

Abe: We will help M'sia grow

Japan will provide high-value investments and aid country in realising Vision 2020

EXCLUSIVE

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PETALING JAYA: Japan has offered to provide high-value investments to Malaysia in the wake of the country's softening economy.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (pic) told *The Star* in a Q&A session that Japan would offer full cooperation to Malaysia through infrastructure investment "in both quality and quantity", as well as Japan's investment promotion.

"I am confident that infrastructure-related cooperation in such areas as high-efficiency coal-fired power plants, waterworks and information and communications technology will enable us to assist Malaysia's aspiration to achieve a high value-added economy and to realise Vision 2020," said Abe.

"I also believe that the introduction of our Shinkansen for the Malaysia-Singapore high-speed rail project will serve immensely to Malaysia's economic advancement in the medium and long term."

Abe said Japan was "warmly touched and moved" when Malaysia extended support to the country during the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011.

"You are really a friend in need, and hence, a friend indeed. As such, I hope further to enhance our bilateral relations," he said.

He said Malaysia was a major economy in Asia and a "growth centre of the world", adding that Japan had high expectations of Malaysia's vigorous growth.

"Japan will cooperate through various means to ensure sustainable development of Malaysia and of the rest of the region," said Abe.

On people-to-people exchanges, the Look East Policy has seen Malaysia sending no less than 15,000 students to Japan since 1982.

Abe said Japan hoped to further advance bilateral relations and cooperation with Malaysia by introducing the Second Wave of the Look East Policy (LEP 2.0).

This will explore collaboration in prioritised new growth areas, which include

advanced industrial technology, service and managerial skills," said Abe.

"Furthermore, human resource development in the engineering field through the Malaysia-Japan International Institute for Technology (MIIT) will also be conducive to Malaysia's endeavours for Vision 2020."

Additionally, the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA), compiled by Japan and Malaysia together with other Pacific Rim countries, has strategic significance in sharing prosperity through establishing new economic rules in the fast-growing Asia Pacific region.

"Contribution by Japan and Malaysia together as strategic partners to the regional and global peace and prosperity should serve as the long-lasting prosperity of our two nations and peoples," said Abe.

"Our two countries will be advanced by sharing fundamental values such as freedom, democracy, human rights, the rule of law, as well as contributing as strategic partners to the region and the international community through pursuing our common benefits, namely to ensure regional and global peace and prosperity."

However, Abe said regional security was "now gravely in danger" due to the "unilateral attempts to change the status quo" through land reclamation and construction of outposts in the South China Sea.

"Japan will lend its support to ASEAN member countries in a seamless manner to strengthen the region's capability of preserving the free, open, peaceful ocean," said Abe.

He said Japan planned to contribute further to regional and global peace, stability and prosperity according to the recently enacted legislation for peace and security, which is based on the principle of international cooperation.

"Moreover, Japan will further enhance ties with ASEAN in the so-called unconventional security fields, such as peace-building measures, counter-terrorism measures, including those to address violent extremism, as well as countermeasures against transnational crimes, such as piracy and armed robbery."



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Q&A with Japan's Shinzo Abe



Najib (left) during a bilateral meeting with Abe (right) on the sidelines of the 27th Asean Summit and related ceremonies. -Bernama

Q: What can Japan do to support Malaysia's goal of becoming a high-income nation by 2020? How can the long-standing cordial relations between Malaysia and Japan be enhanced? Japan has been experiencing economic difficulties for a while - what is Japan's advice to Malaysia, which has seen its currency affected due to the crude oil price fall and the slower growth rate of advanced economies?

I would like to extend my heartiest congratulations to Malaysia to be the Asean Chair, when the East Asia Summit (EAS) celebrates its 10th anniversary. In this historical year, I am delighted and honoured to visit Malaysia, which is my third visit as the Prime Minister of Japan, after 2007 and 2013.

With the constant increase in population, the Malaysian economy is expected to grow continuously in the medium and long term. As Malaysia is a major economy in Asia and a growth centre of the world, Japan places high expectations on Malaysia's successive vigorous growth. Japan will co-operate through various

means to ensure the sustainable development of Malaysia and of the rest of the region.

