

## **Speech by Ambassador Takahashi**

Thank you for joining the celebration of the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. Let me also express my deep appreciation for your cooperation and commitment to Japan-Malaysia relations for the past one year.

The year 2023 witnessed a remarkable progress in the bilateral relations.

First and foremost, Prime Minister Kishida visited Malaysia last November, and Dato' Seri Anwar visited Japan right in the following month.

The highlight of Dato' Seri Anwar's visit to Japan was the upgrading of the Japan-Malaysia relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in the Joint Statement. Other outcomes include signing of the Exchange of Notes for the Official Security Assistance and launch of the Strategic Dialogue. These made me feel rewarded for the long efforts, and I think my predecessors would echo on this.

Our two countries also signed cooperation documents in the fields of communication and space. This is an indication that our cooperation is expanding beyond traditional areas.

In addition to mutual visits at the leaders' level, we received a number of other high level visits in both public and private sectors, such as Ministers, prefectural governors as well as a business mission led by Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry. This is another aspect to symbolize expansion of Japan-Malaysia cooperation.

Moreover, our embassy had a number of opportunities to promote Japanese food and its safety last year. Our activities to promote Japanese popular and traditional culture were also well received.

Ladies and gentlemen.

We hope to turn our Joint Statement and the momentum we gained last year into tangible results.

This year, we are expecting the opening of a branch campus of the University of Tsukuba in Malaysia. This is a major milestone in our educational cooperation, and we will make every effort to ensure its smooth start.

We will also continue to promote the attractiveness of Japan to the Malaysian people. On the cultural front, we want to see more Malaysians to be interested in Japanese culture and actually visit Japan. On the economic front, we would like to strengthen investment not only from Japan to Malaysia, but also from Malaysia to Japan. Actually, Japan is an excellent investment destination. The market size is large and Japan has the world's best human resource base and competitiveness in R&D. Some Malaysians are already investing to Japan, but we want to encourage more.

This evening, we have a number of exhibition booths of Japanese companies and organizations in and outside this ballroom. Please visit the booths, enjoy the high quality of Japanese products and consider expanding your business to Japan.

Let me introduce participating companies and organizations in alphabetical order.

Ajinomoto  
AWA Sake Association  
Canon  
Chitose Agri Laboratory  
Choya  
Gekkeikan  
Gifu Prefecture  
Glico

Hisamitsu  
Hokto  
Japan National Tourism Organization  
KIRIN  
Mitsubishi Heavy Industries  
Panasonic  
SenSenSushi  
Shiratoya  
Shizuoka Prefecture  
Sony  
TMI Trading  
Tong Woh Enterprise  
Toyota  
University of Tsukuba  
Yakult

To acknowledge their support to make our reception more attractive and enjoyable, please give them a big round of applause.

To conclude, I am deeply determined to enhance the cordial relations between Japan and Malaysia to an even higher level to measure up to the name “Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.” In order to do so, I ask further support and cooperation from all of you here tonight. I am looking forward to working with you this year and beyond.

Thank you, and please enjoy the rest of the evening.