made our transition into new industries smoother." Strategic partnerships have also played a pivotal role. "We have successful partnerships with companies that have a global presence," he said. "These ventures help us access new markets, enable knowledge transfer and strengthen our core business."

Furthermore, "the Pulau Muara Besar Industrial Park, home to the Hengyi refinery, is expanding into a full industrial park with a new shipyard and other industries," said Yang Mulia Awang Shamir Salahudin, managing director of the Petroleum Authority of Brunei Darussalam.

Captain Abdul Mateen Abdurrahman Liew, managing director of Brunei Gas Carriers, echoed this strategic strength, noting: "Brunei is well-located in this region, close to key markets and end users. I am proud to say that we have proven to be a reliable shipping partner over the years. We deliver every cargo as promised, which Bruneians can take pride in."

Transformation underway

As Brunei accelerates its digital transformation under the Digital Economy Masterplan 2025, Exceltech is well-positioned to support national goals. "Part of our ambition is to digitize operations as far as possible — reducing paperwork, speeding up decision-making and enabling companies to evaluate options more quickly," Fayadh



The Canopy at Ulu Temburong National Park rises over 130 feet, allowing visitors to experience nature up close.

shared. He cited examples like drone-based inspections replacing manual site visits, reducing cost and increasing efficiency.

The country's broader energy and infrastructure ecosystem is also undergoing

support Brunei's long-term development." Exceltech is also engaging with Brunei's renewable energy transition. "We fully support this direction," Fayadh affirmed. "It allows us to offer competitive services to clients undertaking large-scale renewable energy projects. We are also open to being a developer, not just a service provider."

Looking ahead, Fayadh urged investors to view Brunei as an emerging ASEAN opportunity. "Brunei offers competitive labor and utility rates, available land, solid infrastructure and strong government support," he emphasized. "What's needed now is greater promotion and visibility to help them recognize the potential here." As an ASEAN Business Award winner, Exceltech stands as a committed, reliable partner ready to help drive Brunei's future — locally and beyond.

"Because of our roots in oil and gas, many of the skills we've developed are transferable to other sectors."

Hafriz Fayadh Managing Director, Exceltech Solutions

transformation. "Our priority is securing Brunei's power supply," said Benard Christian, acting CEO of Berakas Power Company. "We are bringing a new 130-megawatt combined cycle gas turbine online by 2027 to boost generation efficiency and strengthen grid resilience designed to

Exceltech Solutions is the one-stop solutions provider in Brunei Darussalam for oil and gas, renewable energy and utility companies.



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Strategic plans for Brunei and beyond

TAIB offers a full suite of Islamic finance products, all syariah-compliant and protected

It has made major steps forward in digital financing and FinTech

TAIB has grown beyond a national institution into a globally benchmarked Islamic finance group. TAIB is the ideal financial partner in Brunei.

As Brunei continues its digital transformation, Perbadanan Tabung Amanah Islam Brunei (TAIB) has emerged as a key driver of innovation in Islamic finance, digital payments and sustainable economic growth. Founded in 1991 to promote a culture of Islamic savings, TAIB has grown into one of the region's most forward-thinking financial institutions — with operations spanning banking, Takaful, travel and even fuel retail.

"TAIB has grown beyond a national institution into a globally benchmarked Islamic financial group," said Hasnah Ibrahim, its managing director. She added: "TAIB is the ideal financial institution partner in Brunei, being a multi-award-winning institution, with international recognition in Islamic finance, digital banking and deposit innovation. It has a corporate heart deeply rooted in Islamic values, of-

fering fully syariah compliant and digitally enabled products for global clients."

To support Brunei's National Digital Economy Masterplan, TAIB has introduced a suite of new features including dynamic QR code payments, Soundbox audio payment alerts and an integrated TAIB Virtual Experience platform. "This feature enables real-time payments, improves reconciliation accuracy and strengthens fraud prevention, all while delivering a seamless customer experience," Ibrahim noted. TAIB also became the first financial institution in Brunei to connect directly to the tarus platform, a national QR code standard that unifies digital payments.

Brunei's central bank (BDCB) is also confident in innovation, its managing director, Rashidah Sabtu, remarking: "We recognize the importance of balancing innovation and regulation. In this context, one major transformation of the financial sector of the past decade has been on the digital front."

Apart from our efforts at modernizing Brunei's payment systems, BDCB has invested to develop a vibrant FinTech ecosystem."

A regional role to play

TAIB's wider ecosystem reflects its unique model: Insurans Islam TAIB provides Takaful protection and Darussalam Holdings offers travel and Hajj services — a testament to its goal of meeting Bruneians' everyday needs. For Sabtu, there are synergies to exploit: "sustainable finance, which shares underlying values with Islamic finance, will be a priority area as it offers favorable benefits to financial



Perbadanan TAIB offers a diverse portfolio of products and services guided by Islamic finance principles.

