



UNIVERSITI BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

SOASCIS

QUARTERLY BULLETIN

VC's Message



On the occasion of the publication of the maiden issue of SOASCIS Bulletin I would like to congratulate the Director and staff of SOASCIS for their commendable initiative in bringing out this publication. I understand that the Bulletin will be published every quarterly and distributed worldwide to individuals, centres, institutes, schools, and other organisations concerned with Islamic studies. Since the Bulletin is meant to publicise SOASCIS' academic, research, and other scholarly activities and its growing network, this is indeed a good move by SOASCIS in its efforts to be better known in the international academic community and to attract more students from different parts of the world to undertake their Masters and PhD studies at the Centre. This way UBD stands to benefit as well from the publication of SOASCIS Bulletin. My best wishes to the Bulletin's readers who, I hope, will multiply in years to come.

Dato Paduka Dr Hj Zulkarnain bin Hj Hanafi
Vice-Chancellor

Message SOASCIS Director



SOASCIS is most pleased to bring out the first issue of its quarterly Bulletin beginning on July 1, 2013. The main purpose of the Bulletin is to serve as the main source of information about SOASCIS' varied programmes and activities for the international academic community as well as the Bruneian general public.

Although SOASCIS is a very young academic centre, having been established only about two years ago, it has succeeded in projecting its public profile here in Brunei Darussalam and in the international

academic community at large as one of the few exclusively postgraduate centres of Islamic studies in the world. It has organised several international seminars and conferences, both at home and abroad, in partnership with leading universities such as Kyoto University, Japan and Oxford University, England. It has gained an excellent reputation among prospective graduate students from all over the Muslim world. To date, it has thirteen PhD and MA students. It has thus far signed eight MOUs with leading universities and research institutes in Japan, Turkey, Qatar, and Malaysia. Hopefully, *insha Allah*, through its regular coverage of the Centre's activities and programmes, SOASCIS Bulletin's readership will grow in years to come, thereby contributing significantly to the reputation of Universiti Brunei Darussalam in general and the Centre in particular

Introducing Soascis Director and Deputy Director

Professor Datuk Dr Osman Bakar *Chair Professor and Director*

Professor Datuk Dr Osman Bakar was appointed Chair Professor at SOASCIS, UBD on 5th September, 2012 and its first full-time Director on 1st January, 2013. A former mathematician, he earned a doctorate in Islamic philosophy from Temple University, Philadelphia, USA. An Emeritus Professor of Philosophy of Science at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, he was also its former Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) (1995-2000), Malaysia Chair of Southeast Asian Islam (2000-2005) at the Prince Talal al-Waleed Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University, Washington DC, Professor of Islamic Thought and Civilisation at ISTAC, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) (2005-2008), and Deputy Chief Executive Officer (CEO), International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies, Malaysia (IAIS) (2008-2012).

A Fulbright Visiting Scholar at Department of History of Science, Harvard University (1992), Dr Bakar is an author of 18 books and more than 300 articles on various aspects of Islamic thought and civilization, particularly Islamic science and philosophy and Islam in Southeast Asia. Several of his writings have been translated into numerous languages, including Spanish, Arabic, Turkish, Chinese, Persian, Indonesian Malay, Urdu, and Bosnian. He was a member of the Council of 100 Leaders of the West-Islamic World Initiative for Dialogue founded by the World Economic Forum, Davos, Switzerland. In 2009 he was included in the list of Malaysia's twenty leading intellectuals and in 2010 and 2012 he was named among the 500 most influential Muslims in the world. In 1994, he was made a Dato' by HH the Sultan of Pahang, and in 2000 a Datuk by DYMM the Malaysian King. He may be reached at osman.bakar@ubd.edu.bn

Pg Dr Norhazlin Pg Haji Muhammad *Deputy Director*

Pg Dr Norhazlin Pg Haji Muhammad is currently the Deputy Director of SOASCIS (since February 2013). She obtained her early education at Arabic Schools in Brunei Darussalam and completed her doctorate in Islamic Studies from the University of Birmingham, United Kingdom in the area of Educational Systems in Brunei Darussalam in the light of Al-Attas' Philosophy of Education. Her publications include a book titled *Islam and Western Philosophy of Education: A Comparative Study*.

