

Malaysia National Day Special

Unity, hope anchor bilateral partnership

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AMBASSADOR OF MALAYSIA



This year marks the 66th anniversary of the National Day of Malaysia. As we commemorate this milestone, we reminisce and appreciate the leadership of Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra

al-Haj, who deftly led the way for Malaya to achieve independence in a peaceful manner, thus earning his name as the nation's father of independence. In his quest for independence, people from all walks of life rallied to help him in whatever way they could. It was evident that *perpaduan* (unity) has been ingrained in the heart of every Malaysian since the very beginning, and has continued to contribute in building the harmonious and prosperous nation of Malaysia.

"*Tekad Perpaduan Penuhi Harapan*" ("Determination in Unity, Fulfilling Hope") has been chosen as the theme for this year's National Day celebration. With this, the government of Malaysia, under the premiership of H.E. Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, calls on all Malaysians to strengthen the spirit of unity in facing global challenges. The emphasis is on the importance of unity to drive the country's economic development to greater heights while maintaining stability, harmony and prosperity.

It was also on this day in 1957 that Malaysia-Japan diplomatic relations were established. Over the years, the ties between both countries have flourished, guided by mutual respect, understanding and collaboration. As a testament to a remarkably swift progression, Malaysia and Japan have announced the elevation of diplomatic relations from a strategic partnership, signed in 2015, to a comprehensive and strategic partnership within a mere eight-year span.

In addition, the Look East Policy has been one of the key initiatives in fostering these close ties. To date, there are about 260,000 Malaysians who have benefited from the policy and are currently holding important roles in various sectors in Malaysia.

Japan continues to be one of Malaysia's most important trade and investment partners.

In 2022, trade between Japan and Malaysia amounted to \$41.21 billion, making Japan our fourth-largest trading partner. Investment meanwhile came to \$2.6 billion, ranking Japan fifth in terms of foreign direct investment.

As one of the preferred top FDI and sourcing destinations in Southeast Asia, Malaysia will continue to create a high-value growth ecosystem to attract current and potential investors, guided by the 12th Malaysia Plan (2021 to 2025), the New Investment Policy and the New Industrial Master Plan 2030, which will be launched in the third quarter. As the 2025 World Expo approaches Osaka, Malaysia is fully prepared to offer a business-friendly atmosphere featuring high-value, technologically advanced human resources, and a commitment to upholding sustainable compliance standards.

As of May, Malaysia had received a total of 77,762 tourists from Japan. With the lifting of COVID-19 travel restrictions, Malaysia anticipates tourist arrivals from Japan to surpass pre-pandemic figures. As a multi-cultural country, Malaysia has unique and diversified experiences to offer. The natural beauty of Malaysia is evident from the deep stunning coral reefs off Tioman Island in Pahang to enchanting Mount Kinabalu in Sabah, sights that complement our agricultural tourism offerings and culinary attractions.

Malaysia has also emerged as a prominent education hub in the Asia-Pacific region, attracting students around the world who wish to pursue a wide range of academic disciplines. Our quality education, afford-



Tioman Island is known as a superb place for diving in West Malaysia. TOURISM MALAYSIA

able cost, English-speaking instructors, strategic location and internationally recognized programs are among the many factors that contribute to the increasing number of international students here.

In 2022, Malaysia welcomed 1,090 Japanese applicants seeking to advance their studies in the country. With the establishment of a Tsukuba University branch in Kuala Lumpur next year, I believe the number of Japanese students will drastically increase in the coming years. This will mark the first overseas branch opened by a Japanese university.

This year will be a significant one as we commemorate the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. Since 1973, Japan continues to be an active and engaging dialogue partner of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Malaysia values Japan's support and cooperation in respecting ASEAN centrality as we work at building the ASEAN community.

It would be remiss of me not to mention

the role that Malaysia plays in regional and international platforms. Malaysia's record in U.N. peacekeeping operations, humanitarian aid and disaster relief missions is evidence of its unwavering commitment to promoting global security, peace and harmony. As of the end of July, Malaysia has extended support to 182,010 UNHCR-registered refugees and asylum-seekers by providing shelter, health care and education opportunities. Malaysia is also known for its consistent protests against the possession, development and proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Based on these shared principles and common values, I believe Malaysia and Japan have many opportunities to explore as we face the rise in geopolitical challenges and economic uncertainties. Let us commit to work together for a brighter future for both our nations. On this auspicious occasion, I wish to extend to all Malaysians and friends of Malaysia a Happy National Day. *Selamat Hari Kebangsaan.*



Mount Kinabalu lurks behind clouds as viewed from the Nanamun River in Sabah state. TOURISM MALAYSIA

A year for deepening investment

TSUYOSHI NAGANO
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-MALAYSIA
ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION



On behalf of the Japan-Malaysia Economic Association, I would like to express our sincerest congratulations to the government and people of Malaysia on the occasion of the 66th

anniversary of Malaysia's independence.

JAMECA was established in 1977 under the endorsement of both countries' prime ministers for the purpose of enhancing mutual understanding and goodwill between Japan and Malaysia's economic circles and promoting bilateral trade, investment, economic cooperation, tourism and culture. Since its establishment, we have held annual conferences with our counterpart, the Malaysia-Japan Economic Association, and organized events to exchange opinions between the two associations. The Joint Conference between JAMECA and MAJECA has been hosted alternately in Japan and Malaysia

almost every year since 1977.

This year, we successfully concluded our 40th Joint Conference on May 25 in Tokyo, with over 100 participants from both countries. We hope the conference contributed as one of the celebratory events for this landmark year, which marks the 50th anniversary of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)-Japan Friendship and Cooperation.

The main theme of the conference was "Deepening Economic Relations between Japan and Malaysia through Multi-Layered Co-Creation." Active discussions were held on the trade and investment environment of our countries, initiatives for regional development, and collaboration on the digital frontier. The conference confirmed expectations for the expansion of business exchanges in the post-COVID-19 era and reaffirmed the strong bonds that have been built between Japan and Malaysia. We at JAMECA will continuously work to further strengthen the economic relations between our countries.

Once again, I would like to extend my congratulations to Malaysia on the 66th anniversary of its independence, along with my sincerest wishes for Malaysia's further development and prosperity in the future.



This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.



Top: Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra al-Haj declares the Federation of Malaya's independence on Aug. 31, 1957. Above: The Merdeka 118 skyscraper in Kuala Lumpur was inspired by Tunku's pose. TOURISM MALAYSIA

Congratulations on the Anniversary of the Independence of Malaysia

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