



Left: On January 10, 2025, Prime Minister ISHIBA Shigeru visited Malaysia and held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar bin Ibrahim. Right: On January 11, Prime Minister Ishiba held a summit meeting with President Prabowo Subianto of the Republic of Indonesia.

AFFIRMING STRONG BONDS WITH ASEAN: KEY OUTCOMES FROM PM ISHIBA'S VISIT TO MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA

On his first bilateral visit since taking office, Prime Minister ISHIBA Shigeru traveled to Malaysia and Indonesia in January 2025, where he held summit meetings. The Prime Minister reaffirmed with the leaders of the two countries the importance of maintaining and strengthening a free and open international order based on the rule of law through the realization of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).

Prime Minister ISHIBA Shigeru visited Malaysia and Indonesia in January 2025 and respectively held summit meetings with the leaders of both countries. As the international community becomes increasingly uncertain, Japan intends to place greater value on its relations with Southeast Asia, with Malaysia being the chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) this year and Indonesia being a major power with the largest population and economy in the region.

At the beginning of his meeting with Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar bin Ibrahim of Malaysia, Prime Minister Ishiba stated that the realization of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) is indispensable as the international society faces a complex crisis, and expressed his desire to have a wide-ranging discussion on regional and international issues as

well as strengthening Japan-Malaysia relations. Prime Minister Anwar responded that he would work closely with Prime Minister Ishiba to further deepen bilateral cooperation in a wide range of areas.

In the security area, the two leaders welcomed the rapid development of the strategic dialogues between the two countries, such as Foreign Vice-Ministerial consultations and strategic dialogue between foreign and defense authorities, as well as the start of bilateral exercises between the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and the Royal Malaysian Navy, and concurred to continue to enhance such cooperation. They also shared the view to further promote cooperation in the area of maritime safety and to continue to collaborate between the relevant authorities in the area of cyber security.

In the economic area, the two leaders concurred

to cooperate in supply chains resilience in important sectors such as semiconductors and aircraft parts, and developing rare earth resources, taking into account Malaysia's "MADANI" policy that Prime Minister Anwar is promoting, which emphasizes sustainability, innovation, and prosperity. They confirmed the promotion of cooperation in resource and infrastructure development to ensure energy security and decarbonization through various pathways.

The two leaders subsequently concurred on their views to continue cooperation in the fields of disaster prevention and human resource development. They also exchanged views on regional and international situations, including the situation in the East and South China Sea, the Middle East, and Myanmar.

Prime Minister Ishiba then visited the Republic of Indonesia, where he held a summit meeting with President Prabowo Subianto. Regarding bilateral relations in the security area, the two leaders concurred to hold a Foreign and Defense Ministers' Meeting (2+2) in 2025 and welcomed the launch of a consultation between defense officials of both countries on maritime security, including defense equipment and technology cooperation.

In the economic area, the two leaders confirmed the promotion of cooperation in the resource and infrastructure development to ensure energy security and decarbonization through various pathways and



Prime Minister Ishiba attended a welcome ceremony in Bogor Presidential Palace.



Top: The Prime Minister and Mrs. ISHIBA Yoshiko attended a luncheon hosted by Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar. Above: A scene from the Japan-Malaysia summit meeting.

welcomed the agreement on coordinated financing by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) and other entities for the Muara Laboh geothermal power project under the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) platform.

As more than 20 years have passed since the Sumatra earthquake of December 2004, which Japan also supported in its aftermath, Prime Minister Ishiba stated that Japan would continue to assist Indonesia and contribute to it in the areas of disaster management. Prime Minister Ishiba also expressed his desire to contribute to Indonesia's efforts to spread the school meals program that President Prabowo is promoting as part of his poverty alleviation and nutritional improvement measures by utilizing Japan's own experiences. In addition, the two leaders stressed the importance of human resource development and concurred to strengthen two-way people-to-people exchanges.

During his visit, Prime Minister Ishiba affirmed with both Prime Minister Anwar and President Prabowo the importance of maintaining and enhancing a free and open international order based on the rule of law to lead the world towards cooperation through the realization of a FOIP and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), and confirmed that they would continue to work together.