

Two longtime partners venture into new frontiers

In March, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak unveiled the New Economic Model (NEM), whose objectives include raising competitiveness, attracting long-term investment, increasing government efficiency, reducing state subsidies and achieving sustainable growth.

tries need to come and appreciate the context of these changes and make their decisions with a long-term perspective," says Tan Sri Dr. Sulaiman Bin Mahbob, chairman of the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (MIDA).

In the latest World Competitiveness ranking, conducted by the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) in Switzerland, Malaysia jumped from No. 19 in 2009 to No. 9 in 2010, a feat that experts attribute to the country's friendly investor atmosphere, world-class infrastructure and stable political structure.

Another initiative of the prime minister, the "1Malaysia: People First, Performance Now" program, aims to build a "more united" nation, known for being one of Asia's most culturally and ethnically diverse.

Should the program prove effective, the government believes that economic growth will grow even faster and become more sustainable and stable.

Building on former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's "Look East" policy, Malaysia wants to further strengthen its collaboration with longtime trading partner Japan, which is among the country's top export and import markets.

"Beyond bilateral economic relations, we have a strong foundation of about 13,000 young Malaysian students and professionals trained and educated in Japan,"



Dubbed the Silicon Valley of the East, Penang has been one of Malaysia's three most industrialized states, boasting a strong high-tech manufacturing industry and electronics sector.

explains Japanese Ambassador to Malaysia Masahiko Horie.

In early 2010, the two countries reaffirmed their commitment to closer trade and educational exchange when Prime Minister Najib and then Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama renewed "an enhanced partnership for a new frontier."

"The enhanced partnership is based on four pillars: international peace and security, economic partnership, cooperation in the environment and energy and human resource development," Horie says.

While total foreign direct investment (FDI) to Malaysia declined in 2009 due to the global economic recession, total investment from Japan actually grew from \$1.62 billion to \$2.06 billion.

"There are currently 1,400 Japanese-affiliated companies in Malaysia and most of them regard Malaysia as a positive investment destination," says Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) Kuala Lumpur Managing Director Hiroki Takahashi.

"Malaysia has a superb operational environment for the electronics and electric industries," adds Takahashi.

The Japanese technology that has featured prominently in the domestic electronics, chemicals and energy industries remains well-protected by a comprehensive intellectual property regime and easily assimilated by a highly skilled, English-speaking local workforce.

"The Japanese should come over and see for themselves. It is time for them to reappraise Malaysia," says Tan Sri Mahbob.

And in the aftermath of the global economic slump, Malaysia has regained its prominence in intra-ASEAN trade and assumed strategic importance in the rapidly

growing trade between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, China, India and the rest of Asia due to its central location, as well as excellent transport and logistics infrastructures.

According to Malaysia's Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), in May, total exports increased 21.9 percent to \$17.27 billion, while imports surged by 24.2 percent to \$14.28 billion.

The rise in exports and imports is attributed to the robust growth of Malaysia's electrical and electronic products, liquefied natural gas (LNG), petroleum, chemicals and palm oil sectors. Japan is Malaysia's second-largest importer and third-largest exporter, after Singapore and China.

As Malaysia aims to be the leader in the fast-growing Islamic finance and halal sectors, the country offers Japanese companies new investment opportunities to diversify their activities and boost their profits.

Last year, Malaysia also welcomed three new solar energy companies and several foreign joint venture research initiatives in a bid to develop a domestic renewable energy industry powered by local natural resources.

"Japanese must collaborate further in the green technology, biotechnology and IT industries. This will be mutually beneficial to the economies and environments of both nations," Horie points out.

Outside of business, Malaysia has also been selected in Japan as the No. 1 destination for a second home, promoted by the "Malaysia: My Second Home" (MM2H) program, which has since assisted more than 1,000 Japanese families in setting up their retirement residences in the country. ♦

Bridgestone makes no stops

Marking its 10th anniversary in Malaysia, Japan-owned Bridgestone will highlight more than its world-famous products, confident that its tires and commitment to excellent customer service will drive them forward to the next decade.

"Tires themselves become the promotion. The more Bridgestone tires are used, the more promotion we get in the market. Gradually, we increase our sales throughout the years because our products are being used and promoted by our consumers. This is our key success story in the 10 years we've been here in Malaysia," says Bridgestone Tyre Sales Malaysia Managing Director Takashi Aoki.