She is currently leading a research project on child protection in the Islamic context. Pg Dr Norhazlin is presently a Visiting Research Fellow at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, United Kingdom. Her research is titled *Transitional Learning of Islamic Studies in the West: Its Philosophy, Curriculum, and Challenges*. She may be reached at norhazlin.muhammad@ubd.edu.bn



SOASCIS Academic Visit to Japan, 18-22 March 2013



Exchange of documents after signing of MOU between SOASCIS and ASAFAS, Kyoto University. **Left to right:** AP Dr Azman, Prof Osman, Prof Shigeki Kaji (Dean of ASAFAS) & Prof Kosugi.



AP Dr Azman and Prof. Osman with academic staff of Institute of Advanced Asian Studies, Tokyo University

SOASCIS paid a five-day working visit to four top-ranking universities in Japan from 18 to 22 March, 2013 with the view of furthering academic collaboration with each of them. The four universities visited were Kyoto University, Doshisha University in Kyoto, Tokyo University and Sophia University, Tokyo. SOASCIS was represented in the visit by AP Dr Azman Ahmad, UBD's Assistant Vice Chancellor (Academic) and its Director, Professor Datuk Dr Osman Bakar. An MOU was signed at Kyoto University between its School of Asian and African Area Studies (ASAFAS) and SOASCIS after which a seminar was convened on the theme *Islam in Asia: Engaging the Community*. The seminar was jointly organised by the School's Centre for Islamic Area Studies (KIAS) headed by Professor Yasushi Kosugi and SOASCIS. SOASCIS' papers were presented by Dr Azman and Professor Osman and KIAS' papers by Professor Kosugi and AP Dr Shinsuke Nagaoka.

MOU Signed between SOASCIS and CILE, Doha, Qatar during 5th FOCUS Conference



Left to right: Pg Dr Norhazlin and Professor Datuk Osman (SOASCIS' signatories) and Professor Tariq and Dr Albakry (CILE's signatories).

Senior Minister Masagos Zulkifli of Republic of Singapore Visited SOASCIS



Photo: AP Dr Azman Ahmad presenting a gift to Minister Masagos Zulkifli



Minister Masagos and his delegation with SOASCIS academic staff. On his right is AP Dr Azman and on his left, Professor Osman. HE the Singapore High Commissioner in Brunei Darussalam, Mr Jaya Ratnam is on the far left

SOASCIS, Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) received an official visit on Thursday, January 17, 2013 from Mr Masagos Zulkifli, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs cum Home Affairs of the Republic of Singapore. His seven-member delegation was received by Associate Professor Dr Azman bin Ahmad and Dr Hajah Anita Binurul Zahrina binti POKLWDSS (Dr) Haji Awang Abdul Aziz, UBD's Assistant Vice Chancellors for Academic and Global Affairs respectively and also by Professor Datuk Dr Osman Bakar, Chair Professor and Director of SOASCIS. The visit commenced with a briefing on SOASCIS' development and progress and major activities since its inception about two years ago, and also its future plans. Mr Masagos expressed interest in exploring potential collaboration between the National University of Singapore (NUS) and the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) and UBD in general and SOASCIS in particular.

Director of OCIS, Oxford and SOASCIS Staff Discussed Issues of Academic Collaboration



On 9 April, 2013 SOASCIS received an official visit from Dr Farhan Ahmad Nizami, the Founding Director of Oxford Centre of Islamic Studies (OCIS) accompanied by Mr Richard Makepeace, OCIS Registrar. The two sides held a discussion on several collaborative issues in the area of Islamic studies. Currently, two SOASCIS staff, Pg Dr Norhazlin Pg Muhammad and Dr Kathrina Hj Daud is attached with OCIS as Visiting Research Fellows.

