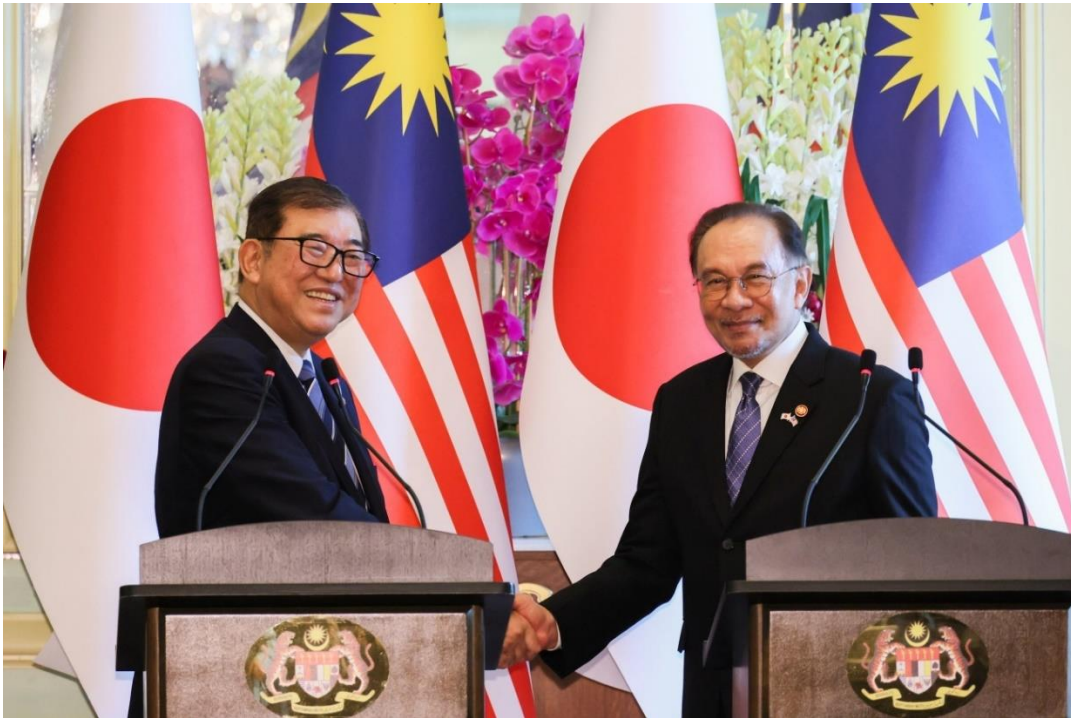


Newsletter from the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN
No. 26: Bringing ASEAN-Japan co-creation into reality

30 January 2025



Joint Press Announcement following the Malaysia-Japan Summit Meeting
(10 January 2025, in Kuala Lumpur, credit: Cabinet Public Affairs Office)

The new year has finally begun! How did you spend your January? There has already been great progress in ASEAN-Japan relations, and the Mission of Japan to ASEAN has been operating at full capacity since new year.

Prime Minister Ishiba visited Malaysia and Indonesia early in the new year as his first bilateral visit since taking office. The following week, ERIA School of Government organized the first High-Level Executive Roundtable, inviting the former Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) Amari. This month, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat was held in Langkawi, and the ASEAN-related Digital Ministers' Meeting and the Tourism Ministers' Meeting were held in Bangkok and Johor Bahru, respectively, with the Vice-Ministers of Internal Affairs and Communications and Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism of Japan attending. At the end of the month, the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) Economic Mission visited Thailand and Indonesia, and I was able to join them at the ERIA visit and New Year's celebration.

Our priority issue that we have been working on since the new year is to "bring ASEAN-Japan co-creation into reality in all fields." In this newsletter, I would like to introduce the steady progress made in ASEAN-Japan co-creation, along with a series of events in January.