Instead, to celebrate the milestone, the world's largest tire and rubber company will highlight its corporate responsibility and promote its environmental protection efforts.

"Celebrating our 10th anniversary, I wanted to do something new. We arranged a charity golf event with F1 drivers and auctioned exclusive, signed F1 golf memorabilia to raise funds and donate them to the Global Environment Center (GEC)," Aoki recalls.

Together with GEC, Bridgestone Malaysia also organized an Earth Charity Drive this year,

which educated local communities about environmentally friendly motoring through its campaign "Make Cars Green."

Apart from those events, Bridgestone will also launch later this year ECOPIA, its first ecofriendly tire for the Malaysian market.

For every ECOPIA, TURANZA and B-SERIES tire sold, Bridgestone will contribute 1 Malaysian ringgit to its CSR fund in its effort to help conserve the environment. Bridgestone may also include its other range of tires in this CSR endeavor.

"Our company decided to produce and market environmental tires. We have started to change the course of our company toward that direction," Aoki says.

Once introduced, Bridgestone's low rolling resistance tires will support the highly motorized country in its efforts to protect its environment, just as Malaysia provided the company with ideal conditions for its growth.

"We appreciate the support from the Malaysian community in the 10 years we have been here. Without their support, and that of Japan and many others, we couldn't have achieved success in Malaysia," Aoki says. ♦

www.bridgestonetire.com.my



Bridgestone Tyre Sales Malaysia Managing Director Takashi Aoki



Japanese Ambassador to Malaysia Masahiko Horie

Both domestic and foreign sectors view the NEM, believing that Malaysia must intensify its efforts to remain a dominant player in a region growing more competitive.

"The NEM will attract investors who view Malaysia as a long-term partner. This is no longer an energy- and labor-cheap economy. Investors in knowledge-based indus-

eBOX

Canon Marketing Malaysia has established its name in the country as the distributor of exceptional cameras, printers and other office equipment, all developed by the Japan-based imaging and optical technology pioneer. www.canon.com.my

The Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) in Malaysia focuses on strengthening and sustaining bilateral trade and investment between the two countries. The Malaysia Japan Automotive Industry Cooperation Project (MAJAICO), an endeavor resulting from the Japan-Malaysia Economic Partnership Agreement, is the organization's current goal. www.jetro.go.jp/malaysia

Century Motolite Battery is among the longest serving automotive battery brands in Malaysia. In partnership with Philippine Batteries Inc., one of the region's largest and most modern battery factories, it recently launched highly advanced Maintenance Free (MF) batteries in the country. <http://centuryauto.com.my>

The Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA) promotes the interests of the travel and tour industry in the country. Based in Kuala Lumpur, it also works closely with the Ministry of Tourism and the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board in organizing trade fairs, seminars, conventions and workshops. It has more than 2,800 members, composed of local tour operators and travel organizations. www.matta.org.my

Palm oil-based product for 'green' Malaysia ink

Toyochem Specialty Chemical (TSC) has grabbed the largest market share in Malaysia with more than 45 percent in each of its business segments - printing ink, graphic arts supplies, polymer chemicals and specialty chemical products and media materials - by creating a highly efficient distribution and after-sales organization.

A subsidiary of the Japan-based Toyo Ink Group, TSC has maintained its competitive edge by investing heavily on research and development, particularly focusing on the use of Malaysia's natural resources in its printing inks and other chemical products.

In fact, TSC was the first in the world to market an ecofriendly palm oil-based ink product.

As part of its green initiatives, TSC will participate in the IGEM 2010 (International Greentech & Eco-Product Exhibition & Conference Malaysia) to exchange knowledge and promote its eco-products and services. TSC plans to use the event to raise its profile in this growing business sector.

"For us to thrive, we must stay ahead of the market and our competitors," stresses Managing Director and CEO Haruhiko Akutsu, who has unveiled plans to diversify the company's green products



Toyochem Specialty Chemical Managing Director and CEO Haruhiko Akutsu

and expand into the automotive and photovoltaic segments with specialty chemical products.

As the group's main manufacturing facility for China, Asia and Oceania, TSC exports its products to the Toyo Ink Group of companies worldwide.

"In order for us to maintain our competitive advantage, we need 100 percent effort from our staff, human resources and all our capabilities," he says.

