

Speech by Ambassador of Japan to Malaysia

His Excellency TAKAHASHI Katsuhiko at the Emperor's Birthday Reception
on 15th February 2024

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for joining the celebration of the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. Let me also express my deep appreciation for your cooperation and commitment to enhance Japan-Malaysia relations.

The year 2023 witnessed a remarkable progress in our bilateral relations.

First and foremost, I would like to mention that Prime Minister Kishida visited Malaysia last November, and Dato' Seri Anwar visited Japan right in the following month. The highlight of Dato' Seri Anwar's visit to Japan was the upgrading of the Japan-Malaysia relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

In addition, I would like to point out that the mutual visits between Japan and Malaysia last year were not only at the summit level but also at various levels and in various fields.

Moreover, our embassy had a lot of opportunities to promote Japanese food and its safety last year. Our activities to promote Japanese culture, both traditional and popular, were also successful.

Ladies and gentlemen.

In Sabah, Japanese universities and University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) are actively engaged in academic exchange. The more active these academic exchanges become, the more chances there are for researchers to make new discoveries, which may lead to the expansion of academic networks and the creation of business opportunities through collaboration with companies. I look forward to the expansion of academic exchange in various fields in the future.

As for tourism, Sabah has a wealth of beautiful natural resources, including the majestic Mount Kinabalu, and the number of tourists from Japan to Sabah has increased steadily this year, more than doubling compared to last year. I hope that tourism between Sabah and Japan will become more active.

On the investment, I want to take this opportunity to invite friends in Sabah and Sarawak to invest more to Japan.

The market size is large, and Japan has the world's best human resource base and competitiveness in R&D. Some Malaysians are already investing to Japan, but we want to encourage further.

This evening, booths are set up within this avenue to introduce the activities of Japanese companies and organizations active in Sabah. Those in each booth are JTB, JICA and JNTO. Please have a look at their booths, talk to them, to gain a better understanding of their activities in Sabah.

To conclude, I want to reiterate my determination to enhance the cordial relations between Japan and Malaysia to even a higher level to measure up to the name "Comprehensive Strategic Partners." In order to do so, I need support and cooperation from all of you here tonight. I am looking forward to working with you much closer this year and beyond.

Thank you, and please enjoy the rest of the evening.