A commemorative photo taken before the Indonesia-Japan Summit Meeting

(11 January 2025, in Bogor, credit: Cabinet Public Affairs Office)

● Prime Minister Ishiba's visit to Malaysia and Indonesia

On 9-11 January, Prime Minister Ishiba visited [Malaysia, the ASEAN Chair this year, and Indonesia, the country with the largest economy and population in ASEAN, as his first bilateral visit since taking office](#). Amid increasing uncertainty in the international situation, we believe that strengthening cooperation and trust with Southeast Asia, which is the key region in the Indo-Pacific region and the world's growth center, is extremely important for Japan's foreign policy in the future. to ASEAN worked together with the Embassy of Japan in Indonesia to prepare and manage this visit.

At his last [press conference in Jakarta](#), Prime Minister Ishiba expressed his impressions, saying that (1) it had been 34 years since he last visited Malaysia and Indonesia, and he was astonished by the remarkable development of both countries since then, (2) both countries had very high expectations of Japan, and Japan must also cherish both countries. I was very encouraged by the fact that the Prime Minister himself would approach ASEAN with this mindset in formulating his policy immediately after taking office.

During this visit, not only did we achieve a variety of outcomes in each country, from security and economy to regional and international affairs, but we were also able to build personal relationships at the summit level through small-group meetings, extended meetings, and luncheons with the Prime Ministers' spouses.



ERIA Trade and Industrial Policy Roundtable
(15 January 2025, at E-DISC)

● ERIA Trade and Industrial Policy Roundtable

The inauguration of the new US administration under President Trump on 20 January attracted the world's attention. ASEAN was no exception. Prior to that, on 15 January, [the ERIA School of Government](#) held [the first High-Level Executive Roundtable](#) on trade and industrial policy and economic security in Southeast Asia for the new US administration.

The meeting was attended by many government officials, including Former Minister of METI Amari Akira, who has been working on economic security and innovation policies in Japan for many years, as well as former ministers and politicians from ASEAN countries and dialogue countries and ASEAN Permanent Representatives. They had a frank exchange of views on issues such as the state of trade and industrial policies of each country and the establishment of supply chains for key industries, based on the Chatham House Rules (participants are free to use the information they receive, but cannot reveal the identities or affiliations of speakers or other participants).

By participating in this roundtable throughout the day, I was able to deepen my understanding of the policy challenges and countermeasures facing ASEAN and the Indo-Pacific region. The ERIA School of Government aimed to disseminate policy with ASEAN as the "Epicentrum of Governance" and to envision and share "Regional Interest" that goes beyond "National Interest". I fully support this initiative.



ASEAN- Digital Ministers' Meeting with Japan

(17 January 2025, in Bangkok, credit: [ASEAN Secretariat](#))

● ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting with Japan and ASEAN+3 Tourism Ministers' Meeting

Malaysia, this year's ASEAN Chair, has launched the ASEAN Chair [website](#) and published a [pamphlet](#). On 18 January, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat was held in Langkawi, and the direction of the ASEAN Chairmanship was indicated in the [Chair's Press Statement](#). In addition, Prime Minister Anwar announced Malaysia's policy as the chair country in his contributed article in December, his speech at the LSE in January, and his remarks at the World Economic Forum.

Ministerial-level meetings have also begun. On 16-17 January, the ASEAN-related Digital Ministers' Meeting was held in Bangkok. [The ASEAN-Japan Digital Work Plan 2025](#) was adopted with the attendance of Japan's State Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications Adachi Masashi at the 4th ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting with Japan on 17 January.

On 19 January, the ASEAN-related Tourism Ministers' Meeting was held in Johor Bahru. State Minister for Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Takahashi Katsunori attended the ASEAN+3 Tourism Ministers' Meeting on the same day, where he shared Japan's efforts in cooperation with ASEAN Member States in the tourism sector, reported on the "Tourism Resilience Summit" (November 2024), and called for cooperation in future activities. [A joint statement](#) was also adopted.



