

**Keynote Speech by H.E. Ambassador Shikata at
the NIKKEI FORUM MEDINI, JOHOR 2025
June 19th (Thu) 12:55 @ Sunway Hotel Big Box**

Yang Amat Berhormat Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Prime
Minister of Malaysia

Yang Amat Berhormat Dato' Onn Hafiz bin Ghazi, Chief
Minister of Johor

Dato' Idzham Mohd Hashim, President and CEO,
Iskandar Investment Berhad

Mr. Kato Hidenaka , Managing Executive Officer, Nikkei
Inc.

Mr. Asami Naoki, Senior Managing Director, Nikkei
Business Publications

Tan Sri, Dato Sri, Dato' Datuk'

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon, selamat tengahari and こんにちは。

First and foremost, as Ambassador of Japan to Malaysia, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Iskandar Investment Berhad, Nikkei Inc. and Nikkei Business Publications, Inc. for giving me this special opportunity to say a few words on this historic first nikkei Forum in Johor. During the last three days, I am so delighted to have been meeting so many Japanese, Malaysian and ASEAN business and government leaders here in MEDINI Iskandar Puteri. It is an honour for me to share with you my vision to further step up our cooperation and strengthen our partnership between Japan and Malaysia, especially in Johor. I will touch upon three major areas of

cooperation -green investment, transportation, and education.

Let me begin by warmly congratulating Malaysia on its special role as ASEAN Chair this year. Japan wholeheartedly supports Malaysia's leadership, actively led by Prime Minister Anwar. Japan is also fully committed to further strengthening its partnership with Malaysia to realize a Free and Open Indo-Pacific. Malaysia's proactive and constructive role in regional affairs has garnered high praise from many countries within and beyond ASEAN. Japan strongly supports these Malaysian initiatives and is committed to advancing as an indispensable partner in the quest for promoting trade and investment, ensuring as well as regional peace and prosperity.

Today I am delighted to share that this year we have

already received seen several Japanese high-level political visits to Malaysia, reflecting the strength and depth of our robust bilateral relations. Prime Minister Ishiba Shigeru visited Malaysia in January, and this was followed by visits of Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Mr. Muto Yoji in April, and the Parliamentary Association of the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC), headed by former Prime Minister Kishida Fumio in May. These visits were crucial opportunities to strengthen our cooperation, particularly in the green sector and tackling climate change challenges. There have been extensive discussions on new green investments in Malaysia, resulting in concrete expressions of investment plans for wide-ranging projects in Malaysia.

As you know, Johor is emerging as a vital hub for data centers. These facilities require substantial energy for cooling, thus presenting a significant challenge in

terms of environmental impact. In this regard, Japan's LNG cooling technology would offer an environmentally friendly and efficient cooling solution. By adopting this technology, the data centers in Johor would significantly improve energy efficiency while reducing their environmental impacts as well as improving operational efficiency.

Secondly, we are also realizing that green energy flow from Sarawak to Johor will not only secure a sustainable energy supply but also unlock new green investment opportunities in Malaysia for Japanese companies. Such cooperation is expected to accelerate sustainable economic growth in both Japan and Malaysia as well as in the ASEAN region, in the context of realizing ASEAN Power Grid, which PM Anwar has been actively promoting.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Now let me address the issue of transportation. As Johor anticipates significant economic growth given the rapid progress of Johor – Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ), I believe that it is essential to address the pressing issues of traffic congestion in Johor. The traffic jam not only hampers economic activities but also wastes energy and harms the environment, as well as increases the risk of traffic accidents. The forthcoming Rapid Transit System, RTS, expected to be completed by late 2026, along with the proposed Elevated Autonomous Rapid Transit, E-ART system, are keys to improving public transportation in Johor.

Japan is eager to collaborate with Johor by offering cutting-edge solutions, including smart transportation systems and quality infrastructure development. By employing Japan's AI-driven traffic control systems and digitally optimized public

transportation networks, we aim to support Johor in overcoming serious traffic congestion and cooperate with Johor becoming a model smart city for transportation solutions not only in KL or George Town, Penang but also in mega cities in ASEAN and beyond.

Now, in terms of international shipment logistics, the strategic role of ports in Johor State cannot be overlooked. Both Port of Tanjung Pelepas and Johor Port have the huge potential to serve as even more competitive regional logistics hubs. These ports are ideally placed to play a greater role in regional and international trade. Japanese stakeholders can work together with ports in Johor to further improve operational efficiency and to provide even more effective management of vessel traffic for further competitiveness. Such world-class competitive ports

will create many good jobs for the local community in Johor, and strategically contribute to regional economic development.

Thirdly in the field of education, I am encouraged by the growing academic and educational exchanges between our two countries, including at the Japanese and international schools in Johor. Building upon “Look East Policy”, I have been promoting “Look at Each Other Policy”, encouraging more Japanese students to study in Malaysia, including at Sunway University and Edu City in Johor. Students exchanges and joint programs between Japan and Malaysia play a vital role in nurturing our talent and would significantly contribute to creating future joint ventures by our next generation business and technology leaders in both countries. It would be great for our respective educational institutions, industry players and

governments in Johor and Japan, represented here today, to support creating new joint programs between Japanese universities and universities in Johor to institutionally promote our student exchanges. These programs could focus on cutting edge technologies including semiconductors, AI, Digital, sustainable energy transformation, and biotechnology. This kind of new collaboration will nurture talent, future influential business leaders and experts in both countries and lay the groundwork for further bilateral cooperation, based on our long-lasting trust and friendship between Japan and Malaysia.

In closing, I believe that through active involvement and cooperation from both the government and private sectors in the three fields I mentioned, that is green investment, transportation and education, we can achieve lasting, sustainable development together.

Each of our efforts is key to creating a brighter and more prosperous future for both of our nations as well as in our region. I sincerely look forward to realizing this goal in close partnership with all of you.

Very Lastly, based on this successful Nikkei Forum Medini, Johor 2025, I hope that Nikkei Forum shall be held in Johor again and again in the future!!

My friends, Let's come back to Iskandar Puteri, Johor next year!

ありがとうございました。

Thank you and Terima Kasih.