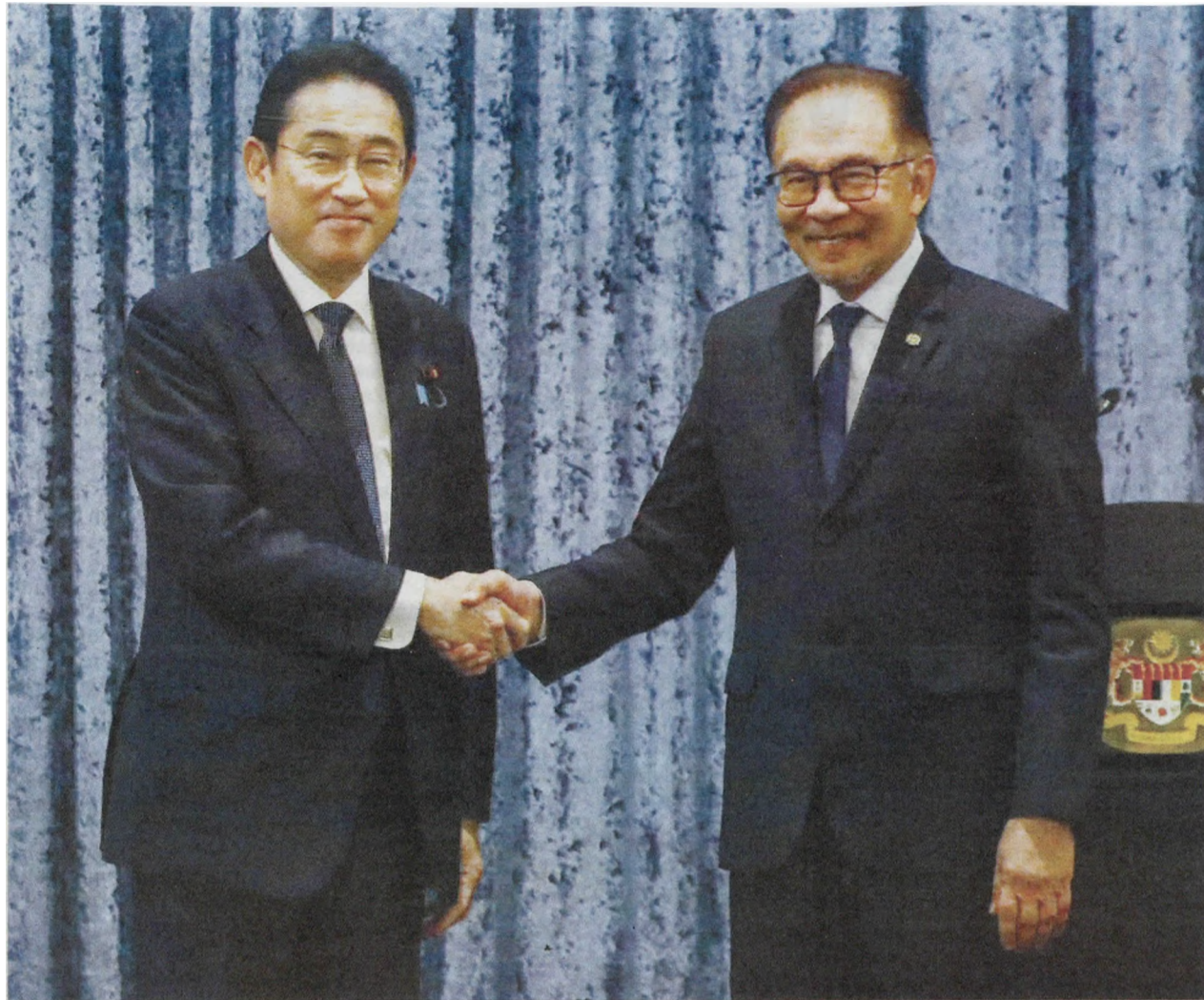


Kishida and Anwar during their meeting in Putrajaya yesterday. - AFP/PIC



Japan, Malaysia to forge stronger security ties

> Both countries agree to enhance cooperation by expediting implementation of OSA framework

PUTRAJAYA: In further enhancing security and defence cooperation, Japan and Malaysia have confirmed their commitment to accelerate the Official Security Assistance (OSA) implementation focusing on strengthening strategic communication.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said the acceleration of coordination for OSA underscored a mutual commitment marking a pivotal reference point in the partnership between the two nations.

"Security and defence cooperation will be enhanced with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim strengthening our strategic communication and acceleration of coordination for implementing OSA was confirmed.

"Moreover, mutual consensus has been reached on enhancing cooperation in the maritime domain, with plans for joint exercises involving coast guard agencies to fortify collaborative efforts," Kishida said during a joint press conference with Anwar at Kompleks Seri

Perdana yesterday.

Launched in April this year, Japan's OSA framework is aimed at raising the security capabilities of developing countries and the beneficiaries are military forces, Bernama reported.

The new OSA framework, first announced in last December's revised National Security Strategy, was initially aimed to provide equipment, supplies and infrastructure development assistance to partner countries mostly in the Asia-Pacific.

In the current regional and global situation, Kishida pointed out the importance of upholding a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

"Concerning the East and South China Seas issue, any attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force is not tolerated.

"On responses to North Korea, including the issues of nuclear, missiles and abduction as well as the Myanmar situation, our close cooperation with Malaysia will be continued," said Kishida.

Kishida's inaugural two-day visit to Malaysia from Saturday held special significance as it coincided with the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of Asean-Japan Friendship and Cooperation this year.

Malaysia and Japan upgraded their ties from an Enhanced Partnership to a Strategic Partnership in 2015, when Kishida visited Malaysia as foreign minister.

For eight successive years since 2015, Japan

has been Malaysia's fourth largest trading partner.

In 2022, trade with Japan was valued at RM181.51 billion, contributing 6.4% of Malaysia's total trade.

As of June 2023, a total of 2,778 projects by Japanese companies have been implemented in Malaysia, with investments amounting to RM91.89 billion.

Meanwhile, Anwar said Malaysia is optimistic that foreign direct investments from Japan will exceed RM30 billion this year, signifying Japanese investors' unwavering confidence in Malaysia.

"This is very impressive (coming) from (Japanese) companies that are already investing in Malaysia, which without exception, have made the commitment to increase and expand."

On another note, Anwar said as members of the Asia Zero Emissions Community, both Malaysia and Japan are committed to increasing efforts to decarbonise and achieve greater zero greenhouse gas emissions.

"We look forward to enhancing collaboration with Japan as we have been exporting liquefied natural gas (LNG) via Petronas for decades and this is something that Prime Minister Kishida and his delegation are very keen to do."

In 2022, LNG accounted for a major portion of Malaysia's exports to Japan, comprising 31% of total exports to the country.