TSC also donates a portion of its profits to local schools to support their environmental initiatives, such as the preservation and reforestation program of Malaysia's rain forests. ♦

www.toyochem.com.my

Daikin expands in hot Malaysian market

Asserting its reputation as pioneers in the air-conditioning industry, Daikin has unveiled new ecofriendly products and technology that will ensure its growth around the world.

In Malaysia, Daikin is determined to lead the air-conditioning industry as it promotes its latest products for both residential and industrial customers.

"Because of the growing Malaysian economy, we expect to expand ourselves in the local market in the next few years," says Atsushi Tamiya, Daikin Airconditioning Malaysia's managing director.

Set up in the late 1990s, the Malaysian subsidiary of the global air-conditioning group is gradually phasing out its classic cooling units and replacing them with VRV (Variable Refrigerant Volume) systems, which provide unparalleled energy savings, capacity range, functional design and reliability.

Recently, it also introduced its patented inverter technology in residential air-conditioning products.

"Our inverters are highly efficient, rapidly cooling a room quicker, while using less energy," Tamiya says.

Lately, Daikin Malaysia has also



Daikin Airconditioning Malaysia Managing Director Atsushi Tamiya

perceived a shift in the market, with residential customers currently accounting for 50 percent of business, and both commercial and industrial customers making up the remainder.

As Southeast Asian countries have until 2013 to meet HCFC-reduction targets set by the Montreal Protocol, manufacturers in Malaysia must soon develop and produce new energy-saving air-conditioners.

Under those conditions, Daikin has a clear head start in selling HVAC systems that offer better energy savings and efficiency. ♦

www.daikin.com.my

Malaysia's top air cargo provider continues to soar

Situated in the middle of Asia's most dynamic economies (Japan, China and India), Malaysia has become a very important air transport center in the region.

With its five 747 freighters, Malaysia Airlines Cargo, or MASKargo, is well-equipped to ship goods to more than 100 destinations in six continents, allowing businesses to maximize the potential of the country's advanced transport hub in Kuala Lumpur.

"Air freight volumes in Asia have recovered to levels higher than in the pre-global economic crisis, with the Chinese and Japanese markets showing impressive growth in 2010. The global crisis has proven that manufacturing will not move away from the Asia-Pacific region. This augurs well for MASKargo as we are based in this region," explains Managing Director Shahari Sulaiman.

"The Japanese have established many manufacturing plants here and they can only be successful if the whole supply chain works. We are an important part of that supply chain and have supported the industry through

scheduled and charter services," he adds.

MASKargo services Narita and Kansai airports and has partnered with the top Japanese forwarders such as Nippon Express, KWE, Yusen and NNR, not only in Malaysia and Japan but in other countries in their network.

Responding to the recovery of imports and exports between Malaysia and Japan to pre-recession levels, MASKargo increased the 747-freighter flights to Narita from one to two weekly flights since March of this year and expects to add more flights.

In late 2011, the company will add two Airbus A330 freighters to its fleet and plans to add more flights to Japan to improve its intra-Asia coverage.

Under its expansion plans, MASKargo plans to raise cargo ground handling capacity in Kuala Lumpur from 650,000 tons per year to 1 million tons per year over the next three to four years, as well as further upgrade the efficiency and security of the company's state-of-the-art cargo center.

With manufacturing and distribution be-



MASKargo Managing Director Shahari Sulaiman

coming more globalized, MASKargo has staked its future growth and success on its ability to form more partnerships, which, according to Sulaiman, will introduce freighter flights to the United States later this year. ♦

www.maskargo.com



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"We are an important part of that supply chain and have supported the industry through scheduled and charter services."

With KWE, customers need not look any further

With Malaysia's exports rising steadily (growth has already reached 10.1 percent this year), Japanese-owned Kintetsu World Express (KWE) has taken advantage of the positive trend and restructured itself from an airfreight company into a total logistics service provider in Malaysia.

When KWE began operations in Malaysia 30 years ago, airfreight forwarding offered promising prospects. But increasing globalization and competition on all fronts have forced forwarding firms to become one-stop shops to serve all their customers' needs.

To reflect that shift in focus, the company changed its name from Kintetsu Integrated Air Services to Kintetsu World Express Malaysia in July.

"The time is right to re-brand the company," says KWE Malaysia Managing Director Kazuhisa Kawamura, who oversees more than 520 full-time and contracted staff.