SOASCIS Hosted a Regional Conference, the 5th FOCUS, on 24-25 May, 2013

YB Pehin OKLW Dr Abdul Aziz, Professor Tariq Ramadan, and Professor Omar Kasule as Key Speakers



YB Pehin OKLW DSS Dr Hj Abdul Aziz delivering his keynote address



Professor Tariq Ramadan presenting his keynote address chaired by AP Dr Jabal M. Buaben of SOASCIS

The Fifth FOCUS Conference, hosted by SOASCIS, was held at the Senate Room, Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) on 24-25 May 2013. The theme of the two-day Conference was *Islamic Ethics and Its Application to Community Development: the Role of Educational Institutions*. The Conference, which was attended by about fifty scholars, academics, and graduate students from the ASEAN region, was opened with welcoming remarks by SOASCIS Director and Chair Professor, Datuk Dr Osman Bakar. This was followed by two keynote addresses, the first delivered by Pehin OKLWDSS (Dr) Haji Awang Abdul Aziz bin Pehin Udana Khatib DSP Hj Awang Umar, a former Minister of Education of Brunei Darussalam and a former Vice Chancellor of Universiti Brunei Darussalam, and the second by Professor Tariq Ramadan, one of the world's leading contemporary Islamic scholars. The title of the former address was *The Institutionalisation of Ethics with Special Reference to Nation Building in the Case of Brunei Darussalam*, while the latter address is titled *Source of Islamic Ethical Teachings: Reforming Our Understanding and Education about Islamic Applied Ethics*. Another specially invited speaker was Professor Omar Kasule, Professor of Epidemiology and Bioethics at Faculty of Medicine, King Fahd Medical City in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Eleven other speakers from Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Singapore, including Pg Dr Norhazlin and AP Dr Mulyadhi Kartanegara of SOASCIS presented their papers around the central theme of the Conference.



AP Dr Mulyadhi Kartanegara



Professor Dr Omar Kasule

SOASCIS Signed MOUs with Universities and Research Institutes in Saudi Arabia, Turkey and United Arab Emirates

During their recent nine-day official visits (30 April – 8 May 2013) to Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), two SOASCIS officials, namely Associate Professor Dr Azman Ahmad (UBD's Assistant Vice Chancellor, Academic) and Professor Datuk Dr Osman Bakar (SOASCIS Chair Professor and Director), held discussions with their counterparts on a wide range of academic collaborations. The institutions visited included:



Dean and academic staff of the Institute of Islamic Economics, Jeddah

In Saudi Arabia:

Institute of Islamic Economics, King Abdul Aziz University, Jeddah; Islamic Research and Training Institute (IRTI), Islamic Development Bank (IDB), Jeddah; Madinah Institute for Leadership and Entrepreneurship (MILE), Madinah; and International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), Riyadh.

In Turkey:

The Centre for Civilisational Studies, Istanbul Medeniyet University; Faculty of Islamic Studies, Sehir University, Istanbul; and Faculty of Divinity, Marmara University, Istanbul.

In UAE:

The Centre for Islamic World Studies, Zayed University, Abu Dhabi.

MOUs signed by SOASCIS were with IIIT, MILE, Centre for Civilisational Studies, Istanbul Medeniyet University, and Faculty of Divinity, Marmara University.

Pehin OKLWDSS (Dr) Hj Abdul Aziz Appointed Senior Fellow of Soascis

YB Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Wijaya Dato Seri Setia (Dr) Haji Awang Abdul Aziz bin Pehin Udana Khatib Dato Seri Paduka Hj Awang Umar was appointed Senior Fellow at SOASCIS beginning on May 1, 2013. A well-known Bruneian senior figure with a long and distinguished public service, including as a former Minister of Education and



Dr Che Wan Jasimah

Dr Che Wan Jasimah Radhi, a senior lecturer at the University of Malaya, was spending her sabbatical leave at SOASCIS from February to June 2013. She was completing her research report on institutional and quality issues pertaining to halal products in Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia.

