

(Anniversary special)

Malaysia National Day

Strong bonds of friendship

DATO' AHMAD IZLAN IDRIS
AMBASSADOR OF MALAYSIA



Sixty years have passed since Malaysia became an independent and fully sovereign state on Aug. 31, 1957. It was also the year when Malaysia and Japan established diplomatic relations.

In commemorating the 60th Anniversary of Malaysia-Japan diplomatic ties, we are honored to have received His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Naruhito during his first official visit to Malaysia in April. This historic visit has further cemented the strong bonds of friendship between our two countries.

I am also pleased to note that other programs and activities have also been held and are being planned both in Malaysia and Japan to mark the diamond jubilee.

A retrospective look at the existing ties between Malaysia and Japan reveals that the friendly relations between the two countries have grown from strength to strength over the last 60 years.

Both countries have benefited mutually from the cooperation and other undertakings in the economic field, particularly trade and investment. To date, many Japanese companies have made Malaysia their investment destination.

The government of Malaysia is ever committed to pursuing pragmatic policies that are conducive to foreign investment, including that from Japan. In this regard, Japanese businesses are invited to explore trade and investment opportunities in Malaysia, and to consider Malaysia as a base for regional and global operations.

The "Look East" policy (LEP) is one of the cornerstones of Malaysia-Japan bilateral relations. Since the LEP's inception in 1982,



Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak meets Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Tokyo on Nov. 16. BERNAMA

thousands of Malaysians have benefited from various programs established under the LEP.

Presently, the governments of Malaysia and Japan are embarking on the second wave of the Look East policy, called LEP 2.0, with a greater focus on human capital development and a more comprehensive approach toward the enhancement of bilateral relations.

The friendly relationship between the people of Malaysia and Japan has also continued to grow over the years. Programs such as the Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youth Program and Ship for Southeast Asian Youth Program provide the platforms for direct people-to-people exchanges. Private-sector-led youth and leadership programs, such as the International Association of Traffic and Safety Sciences Forum, have contributed to promoting people-to-people contacts between Malaysia and Japan. Other civil organizations such as the Japan-Malaysia Association, which also celebrates its

60th anniversary this year, contribute immensely to the overall efforts in fostering closer people-to-people relations and greater goodwill among the citizens of the two countries.

As for tourism, more and more Malaysians are visiting Japan, and the number has increased by 29 percent in 2016. The numbers of Japanese citizens visiting Malaysia and participating in the Malaysia My Second Home program have also been favorable. All these have contributed further to the deepening of ties between Malaysia and Japan.

As we celebrate Malaysia's National Day and the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Malaysia and Japan, I am confident that both Malaysia and Japan will be able to work in close cooperation as strategic partners in building a more robust and dynamic relationship.

To all Malaysians and friends of Malaysia, happy national day 2017!



Left: The Sultan Abdul Samad Building, one of the heritage landmarks in Kuala Lumpur; Right: A spectacular sunset at Pangkor Island in the state of Perak



Working to foster beneficial economic ties

MIKIO SASAKI
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-MALAYSIA ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION



On behalf of the Japan-Malaysia Economic Association (JAMECA), I'd like to congratulate Malaysia on the 60th Anniversary of its Independence and 60th Anniversary of diplomatic

relations with Japan.

About JAMECA

JAMECA was launched in 1977, after our then-prime ministers agreed to establish a joint conference to bridge our business communities. Ever since then, JAMECA has met regularly with its Malaysian counterpart, the Malaysia-Japan Economic Association (MAJECA), to promote bilateral exchange. JAMECA also actively encour-

ages the Japanese government to deepen our countries' mutual understanding and goodwill, and strengthen bilateral trade, investment, economic cooperation, tourism and cultural exchanges. The joint conference between JAMECA and MAJECA has been held alternately in Japan and Malaysia almost every year since 1977. This year we are planning to have the 35th joint conference on Nov. 23 in Kuala Lumpur.

Strengthening economic ties

The Malaysian government announced its "Look East" policy (LEP) at the fifth joint conference in 1982. The policy has significantly influenced economic relations between Japan and Malaysia, and since it was announced, more than 16,000 Malaysians have visited Japan to study our country's language, technologies and work practices. The main theme at the 33rd joint conference in 2014 was "Look East Policy 2.0 — Japan and Malaysia." The policy can serve as the basis for Malaysia's understanding of Japan, and it has the potential to boost our

bilateral economic ties as well.

Further mutual investment

Japan has invested more than 79.9 billion ringgit (\$18.6 billion) in Malaysia, and more than 1,400 Japanese enterprises have established operations there. Japan's presence has increased in both the manufacturing and service industries, in large part due to the growth of Malaysia's middle class, and is expected to grow even further in areas such as food services, hospitals and information technology. Cooperation in these areas is on the agenda for our 35th joint conference. Today, investment from Malaysia to Japan is expected to increase in the area of halal food and travel-related services. Both JAMECA and MAJECA will continue to contribute to the expansion of mutual investment and the strengthening of economic relations between our two countries.

In closing, I would like to once again offer my heartiest congratulations to Malaysia and my best wishes for its future development.



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of
the Independence of Malaysia



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