"The new name links us back closer to the KWE Group identity, as well as projecting our vision to be a leader in total logistics service in Malaysia. We have to be strong in Malaysia and globally to compete with our competitors," he adds.

Over the years, KWE Malaysia has attracted an impressive clientele that includes many global giants.

Among its largest customers are U.S.-based Texas Instruments and Agilent Technologies, which have remained partners with KWE Malaysia because of its quality service and commitment.

For Japanese companies in Malaysia, the company



KWE Malaysia Managing Director Kazuhisa Kawamura is highlighting its Japanese advantage to expand business with them.

"We have much room for expansion in business with Japanese clients. We want Japanese companies to come to KWE, leveraging on our strength and expertise in the Asian market. Together, we can win the game!" says Kawamura.

Besides its core strength in handling electronics and electrical goods, the company also hopes to enlist more customers from sectors such as pharmaceuticals, aerospace and "green" technology.

Anticipating growth in the near future, KWE Malaysia plans to build new facilities and warehouses in the country to diversify and strengthen its business.

Currently, airfreight accounts for 70 percent of its business, with the remaining 30 percent in ocean freight, contract logistics and trucking. ♦ www.kwe.com

"We want Japanese companies to come to KWE, leveraging on our strength and expertise in the Asian market. Together, we can win the game!"

Veteran Japanese builder maps out local strategy

As Japanese electronics companies established operations and manufacturing facilities in cost-friendly Malaysia amid a boom in the industry in the 1980s, several Japan-based construction and engineering groups followed that overseas expansion, confident that they would easily meet the exacting quality standards of their compatriot companies and generate new business for their parent companies back home.

Since entering the Malaysian construction business 21 years ago, Kajima Malaysia has become more than just a supporting contractor for Japanese companies in the country.

"We also design and we have capabilities to engineer a unique idea. We also offer services at all levels of the development pro-



Kajima Malaysia Managing Director Yukio Yasuda

cess," explains Managing Director Yukio Yasuda.

Yasuda, who joined Kajima 20 years ago and took over the Malaysian subsidiary in 2005, has steered the company through the

2007 economic recession as he harnessed the strength of the entire company from the bottom up and used "everyone's power to move in one direction."

Kajima expects continued growth as Malaysian companies understand the need for world-class engineering and the local property sector sees increased foreign investment with property prices growing more affordable.

As part of its growth strategy, Kajima Malaysia plans to build large-scale shopping and retail centers intended for the domestic market.

"We have a long history with our Japanese clients here, but we are changing direction and opening up to all," says Senior Manager of Finance for Administration Tsuyoshi Iseki. ♦ www.kajima.co.jp/english

With new CEO, Canon Malaysia set to retain market leadership

Canon Singapore, the regional head office for South and Southeast Asia, appointed company veteran Melvyn Ho as the new president and CEO of Canon Marketing Malaysia in October 2010.

Ho has extensive experience in managing the overall business performance of Canon consumer products, including computer peripherals (laser printers, inkjet printers, all-in-ones, scanners), visual communication tools (projectors, visualizers and webcams), photographic products (cameras, digital lens shutters, DSLR cameras and digital camcorders) and personal office products such as personal copiers and fax machines.

Previously the vice president for South and Southeast Asia in Canon Singapore, Ho has acquired deep expertise in exactly the areas of growth concentration of Canon Marketing Malaysia, which has given him

the needed competence to improve local operations.

During his tenure in Singapore, Ho played an integral role in increasing revenue and market growth for the countries he oversaw.

The results-oriented Ho, who joined Canon in 1988, also held various positions in customer service, corporate planning, training and IT support.

"With all the branding efforts and assimilation into the daily lifestyles of Malaysians, I have noted that the Canon brand in Malaysia has grown by leaps and bounds and have firmly secured formidable market leader positions for many Canon product categories," says Ho.

"Now it's time to grow the product reach and enhance customer service further to retain our valued customers and in the same instant, attract new customers," he adds. www.canon.com.my

With a 70 percent market share in the Malaysian printer business, the subsidiary holds the highest printer market share of all Canon subsidiaries in the world.

While its headquarters in Japan designs the new technology and products, Canon Marketing in Malaysia has promoted its products to appeal to the new generation of consumers in the country.

To further assimilate the brand into the local lifestyle, Canon has sponsored various events related to dining, music, fashion and culture.