SOASCIS Intellectual Dialogue Series

Public Lectures by Professors Kamal Hassan and Tariq Ramadan

On December 8, 2012, as part of the SOASCIS Intellectual Dialogue Series, Tan Sri Professor Mohd Kamal Hassan, SOASCIS' first EVP and also a Distinguished Professor at ISTAC, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), gave a lecture at the CORE, UBD on the topic Integration and Islamisation: the Rationale, What, Why and How. On January 21, 2013 he gave another lecture to launch the SOASCIS Graduate Seminar Series, which since then has been held once a month except for the months of June and July when academics and students are away on long vacation.



His lecture title was *Reflections on Contemporary Civilisational Crisis: Implications for Islam's Approach to Human Knowledge*. In this lecture Professor Kamal Hassan emphasised on the need for the integration of reason and Divine Revelation and the crucial role of Muslim intellectuals in the way forward.

Professor Tariq Ramadan was the second guest speaker to deliver a lecture at the SOASCIS Intellectual Dialogue Series in December 2012. He is currently HH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al Thani Professor of Contemporary Islamic Studies, University of Oxford, St Antony's College (since 2009) and also Director of the Research Centre of Islamic Legislation & Ethics (CILE) (Doha, Qatar). In the lecture titled *Sharia and Ethics*, he dwelt on the relationship between the areas of studies related to Sharia and Ethics. He also stressed on the need to rethink teaching and research in Islamic sciences, reassess interpretations and understanding of the text, and reform the Muslim mind.



Later, at another lecture held at ILIA Auditorium, UBD, titled *Opportunities and Challenges in this Decade for Graduate Students in Islamic Studies*, Professor Ramadan spoke of various types of intellectuals and their corresponding educational and scholastic products. Further, he emphasized the need for a sound methodology in Islamic studies and a clear understanding of contemporary challenges and their contexts.

SOASCIS Bulletin Editorial Staff

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Dr Gubara Said Hassan



Dr Kathrina DP Hj Mohd Daud



Ahmad Raimie Hj Muhammad

VISITING Fellows at SOASCIS



Fellow:

Dr Gabriel Fouad Haddad was appointed a Fellow at SOASCIS on July 1, 2013. An author of many books, Dr Haddad is currently undertaking a research project in the form of a critical edition and English translation of the Arabic text of the famous classical Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*) of al-Baydawi titled *Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil* (The Lights of Revelation and the Secrets of Interpretation). The translation is accompanied with well-researched footnotes



Visiting Fellow:

Dr Maria Kosugi from Japan commenced her Visiting Fellowship at SOASCIS on April 1, 2013.



Post-Doctoral Fellow:

Dr El-Sayed Amin joined SOASCIS as a Post-Doctoral Fellow in March 2013. With a PhD in Qur'anic studies from the University of Birmingham, Dr Amin is presently a Senior Lecturer in Islamic Studies (English Medium) at Al-Azhar University, Cairo. His current research at SOASCIS is a comparative study of classical and modern Qur'anic exegeses on selected themes of power and social justice. The research has already produced a paper that is to be published in an international journal

Congratulations to SOASCIS First Batch of Graduands



Awang Muhammad Baihaqy Helmy bin Haji Awang Mohd Yusuf and Awang Haji Ahmad Busyra bin Hj Mat Zain created history at SOASCIS when they became the first two students of the Centre to complete their graduate studies by research. They received their MA degree in Islamic Civilisation and Contemporary Issues on 12 September 2013 at UBD's 25th convocation from the University's Chancellor, His Majesty Sultan and Yang DiPertuan of Negara Brunei Darussalam. Awang Baihaqy's thesis was titled

The Miracle of the Qur'an in the Perspective of Astronomy, while Awang Ahmad Busyra's thesis has the title *Tulisan Jawi Di Brunei Darussalam: Persepsi dan Penguasaannya Dalam Kalangan Guru-Guru Sekolah Rendah Kawasan Brunei III*.