Japan will offer full co-operation for Malaysia, under our initiative of "Partnership for Quality Infrastructure", through infrastructure co-operation, which provides ample infrastructure investment both in quality and quantity, as well as through our investment promotion. I am confident that infrastructure related co-operation in such areas as high-efficiency coal-fired power plants, waterworks and information and communications technology, will enable Malaysia to assist Malaysia's aspiration to achieve a high value-added economy, and to realise Vision 2020 especially. I also believe that the introduction of our Shinkansen for the Malaysia-Singapore high-speed rail project will serve immensely to Malaysia's economic advancement in the medium and long term.

I have met Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib on many occasions since my last visit to Malaysia in 2013. Last May, when Prime Minister Najib visited Japan, we agreed to elevate our relations to a Strategic Partnership.

The factors which formed the basis of the steady development in bilateral relations include exchanges between the Japanese Imperial Family and the Malaysian Royal Family, and between leaders and officials at ministerial level. Above all are the people-to-people exchanges based on the Look East Policy, which has offered our helping hand to Malaysia to send no less than 15,000 young students to Japan since 1982. Active economic relations between our two countries also play a vital role in forging strong bond between the two nations and the two peoples.

We were warmly touched and moved when the Malaysian people extended their heart-warming support to us during the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011. You are really a friend in need, and hence, a friend indeed. As such, I hope further to enhance our bilateral relations.

The Look East Policy, which has formed a foundation for current fruitful bilateral relations, will further advance our co-operation under the new framework, the Second Wave of the Look East Policy (LEP2.0). This will explore collaboration in prioritised new growth areas, which include advanced industrial technology, service and managerial skills. Furthermore, human resource development in the engineering field through the Malaysia-Japan International Institute for Technology (MJIT), will also be conducive to Malaysia's endeavours for Vision 2020.

The TPP agreement, compiled by Japan and Malaysia together with other Pacific Rim countries, has strategic significance in sharing prosperity in the fast-growing Asia Pacific Region through establishing new economic rules that are appropriate for the 21st century. Contribution by Japan and Malaysia together as "Strategic Partners" to the regional and global peace and prosperity should serve to the long lasting prosperity of our two nations and peoples. Our two countries will be advanced by (1) sharing fundamental values such as freedom, democracy, human rights, the rule of law, as well as (2) contributing as "Strategic Partners" to the region and the international community through pursuing our common benefits, namely to ensure regional and global peace and prosperity.

Q: What can Japan do for the Asean Economic Community, which will be established by the end of this year? How can Japan contribute to the safety and security of this region?

Let me extend our warm celebration on the establishment of the Asean Community at the end of this year. For regional peace and prosperity, it is important for Asean to develop and prosper as a partner sharing values such as freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. From this viewpoint, Japan renders its fullest support to Asean's endeavours towards integration.

In December 2013, I welcomed the leaders of the Asean nations to Japan and

hosted the 2nd Asean-Japan Commemorative Summit Meeting in Tokyo. At the Summit Meeting, the "Vision Statement on Asean-Japan Friendship and Cooperation" and its Implementation Plan were adopted. It was reaffirmed that Japan should strengthen co-operation in the following areas as the Asean's "Partner for Peace and Stability", "Partner for Prosperity", and "Partner for Quality of Life". Based on this Vision Statement and its Implementation Plan, Japan intends to continuously contribute to enhancing its partnership with Asean.

Further economic integration of Asean should need massive demand for building infrastructure, including for enhancing connectivity, and should also need to narrow disparities in the region. These challenges can be tackled through the "Partnership for Quality Infrastructure" and human resources development as well as the strong support from our public and private sectors for these initiatives towards sustainable growth.

Unilateral attempts to change the status quo, such as land reclamation and construction of outposts, have taken place in the South China Sea. It is our serious concern that regional security is now gravely in danger. From the point of view of the rule of law at sea, the three principles which I advocated last year are crucial. (a) States should make and clarify their claims based on international law; (b) States should not use force or coercion in trying to drive their claims; and (c) States should seek to settle disputes by peaceful means. By combining our various ODA support menus, such as capacity building assistance and defence equipment, Japan lends its support to Asean member countries in a seamless manner to strengthen Asean's capability of preserving the free, open, and peaceful ocean.

Japan intends to contribute further to regional and global peace, stability and prosperity, according to the recently enacted Legislation for Peace and Security, and under the banner of "Proactive Contribution to Peace", which is based on the principle of international cooperation.

Moreover, Japan will further enhance ties with Asean in the so-called unconventional security fields, such as peace-building measures, counter-terrorism measures including those to address violent extremism, as well as countermeasures against trans-national crimes, such as piracy and armed robbery.

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