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Sandalwood (Gaharu)

Sandalwood or agarwood (gaharu) is a dark oil-embedded wood formed in species of Aquilaria trees that uniquely grow in Southeast Asia.

The central part of the tree is initially light and pale-coloured. However, when a parasite mould attacks the bark, the tree would secrete a fragrant oil to heal the wounded area that darkens and hardens over time.

It is the perfumed scent oozing out of the sandalwood that captivates the hearts, and noses, of aroma-loving people both locally and abroad.

Sandalwood is protected not only under the Brunei Forest Act of 1934, Chapter 46, Section 4(A), 19 and 26(A), but also under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES).

As it is a highly regulated commodity, only a few companies are licensed to explore sandalwood trees in Brunei.



The price depend on its quality.



It requires skill to extract the resin from dead wood.



Some of the Gaharu product, such as Talc Powder, lotion and Gaharu Tea (left) new product from local company.

Sandalwood-based products, then and now

Sandalwood sales in Brunei is usually at its peak during the month of Ramadan and Eid and Al-Adha festivities, and especially for Khatam Al-Quran ceremony.

Sandalwood is not just sold in the form of oil and woodchips, but they are also available in an array of sandalwood-based products such as

tea, powder, soap, lotion, perfumes and car fragrance.

Many of Brunei pilgrims have said that its unique fragrance acts as a reminder of home when they are performing the Hajj and Umrah. The sweet smell of sandalwood can help soothe a fatigued mind or it can just simply create a pleasant, relaxing atmosphere.

Sandalwood business: Challenges and misperceptions

The main challenge that Sandalwood businesses face in Brunei is that a lot of people are not fully informed of the benefits of sandalwood.

There are also misperceptions about sandalwoods. One of the confusions is to why its price can reach up to thousands of dollars per 12ml.

This is due to the fact that the cost of extracting even a drop of the oil is very high, especially when it is top quality.

However, regardless of its price, there is a high demand of local sandalwood not only in Brunei, but also overseas as well.

Local sandalwood oil is even recognised by foreign sandalwood producers as top quality oil, comparable with the ones from Cambodia, Laos and Thailand. It is also described to have a more seducing smell unlike any other.



'Regal Brunei' and 'Supreme Brunei' two of the famous perfume with high quality which produce by Golden Aroma Enterprise (GAA).

Friendship Bridge



His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam cut a ribbon to mark the launch of the Friendship Bridge with Prime Minister, Yang Amat Berhormat Dato' Laila Utama Dato' Seri Mohd Najib bin Tun Abdul Razak.

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Mahrum Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul khairi waddien, The Sultan and yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and Malaysian Prime Minister, The Honourable Mohd. Najib bin Tun Abdul Razak officially launched the Friendship Bridge on december 8, 2013.

Both leaders then inaugurated the BND10 million bridge by signing a plaque, which was followed by ribbon cutting at kampong ujong jalan in Bangar.

The Friendship Bridge officially ends the nightmare of the slow ferry service, which was terminated upon its completion, cutting the crossing time in just minutes.

The two sides, which evenly shared the cost of the construction, have agreed that the bridge will remain toll- free.

Apart from connecting the citizens of both nations, the bridge reflects the friendliness and close ties between the government of Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia.

Long-awaited historic bridge officially opens to public

The construction work over Pandaruan River began on May 5, 2012.

Brunei and Malaysia formed the joint Project team (JPT) and the Bridge Management Committee (BMC) to oversee the project until its completion.

The team from both countries met to ensure the two edges of the bridge fit together at the meeting point, the Brunei-Malaysia border.

The infrastructure construction was completed on August 13, 2013, stretching 189 metres long, 14 metres wide and five metres high.

And by the end of October 2013, the work on the bridge was finalised.



His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and The Honorable Mohd. Najib bin Tun Abdul signed the bridge's plaque, strengthening ties between Brunei and Malaysia.



Both Brunei and Malaysia play an important role in ASEAN's master plan on Connectivity.



Friendship Bridge the link between Brunei and Malaysia.

Impact on development of local industries

The Friendship Bridge opens up new opportunities to explore and improve the tourism in Temburong District as it has a great potential to thrive in the tourism industry with its untouched lush green tropical trees and an abundance of wildlife.

It also plays a role in accelerating the development in Temburong District due to easy access to material buildings from Brunei-Muara district, further hastening the growth of Bangar Town.

The Friendship Bridge is hoped to benefit the whole society, especially the motorists who frequently travel to the neighbouring countries.

It is also anticipated that it will positively impact the development and progress of the country in line with the Brunei Vision 2035.



Bru-HIMS



His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, The Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime heard explanations on the use of online Bru-HIMS registration.

Brunei Healthcare Information and Management System

Bru-HIMS (Brunei Healthcare Information and Management System) is a system that integrates and manages patients' information under the medical and healthcare services.

It stores information electronically and improves the management as well as the accessibility of the patients' information and comprehensive medical history in the country.

