

Malaysia National Day Special

Over 60 years of ongoing friendship, business relations

DATO' AHMAD IZLAN IDRIS
AMBASSADOR OF MALAYSIA



2018 is both a historic and an exciting year. It marks the 61st Anniversary of Malaysia's Independence, and it also witnessed the first-ever change of federal administration in the country.

Thus, this year's national day celebration will be the first under the new government of the Alliance of Hope (Pakatan Harapan) led by the Honorable Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, who was also the prime minister from 1981 to 2003.

With the theme "Sayangi Malaysiaku" (Love My Malaysia), Malaysians from all walks of life are called upon to further cherish noble ideals, including patriotism and unity in propelling the country toward a brighter future.

Aug. 31 is also a very significant date for

both Malaysia and Japan, as diplomatic relations between the two countries were formally established on the very same day in 1957. As Malaysia and Japan mark the 61st anniversary of their diplomatic relations this year, we have much to be proud of considering our bilateral ties have gone from strength to strength in various areas, including education, infrastructure development, science and technology and tourism, as well as trade and investment.

Investment

Japan has been a significant part of Malaysia's growth as it has been among our top source of foreign direct investment (FDI) since the 1980s. In terms of FDI stock, Japan stood as the second-largest foreign investor in Malaysia with total investments valued at \$19 billion as of the first quarter of 2018. Additionally, Japan ranked as the largest foreign investor in the manufacturing sector. As of 2017, roughly 2,645 manufacturing projects with participation from Japan have been implemented with investments totaling \$27.6 billion. These projects have

benefited more than 340,000 Malaysians through employment.

Malaysia welcomes high-quality investments particularly in new growth areas with emerging technologies, as well as capital-intensive, high value-added, knowledge-based, skills-intensive and export-oriented industries.

Located in the heart of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Malaysia is capable of offering multinational corporations and investors with unique access to a steady stream of talent, a modern business ecosystem, world-class infrastructure and connectivity, and competitive cost advantages and incentive packages. These corporations can utilize Malaysia as a base for conducting their regional and global operations to manage, control, and support their key functions.

The government of Malaysia is committed to strengthening Malaysia's pro-business environment with prudent and pragmatic policies to ensure a conducive ecosystem as we continue to seek both capital and technological injection into the

Malaysian economy.

In this connection, Malaysia appreciates the continued presence of Japanese investors as major source of FDI in the manufacturing sector, and we hope more investors from Japan will choose Malaysia as their regional hub to tap into markets in the East and West.

Tourism

Malaysia is blessed with verdant national parks, pristine beaches, as well as many islands and majestic mountains. For instance, Pahang National Park is one of the oldest rainforests in the world, estimated to be 130 million years old. Another popular destination is Mount Kinabalu, which offers climbers spectacular views of the surrounding areas, among others.

For avid bikers, Malaysia is a great place for motorcycle holidays, as the country's well-connected highways offer bikers the opportunity to explore and enjoy the scenic countryside, historical places, and savor delectable local cuisine along the journey.

With Malaysia's multiethnic society, travelers or visitors from Japan and other countries will have the opportunity to experience the diverse cultural landscape comprising Malay, Chinese and Indian cultures along with the cultures of unique ethnic groups in Sabah and Sarawak.

In 2017, Malaysia was privileged to receive approximately 392,700 tourists from Japan. We hope more travelers from Japan will continue to visit and explore our beautiful country this year.

Closer ties

Within the first three months of his term, Malaysia's seventh prime minister had visited Japan twice. The first was a working visit to Tokyo from June 10 to 12, the prime minister's first trip abroad since assuming the premiership on May 10. The second was a working



Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe shake hands during their meeting in Tokyo on June 12. BERNAMA

visit to Fukuoka and Oita from Aug. 6 to 9. I am also pleased to note the working visit by Japan's Foreign Minister Taro Kono to Malaysia on July 10 and 11. The recent exchange of high-level visits has further reinforced the existing, friendly ties between Malaysia and Japan. It also augurs well for closer and better relations between the two countries in the future.

The bilateral relations between Malaysia and Japan continue to enjoy good momentum following the elevation of the relations from enhanced partnership to strategic partnership in 2015. In line with its renewed interest in the Look East Policy, Malaysia remains committed and looks forward to working together with Japan to deepen bilateral collaboration, strengthen business competitiveness for both countries, as well as promote two-way cultural and people-to-people exchanges. In this connection, it is of importance for both countries to continue working closely to keep momentum moving forward. Sustained joint efforts by both sides would certainly foster and intensify collabora-

tion toward broadening the foundation of Malaysia-Japan relations.

On this celebratory occasion, I wish to extend my warmest greetings to all of you and wish all Malaysians and friends of Malaysia, happy national day 2018! As the ambassador of Malaysia to Japan, it also gives me great satisfaction to note that over the past 61 years, the bilateral ties between our two countries have gradually matured into a dynamic, strong and effective partnership that works cooperatively on a range of issues of mutual interest in the Asia-Pacific region and around the world. Noting the commitment demonstrated by the leaders of both Malaysia and Japan, I am confident that the strong bonds of friendship and cooperation that exist between our two countries will continue to grow in the coming years. Indeed, we have much more to look forward to in the future.

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



Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono and Malaysian Foreign Minister Dato' Saifuddin Abdullah in Putrajaya, Malaysia, on July 11. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MALAYSIA



Putrajaya will host the 61st National Day anniversary celebration under the theme "Sayangi Malaysiaku" (Love My Malaysia). TOURISM MALAYSIA

Decades of trade cooperation

MIKIO SASAKI
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-MALAYSIA ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION



On behalf of the Japan-Malaysia Economic Association (JAMECA), I would like to congratulate Malaysia on the 61st Anniversary of its Independence.

Established in 1977 after gaining support from our then-prime ministers, the organization marked its 40th anniversary last year. Ever since, JAMECA has met regularly with its Malaysian counterpart, the Malaysia-Japan Economic Association (MAJECA), organized events for promoting exchange and submitted proposals to our governments to deepen mutual understanding and goodwill of businesses of both countries and to 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, with members of the associations having continued their active discussions on issues such as trade, investment and technical cooperation. This year, we are planning to have the 36th joint conference in Japan.

In Malaysia, the government changed in May for the first time since the country established its independence. Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad took office after 15 years from his previous service as the leader of Malaysia. During his previous terms, Mahathir carried out his Look East policy and greatly contributed to the development of the country.

On June 12, JAMECA held a gathering with the prime minister in Tokyo by collaborating with other economic organizations. At the gathering, the prime minister expressed his great expectation for more

investment from Japan. He also mentioned that he would like to gain cooperation from Japanese companies in solving economic and societal issues that Malaysia is facing today, securing employment and enhancing manufacturing technologies through importing Japanese technologies.

In recent years, economic relations between Japan and Malaysia have greatly developed as the number of Japanese companies in different fields, including the restaurant industry, retail business and service industry, have expanded their business in Malaysia, while some Malaysian companies in tourism and other fields plan to start their business in Japan.

As the president of JAMECA, I hope we can continue working on strengthening the economic relations of the countries. In closing, I would like to once again express my best wishes for your country's further development and prosperity on this occasion of the 61st anniversary of Malaysia's independence.



Top: The Sultan Abdul Samad Building, one of the heritage landmarks in Kuala Lumpur. Above: A spectacular sunset at Pangkor Island in the state of Perak. TOURISM MALAYSIA

Congratulations on the 61st Anniversary of the Independence of Malaysia



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Congratulations on the 61st Anniversary of the Independence of Malaysia

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Congratulations Malaysia on your 61st National Day



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