

**PM: MJIIT opening proof of countries' warm ties**  
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**By MAZWIN NIK ANIS**

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysia-Japan International Institute of Technology has officially opened its doors, with Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak describing it as a testimony of *kizuna* or the friendship between the two countries.

The Prime Minister said the MJIIT was a "symbol of Malaysia's rich and burgeoning relationship with Japan", a reflection of its confidence in Japanese technology, admiration for their work ethics and a desire to gain insight into the Japanese way of life.

"It is a partnership that I hope will see Japanese innovation and entrepreneurial skills inculcated into a new breed of Malaysian engineers; young people with skills and talent to contribute to the sustainable growth of the nation," he said when opening the institute.

"With Malaysia emerging as a centre for international education, I would also like to see MJIIT serve as a platform for introducing students to a Japanese-style engineering education."

Najib expressed confidence that the institute, over time, would grow to become a centre of excellence that could rival any that were offered elsewhere in Asia.

He said the launch marked the culmination of years of talks and careful planning.

"The idea was conceived 10 years ago by then prime ministers Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Junichiro Koizumi."

Najib said despite the enthusiasm on both sides, it was only in 2010 did he and former prime minister Yukio Hatoyama pledged to push harder to ensure the institute became a reality.

Meanwhile, Hatoyama said under the "Look East Policy", some 14,000 students learned Japanese work ethics and business philosophy, and contributed to Malaysia's development.

"I believe the policy will continue to be the cornerstone of friendship between Japan and Malaysia well into the future," he said. "And, the MJIIT is one of the most visible symbols as the culmination of that policy."

Hatoyama said while bilateral relations had matured, it was important to foster greater relations among the next generation to strengthen mutual trust and adopt each other's values and cultures.

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