The system aims to combine patients' information and their medical histories under 'one patient, one record'.



Bru-HIMS use application can retrieve system of patient records more accurate and effective.

Effectively managing the time

The benefits of using Bru-HIMS include effectively managing the time spent by the patients at hospitals and health centres and facilitating the liaison between patients and doctors better due to easy access to patients' records.

The system allows doctors and nurses to attain immediate results of medical check-

up and patients' medical histories via online and provides short reminders to the patients regarding their appointments three days prior to their actual meeting.

It also allows doctors to provide diagnosis and treatments more accurately and effectively with the patients' complete record being compiled under a single electronic file.



The Minister of Health, Pehin Dato Awang Haji Adenan watching the staff apply the Bru-HIMS at the counter of RIPAS Hospital.

e-Health

Bru-HIMS is a nationwide e-Health initiative by the Ministry of Health to advance in healthcare services by following the current global trend for health facilities by replacing the old manual system.

Registration can be done by filling in a form at registration counters in government hospitals, by downloading the registration form for Bru-HIMS from the Ministry of Health's website or by registering online through the Bru-HIMS application.



Officers of RIPAS Hospital show Bru-HIMS use application that can be downloaded via Google Play and Aps Store for easier retrieval system of patient records.



Institute Technology of Brunei

Institut Teknologi Brunei (ITB) was set up in January 1986 with the primary objective of catering for a range of interests in technical and commercial education.

Initially, ITB offered Higher National Diploma programmes in engineering, business and computing.

However, His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam officially upgraded ITB to a university status in his decree during the Teacher's Day Celebration on October 18, 2008.

Retaining its old name, ITB is now one of the three fully-fledged public universities in Brunei Darussalam and is a 'Brunei University of Engineering, Business and Computing'.

Since 1986, ITB has always focused on meeting the national manpower needs by enrolling a high percentage of local students.

During the ITB Convocation Ceremony 2013 at the International Conference Centre, His Majesty The Sultan and Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, who is also ITB's Chancellor, stressed in his titah that it was time for ITB to step out of its comfort zone and make changes to transform itself while at the same time turning itself into an engineering and technology university that is of international standards.

ITB has a small stature especially in terms of the student population. Its size is seen as an advantage for ITB to easily facilitate planning and implementing initiatives as a supplier of relevant human resource.

Such a feat is possible as proven by experiences in other countries. An example is the California Institute of Technology, a small university in California with only 2,000 students that has become one of the world's top engineering universities.

Milestone

This year, ITB recorded another milestone after producing local degree graduates for the first time, on par with ITB's status as a university. The convocation ceremony demonstrated the seriousness of ITB in improving the skills of local students in becoming an asset for the future development of the country.

The Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam aims to see a 60:40 science to arts ratio as part of its national development plan.

Therefore, ITB has the obligation to ensure that the programmes on offer are interesting to attract even more students who aim to pursue science.



Skilled of local students as an asset for the country.



Marital Arts from the student of ITB

Regatta Brunei Darussalam



Regatta Brunei Darussalam aims to restore the glory days of boat-racing in the 50's, 60's and 70's which were held in a cheerful and lively atmosphere in Bandar Seri Begawan.

A regatta can be best described as either a boat race or series of boat races. The term typically describes racing events of unpowered watercraft.

Most commonly, a regatta involves rowing, sailing or yacht racing.

There are two people who hold important roles in a rowing team; Pencaruk and Pengemudi.

The pencaruk is the person who sits in front of the boat and who shouts words of encouragement to the rowers.

Meanwhile, the Pengemudi sits at the back and steers the boat at the right course.



His Majesty leading the team comprising of Brunei Darussalam Regatta's Executive committee.

Berjanawari

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam consented to attend this year's boat race event.

The presence of His Majesty further increased the enthusiasm and excitement at the event by participating in the race like his late father did, who was a keen sportsman.

In the past, regatta was known as berjanawari. The word comes from the month January. January was once a festival month, hence, it was called ber-Januari.

However, when Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien succeeded the throne, the regatta was moved to September as it was the month of his birthday. Thus, the name berjanawari was no longer appropriate.



Other events competed during Regatta Brunei Darussalam that include Jet Ski race, F-one, speedboat race and the water taxi race.



Unique festival

To most Bruneians who lived in Kampong Ayer, before the World War and after, the regatta is a most unique festival.

It is a time when the river is jammed packed with boats. Some boats come "dressed" for the occasion and some boats are said to be berpanga — decked with a roof on top.

Due to this reason, Dermaga Diraja

Bandar Seri Begawan has become a tourist attraction for people who wish to witness the regatta.

Regatta not only restores the joy and enlivens Bandar Seri Begawan as a centre, but it also increases the income of the small-scale businesses around the capital.

It is hoped that the regatta would help to promote tourism in Brunei and at the same time turning Bandar Seri Begawan into a tourist centre.