Exchange of views with Japanese Staff of International Organizations in Jakarta
(16 January 2025, at the Residence of the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN)

● Exchange of views with Japanese Staff of International Organizations in Jakarta

One of the major strengths that Japan can provide in cooperation with ASEAN is its collaboration with international organisations, including the United Nations. International organizations have global expertise and networks in their respective fields, and Japan, as a major developed country, is involved in the management of each international organisation and promotes cooperation. If this is also used in ASEAN, we can create significant added value. To date, we have been actively promoting ASEAN-Japan cooperation with UNDP, UN Women, and others.

On 17 January, an [exchange of views with Japanese staff members of international organizations in Jakarta was held at the Residence of the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN](#). Dozens of Japanese staff members from ADB, ICRC, IFAD, ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, and WHO Jakarta offices participated, and had a very meaningful meeting with their counterparts from the Mission of Japan to ASEAN and the Embassy of Japan in Indonesia. In addition, Japanese staff members also work for UNIDO and WFP Jakarta offices.

As ASEAN's regional cooperation and ASEAN-Japan cooperation deepen, the possibilities for collaboration with international organizations are expanding. I would like to take advantage of this meeting in forming further projects in the future.



Visit of JCCI and TCCI Economic Mission to ERIA
(24 January 2025, at E-DISC)

● Visit of JCCI and TCCI Economic Missions to Thailand and Indonesia

In late January, economic missions from the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) and the Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI) visited Thailand and Indonesia. It is a large-scale mission consisting of more than 40 people. On 23 January, they visited ERIA for an exchange of views, which I attended as well. On the 24th, a social gathering was held at a hotel in the city in conjunction with the New Year's celebration of the Jakarta Japan Club (JJC) Corporate Division.

[At the meeting with ERIA](#), President Watanabe Tetsuya and other ERIA executives introduced their activities in key areas such as digital (E-DISC), decarbonisation (Asia Zero Emission Centre), strengthening supply chains, healthcare, and support for the ASEAN Chairmanship, followed by a question-and-answer session about the challenges and possibilities of ASEAN business. I felt that ERIA's understanding of the challenges in a wide range of areas in ASEAN and its policy proposals and support for the chair are very useful not only for ASEAN but also for the private sector, including Japan.

A total of 700 people attended [the New Year's celebration and exchange event with JJC](#), and it cemented the strong presence of Japanese companies in the region. At the beginning of the meeting, JJC Chairman Kikuchihara Shinichi, Ambassador of Japan to Indonesia Masaki Yasushi and I delivered greetings, and Mr. Kobayashi Ken, Chairman of the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI), led the toast. Chairman Kobayashi requested cooperation to utilize the power of Japan's small and medium-sized enterprises in Southeast Asia. I would like to support them through ASEAN-Japan cooperation.



JJC Corporate Division New Year's celebration & Exchange Meeting with JCCI and TCCI Economic Mission (24 January 2025, at a hotel in Jakarta)

● Bringing ASEAN-Japan Co-creation into reality

On the occasion of the New Year, we have updated the [Message from the Ambassador](#) on our Mission's website. It concludes with a declaration of my commitment: "I would like to work with a wide range of stakeholders to take concrete actions so that 2025 will be a year to further promote the ASEAN-Japan vision of 'trust and co-creation' through 'consistency and transformation'".

The theme upheld by Malaysia's Chairmanship of ASEAN is "Inclusivity and Sustainability." This is in line with Japan's ["New Plan for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific \(FOIP\)."](#) which calls for respecting diversity, inclusivity, and openness (not excluding anyone, not forming camps, not imposing values, not falling into geopolitical competition, and diverse nations coexisting and prospering under the rule of law) and addressing issues in a realistic and practical Indo-Pacific way (enhancing the resilience and sustainability of each nation's society and realising equal partnerships among countries).

I hope that [ASEAN and Japan](#), as trusted partners, will [harness each other's strengths in a wide range of areas](#) to bring co-creation into reality and create a major trend by drawing out everyone's strengths and aligning our direction. I look forward to your continued support this year!

Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN
Kiya Masahiko