

MALAYSIA-JAPAN TIES

PM's visit opens up a host of opportunities

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**AZMI
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MALAYSIA'S economic sector is expected to receive a much-needed boost with small, medium and micro enterprises becoming the main beneficiaries.

This will translate into more jobs for the people of Malaysia or Keluarga Malaysia, many of whom are still reeling from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

With Malaysia's transition into

endemicity and the reopening of its international borders since April 1, the prospect of a robust economic recovery is much more realistic.

Malaysia hopes to overcome pre-pandemic nagging problems, including persistent labour market challenges, lingering supply issues and rising inflationary pressure, among others.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob, who returned from a six-day trip to Japan recently, believed his maiden visit to the Land of the Rising Sun had paved the way for the creation of new opportunities in all sectors, which would bring immense benefit to the country and its people.

Among the more significant achievements was the signing of three memoranda of cooperation (MoC) related to the aircraft industry, skilled workers and youth

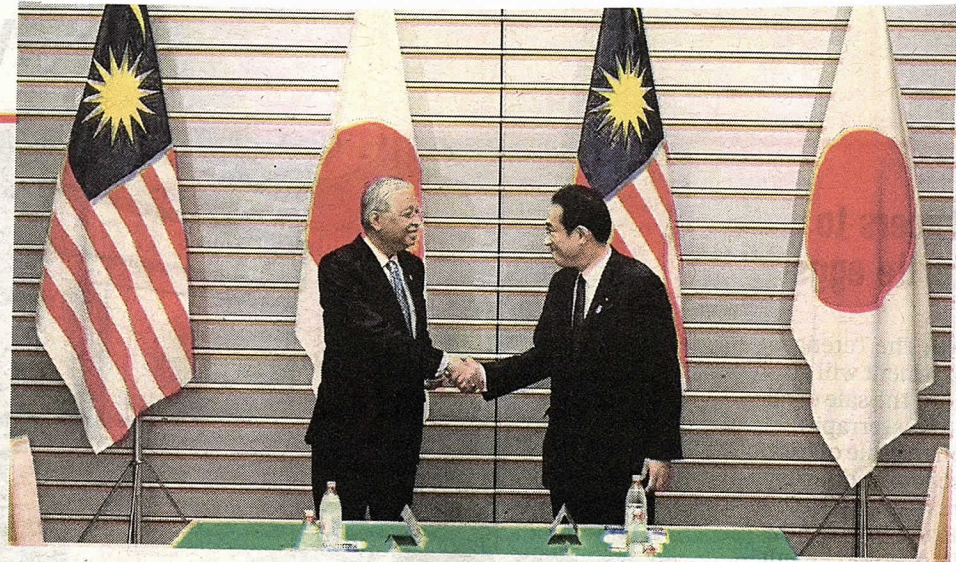
and sports.

The aircraft industry MoC was a collaboration between Malaysia and Japan to boost aerospace activities involving maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO), as well as aerospace downstream activities.

It will provide an opportunity for small- and medium-enterprises to be involved in the industry's supply chain.

The MoC on skilled workers, meanwhile, was on sending Malaysian skilled workers to Japan.

Through it, over 1,000 Malaysians can gain work experience in Japan. If the programme proves effective, discussions will be held with the Japanese government to increase the number of participants.



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob shaking hands with his Japanese counterpart, Fumio Kishida, in Japan recently. PIC COURTESY OF AZMI TARMIZI

The programme provides the opportunity for Malaysians to gain experience and expertise in Japan and they can contribute to related industries in Malaysia on their return.

The MoC involving the Youth and Sports Ministry is related to youth exchange and development, as well as sports.

Among the areas of cooperation being looked into include volunteer training for disasters such as floods, and volunteerism in international sporting events, with Japan leading by example after it hosted the 2020 Olympic Games in challenging conditions.

Japan was the host of the Games, but the prestigious sporting event was rescheduled to July last year due to the pandemic.

The prime minister, who held an engagement and friendly session with almost 30 leading Japanese company representatives, said some expressed their desire to explore trade opportunities, while others planned to increase their investment in Malaysia.

Among them are Mitsubishi Corp, Mitsui & Co Ltd, Marubeni Corp, Mitsubishi Power Ltd and others.

"I believe my official working visit has achieved the desired objective, and relations between Malaysia and Japan continue to strengthen to the advantage of both countries," said the prime minister.

The writer is the Prime Minister's Press Secretary 1