

Malaysia independence day

Country sees strong economic growth

Hendy Assan
CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I., EMBASSY
OF MALAYSIA

On the occasion of the 57th anniversary of the independence of Malaysia, which falls on Aug. 31, I have the great honor to convey my heartfelt greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial family, the government and the people of Japan. I would also like to extend my warm greetings to all Malaysians, friends of Malaysia and readers of The Japan Times.



Prime Minister of Malaysia
Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun
Abdul Razak

The Malaysian economy is developing fast with strong growth, phased liberalization, and greater connectivity. Malaysia is on track to reach its national economic ambition of becoming a high-income nation by 2020. Under the Economic Transformation Programme, which guides economic development, Malaysia aims to attract 1.23 trillion ringgit in private investment by the end of the decade. Foreign capital will continue to build businesses, infrastructure and confidence on which Malaysia's economic success depends. In the four years since the program began, Malaysia has achieved some headline achievements, from soaring gross national income to huge increases in competitiveness.

As Malaysia heads toward high-income status, emphasis will be given to building a more sustainable economy, with greater opportunity for young people, a more accessible financial sector and a clear balance between macro achievements and individual success. The government wants to create growth that is lasting and an open, inclusive economy where national development and individual ambitions unite behind common goals.

The continued success of the ruling coalition of Barisan Nasional led by Prime Minister Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak in last year's 13th general election could be very much attributed to the tremendous economic and social progress achieved by the government. Despite the challenging global environment, GDP grew by 4.7 percent last year. In the first half of this year, it grew by 6.3 percent compared to 5.5 percent growth for the same period in 2013, exceeding expectations. From 2009 to 2013, GNI per capita grew an impressive 42.5 percent, reaching \$10,060 and the overall poverty rate dropped to 1.7 percent in 2012, down from 3.8 percent in 2009. Malaysia's economy is also diversifying. For example, in 2008, oil and gas accounted for 39.7 percent of total revenue, but this year it is forecast to be 28.9 percent. Services now account for 55.2 percent of GDP, well on the way of the target of 65 percent by 2020. Inflation is projected to be between 3 and 4 percent,

and Malaysia is essentially at full employment.

Private investment has also surged, growing 15.3 percent between 2010 and 2013, more than triple the compounded annual growth rate compared to the previous three-year period. Total private investment last year reached 161.1 billion ringgit, surpassing the target for the year by some 8.6 percent and almost double the 86.7 billion ringgit invested in 2010. This investment has been put to productive use, helping to create jobs and grow stronger businesses.

Alongside efforts to build a strong economic base, the government has also introduced a series of policies to make it easier and more attractive to live, invest and do business in Malaysia. Malaysia was ranked sixth in the latest "Ease of Doing Business" report by the World Bank, up fifteen places from 2009. Malaysia is now 12th out of 60 countries in the International Institute for Management Development's "World Competitiveness Yearbook," ahead of the U.K., Australia, Japan and Korea. The country is also third in Bloomberg's list of the 22 best emerging markets. Malaysia is also a safe haven for investment and, according to the World Bank, Malaysia's investor protection regime is ranked fourth in the world.

Sustainability is also about strengthening the government's financial position. Over the past year, efforts to improve Malaysia's fiscal situation have been undertaken. Rationalizing blanket subsidies so that government support reaches those who need it most, reducing spending, remaining within our self-imposed debt ceiling, reducing the budget deficit faster than expected and broadening the tax base with the forthcoming introduction of a goods and services tax are among various measures taken.

Likewise, equity shareholding for credit rating agencies will be liberalized, and international credit rating agencies with full foreign ownership will be allowed in the Malaysian market from Jan. 1, 2017. Equity shareholding for unit trust management companies will also be liberalized and foreign corporations will be allowed to own 100 percent of shares in

unit trust management companies. There will also be no barriers to entry for new foreign unit trust management companies coming into Malaysia.

Globally, there has been a growing trend toward integration with rising cross-border trade, new technology-driven global sectors and increasing economic cooperation between nations and regions. Malaysia's liberalization programs are designed to prepare industries to compete in a new, more closely connected global economy. Malaysia continues to pursue bilateral and multilateral trade agreements, negotiating hard to secure the best benefits for people and businesses. This approach and these policies bring benefits to investors, businesspeople and the people of Malaysia.

While firmly devoted to uplifting the nation's economy, Najib is also committed to continue nurturing the close relationship that Malaysia already enjoys with our ASEAN neighbors, as well as other friends

all across the globe, including Japan. The strong ties between Malaysia and Japan have indeed been excellent and have continued to broaden in all areas of mutual benefit over the past 57 years. The closeness between Putrajaya and Tokyo, and the excellent relationship at the leader's level manifested from the regular exchanges of visits such as the working visit by Najib in December 2013 for the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit and in May 2014 to attend the Nikkei Conference. Additionally, the official visit of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Malaysia on July 25, 2013, has certainly forged a closer working relationship between the two governments.

