

# Stronger trade with Japan

## Look East Policy to boost education, environment and economy

**TOKYO:** Malaysia and Japan will increase bilateral relations through new areas of cooperation such as energy, smart city, environment and climate change while continuing with the Look East Policy, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

In his meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in Tokyo on Friday, he said he proposed that the Malaysia-Japan ties be upgraded to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) and stated Malaysia's readiness to continue with the Look East Policy which was well received by Kishida.

"Malaysia and Japan will draft out clearer outlines on the closer relations," the Prime Minister said in a media conference here at the end of his official working visit to Japan.

Malaysia and Japan upgraded their relations from Enhanced Partnership to Strategic Partnership status in 2015 when Kishida visited Malaysia when he was Japan's foreign minister.

In the meeting held at Kantei or

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Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob

the Japanese Prime Minister's Office on Friday, Ismail Sabri held bilateral discussions with Kishida to strengthen the long-established Malaysia-Japan ties.

It was the first meeting between the two leaders.

Both leaders had made contact via telephone on Dec 2, 2021, and on April 20 to discuss enhancing Malaysia-Japan relations as well as on regional and international issues in which Japan and Malaysia have common interests.

It was also the first time Kishida played host to the Malaysian Prime Minister since taking up the post as the Prime Minister of Japan in October last year.

This year is also the 65th anniversary of the Malaysia-Japan diplomatic relations and also the 40th anniversary of the Look East Policy.

Ismail Sabri also expressed his appreciation to Kishida for Japan's support and assistance in developing Malaysia's implementation of the Look East Policy.

"We have stated Malaysia's readiness to continue with the Look East Policy with Japan via new programmes such as energy, smart city, environment and climate change," he said.

Ismail Sabri said in his discussion with Kishida, both leaders also agreed to step up cooperation in economy, trade and investment.

Japan has been the fourth-largest trading partner to Malaysia since 2015.

Trade value last year amounted to US\$35.9bil (RM172bil), which was an increase of about 20% com-

pared to US\$29.6bil (RM129bil) in 2020:

Japan is also the third-largest investor in Malaysia in terms of projects in the manufacturing sector.

Investment value from 1980 to 2021 was US\$27.6bil (RM120bil) with 2,709 projects in the manufacturing sector implemented.

In 2021, US\$1.81bil (RM7.9bil) worth of investment was recorded involving 25 projects in the manufacturing sector.

Ismail Sabri said he also assured Kishida that the process of setting up the branch campus of Tsukuba University in Malaysia would be finalised soon.

He said the Higher Education Ministry reported that the technical problem related to the university's formation had been resolved.

The aim of the Japanese university branch campus in Malaysia was to make accessible Japan's education system to Malaysian students.

"We gave our assurance that it would be set up soon," said Ismail Sabri. — Bernama