Hasnah Ibrahim



Managing Director, TAIB

Rashidah Sabtu



Managing Director, Brunei Darussalam Central Bank

pany, we can offer a base in ASEAN to work with different parties from here. We know many have used Singapore as their base for Southeast Asia or even the Asia-Pacific. We have a close working relationship with Singapore at the government-to-government level — we even share the same currency — which offers people already there a very comfortable second destination in ASEAN to expand towards this other side: Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines."

The BDCB also notes how, in 2016, Brunei became the first ASEAN country to introduce a collateral registry which eases access to credit within the country. Ibrahim stressed: "With a robust Islamic banking platform that supports individuals, SMEs and larger corporations across Brunei and, increasingly, international businesses entering the Bruneian and ASEAN markets, TAIB aims to become the financial institution of choice in Brunei and beyond."

sector development without compromising the environment, social well-being and governance."

Looking ahead, TAIB sees itself as a bridge for ASEAN trade and investment, something shared by the Brunei Economic Development Board, whose Acting CEO, Daniel Leong, highlighted: "for a U.S. com-

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Kampong Ayer known as the “Venice of the East” is the world’s largest water village.



Luagan Lalak — where forest sky and still waters create an enchanting scene.

Imagining a digitized future with Imagine Sdn

 Imagine has evolved from a government-linked company into a fully corporatized entity

 Almost 100% of Brunei is covered by 5G infrastructure

Imagine provides reliable and high speed connectivity in a highly connected country.

Imagine has emerged as Brunei’s leading telecommunications provider — and a national symbol of digital resilience. It is a fully-fledged tech-driven enterprise, recently earning recognition at the 2025 Asian Telecom Awards.

“Two years ago, 100% of our revenue came from telecommunications, Wi-Fi and broadband,” said Allen On Hsien Yung, Imagine’s director and acting CEO. “Today, we have diversified into managed services and digital platforms. We are confident this year will bring another breakthrough.”

At the core of Imagine’s philosophy is a commitment to going beyond connectivity. From AI-driven enterprise solutions to cloud-based services and lifestyle integrations, Imagine is redefining what a telco can be. “We want you to live, breathe and chill Imagine,” Yung added. “That’s the kind of transformation we envision — being a part of your ev-

eryday life.” This transformation comes synchronized with Brunei’s Wawasan 2035 vision — a national agenda centered on economic diversification through ICT, logistics and smart infrastructure. Imagine is playing a critical role in supporting that goal. Telecommunications in Brunei used to be very basic and for a long time, the sector was underdeveloped,” said Chris Phan, acting CEO of Unified National Networks (UNN). Eventually the Ministry of Finance and Economy consolidated networks to reduce costs, increase efficiency and encourage innovation, but there was a bigger picture at play. “This led to lower data prices — from around \$3 per gigabyte to about \$1.80 — making technology more accessible and affordable,” continued Phan, who added “this shift wasn’t just about telecommunications. It was about laying the groundwork for broader digitalization. The Ministry saw digitalization as a necessary path to diversify the economy.

From a broader digital infrastructure perspective, Darussalam Assets has played a central role in preparing Brunei for the next phase of its technological evolution. “Obviously, now we are entering the age of AI,” noted chief corporate affairs officer Rahayu Razak. “Access to reliable telecommunications is essential — it’s the very platform on which digitalization depends. What UNN has done in this area has been a major step forward, ensuring that both our companies

Allen On Hsien Yung



Director and acting CEO
Imagine

Rahayu Razak



Chief Corporate Affairs Officer
Darussalam Assets

and the country have a solid path to digitization.” This foundation has enabled companies like Imagine Sdn Bhd to rapidly evolve from traditional service providers into innovation-driven platforms, accelerating Brunei’s transition to a digital economy aligned with Wawasan 2035.

Pioneering the path ahead

Telecom players are stepping up to help power this shift. As Progresif CEO Nurul Haniah Jaafar put it: “Ultimately, the nation is our client. As a government-linked company, what we do — and what we aspire to be — must align with Brunei’s goals of becoming a smart, connected nation. We are the enablers. Innovation is our DNA.”

Imagine’s innovation strategy rests on four key pillars: digital experience platforms, managed digital services, smart sectoral solutions and content/community engagement. These range from secure enterprise systems

and 5G-ready infrastructure to public sector partnerships in education and transport.

“We don’t just sell services,” Yung emphasized. “We build the capability in-house first, then deliver it to market. That’s how we ensure value and sustainability.” Imagine must remain competitive not just locally but also regionally: “With Sarawak to our left and Sabah to our right, the regional competition is very real. Cross-border connectivity and eSIMs challenge our market share, so we have to lead through innovation, not just infrastructure.”

This approach applies to HR too. Imagine is investing in Bruneians — from social media influencers to empowering fresh graduates through innovation teams. “While we outsourced most projects previously, last year, several significant projects of substantial value were completed in-house,” Yung said. “We hope to build on this because this is one of the main revenue streams that we can explore.”

What may have seemed out of reach two years ago is being delivered by Bruneians, for Brunei. “Imagine is 100% local. This proves that Bruneians have what it takes not just to catch up but leap ahead.” In a hyper connected world, Brunei is at the forefront.

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