This multifaceted relationship is also manifested vibrantly in trade and investment, education, human resource development, capacity building, science and technology, cultural exchanges and tourism. On the economic front, bilateral trade between Malaysia and Japan has seen contin-

ued growth. Exports especially have been trending upward since the implementation of the Economic Partnership Agreement between Malaysia and Japan in 2006. In 2013, overall trade with Japan amounted to \$43.20 billion, making it Malaysia's third-largest trading partner. For the first five months of 2014, Japan ranked first in investment with a total of 33 projects worth \$2.76 billion. Both countries are also involved in various regional trade agreements such as ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement and the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement.

Similarly, at the person-to-person level, tourist arrivals from Japan in 2013 also recorded an upward trend with 513,076 arrivals, an increase of 9.2 percent from the previous year. The number of tourists traveling from Malaysia to Japan jumped by 35.6 percent to 176,521 in 2013, mostly on the back of a visa relaxation by



The Petronas Twin Towers (center) dominate the skyline of Kuala Lumpur's central business district. TOURISM MALAYSIA

the Japanese government.

The leadership of both countries has renewed their commitment to further strengthen ties in the years ahead. Malaysia's "Look East Policy" is now entering the second phase, 32 years after it was first introduced by the then Prime Min-

ister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. I am confident both Malaysia and Japan can achieve greater heights together in various fields of cooperation.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to The Japan Times for

giving me the opportunity to address its esteemed readers who have contributed to the promotion of the ties of friendship and cooperation between Malaysia and Japan. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the sponsors for their generous contribution.

Increased economic, political cooperation

Mikio Sasaki
PRESIDENT, THE JAPAN-MALAYSIA
ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION

On behalf of the members of the Japan-Malaysia Economic Association (JAMECA), I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations on the 57th anniversary of the independence of Malaysia.

I would also like to express my condolences over the two tragedies this year involving Malaysia Airlines, while wishing for the victims to rest in peace and offering my prayers to bereaved families and friends.



Malaysia has achieved economic development by the joint efforts of the public and private sectors under the leadership of Prime Minister Najib Razak, who announced the second stage of the country's "Look East Policy" last year. Malaysia recorded more than 6.2 percent growth in real gross domestic product in the first quarter this year.

The economic and political ties between Malaysia and Japan are becoming closer and Malaysia is now home to about 1,400 Japanese companies, including not only manufacturers, but also services industry companies.

Last year, the prime ministers of both countries visited the other's country to hold summit

meetings to discuss the direction of the second wave of the Look East Policy and cooperation on infrastructure building. They also reaffirmed the mutual understanding that Malaysia will use Japanese technology in their high-speed trains, water supply and sewerage systems, medicine and other fields.

In the 35 years since it was established in November 1977, JAMECA has sought to expand trade and investment between our two countries, improve infrastructure, develop human resources and promote tourism. To this end, JAMECA has conducted various initiatives such as holding joint conferences (the 33rd of which is scheduled to be held in Kuch-

ing, Malaysia) with our counterpart, the Malaysia-Japan Economic Association; round-table discussions between JAMECA members and high-ranking government officials from Malaysia during their visits to Japan; and investment seminars attended by numerous Japanese companies with an interest in investing in Malaysia.

We are hoping that business opportunities between companies from our two countries will expand via not only political exchanges but also activities by the private sector, including our association.

In closing, let me once more congratulate you on the 57th anniversary of the independence of Malaysia.

Congratulations
on the 57th Anniversary
of
the Independence of Malaysia



Minatomirai Grand Central Tower
4-6-2, Minatomirai, Nishi-ku
Yokohama 220-8765, Japan
<http://www.chiyoda-corp.com/en>

Congratulations
on the 57th Anniversary
of the Independence of Malaysia



JAPAN MALAYSIA LNG CO., LTD.
NISSEKI YOKOHAMA BUILDING 17F,
1-1-8 SAKURAGI-CHO,
NAKA-KU, YOKOHAMA 231-0062
TEL: (045) 683-1330 FAX: (045) 680-2265



MISC LNG LIAISON OFFICE JAPAN
QUEEN'S TOWER A 9F, 2-3-1 MINATOMIRAI,
NISHI-KU, YOKOHAMA, 220-6009
TEL: (045) 680-2280 FAX: (045) 680-2284

Congratulations
on the 57th Anniversary
of the Independence
of Malaysia



Engineering for the Quality of Human Life
JGC CORPORATION

Congratulations
on the 57th Anniversary
of the Independence
of Malaysia



Congratulations
on the 57th Anniversary
of the Independence
of Malaysia



MITSUI & CO., LTD.

Congratulations
on the 57th Anniversary
of the Independence of
Malaysia

Polyplastics

Polyplastics Asia Pacific Sdn. Bhd.

Head office
50-5-13A, 5th FL, Wisma UOA Damansara, 50, Jalan Dungun,
Damansara Heights, 50490 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Phone: +60-3-2773-6600 Fax: +60-3-2773-6700

Kuantan Plant
Lot 135, Gebeng Industrial Estate P.O. Box 33, 26080 Balok, Kuantan,
Pahang, Malaysia
Phone: +60-9-585-8200 Fax: +60-9-585-8300

Polyplastics Co., Ltd. (Tokyo, Japan)

*Our thoughts
are with the people
of Malaysia
on the 57th Anniversary
of Their Independence*