Canon Malaysia is the second-longest standing investment in Asia by Canon Japan, which entered the country in the 1980s because of its highly skilled labor force and the political and economic stability that continues today. ♦ www.canon.com.my



Canon Marketing Malaysia President and CEO Melvyn Ho

PIHH – the global gateway to halal markets

Penang, the northwestern state of Malaysia, aspires to be a leading international hub in the fast-growing, trillion-dollar halal industry and to inform the world that halal is a holistic concept that goes beyond the prescribed manner of food and beverage preparation and processing.

To reach this objective, the Penang government has exerted a concerted effort to position the state as an international halal hub through its existing export-oriented infrastructure and global connectivity.

The Penang International Halal Hub (PIHH) was established to spearhead the development of the halal hub in Penang and to promote it under the brand Halal Penang. This initiative is formed by Penang's state agencies, as well as its corporate and academic sectors.

"Through these working relationships, we can take the halal industries to greater heights and achieve our goal of becoming a global leader in halal," says Abdul Malik, who is also the State Minister for Islamic Affairs, Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs.

According to Abdul Malik, halal is synonymous with the term *toyyiban*, which means wholesome and good, as well as permissible.

"This holistic approach to halal encourages and initiates products and services that will not only be produced and marketed for the Muslim community but for all," he says.

"This way of life is marketable to the whole world. We are looking at the full traceability of halal. That means from farm to fork," he explains. Halal Penang offers a holistic



PIHH Chairman Abdul Malik

halal supply chain, focusing on nine main clusters, namely industries, logistics, agro-based, R&D, life sciences, Islamic finance, hospitality and tourism, human capital or halal-knowledge workers, and marketing and promotion.

Considering Halal Penang's strategic branding and market linkages over the past year, various countries have shown profound interests in seeking assistance from Halal Penang in developing their respective halal industries (including the establishment of halal industrial parks) such as Pakistan, Yemen, India, Thailand, Indonesia and the U.K.

"We do not want to compete with anybody. We want to collaborate with all countries and promote this concept internationally. My dream is to be able to get the Japanese businesses to be able to look into this tremendous potential," says Abdul Malik. ♦ www.halalpenang.com

Passion breeds successful collaboration for Honda

Since Malaysia's Oriental Holdings and Japan's Honda Motor formed the 50-50 joint venture more than two years ago, Boon Siew Honda has not shifted its focus in the country, which is to consolidate the production and sales of motorcycles while keeping all its customers satisfied.

"Successful collaboration within other Honda group companies in the ASEAN region is integral. We plan to bring Boon Siew Honda's operations level on par with those of Honda companies in other various countries worldwide," says CEO and Managing Director Shoichi Harada.

To reach the same level as those of its counterparts, Boon Siew Honda has had to understand Malaysian motoring culture and use the knowledge to localize its marketing strategy.

"We will not only incorporate the same operation module as in our Honda headquarters in Japan. We have to clarify user needs in other ASEAN countries and take into consideration the viewpoint of our users in this specific region," says the company chief.

For instance, Boon Siew Honda has highlighted the EX5, a basic motorcycle model that has been its best-seller since its launch 20 over years ago because of its affordable price and excellent quality.



Boon Siew Honda CEO and Managing Director Shoichi Harada

From its headquarters in Penang, Boon Siew Honda manages its sales and production facility (which had a capacity of 220,000 units per year as of 2010), spare parts center, customer service center, riding safety center and motor sports division.

The Penang office also oversees the daily operations of its branches in Kuala Lumpur, Melaka, Kuala Terengganu and Johor Bahru.

Historically, Penang is a home to small and medium-size automotive-related companies that supply parts and components to Boon Siew Honda.

In line with a more aggressive

branding plan, Boon Siew Honda launched a nationwide advertising campaign and stepped up its marketing strategy, such as sponsorship of motor sports and extreme sports events, which are gaining popularity in Malaysia.

"We support this racing culture by promoting our brand to the youth as they are the future of Boon Siew Honda's customers," explains Harada.

Boon Siew Honda has shown signs of keeping its No. 1 position in motorcycles by providing environmental solutions and constantly striving to improve operations to the highest quality possible. ♦ www.boonsiewhonda.com.my

Malaysia's top car has Japanese roots and global future

In 1993, Malaysian and Japanese partners formed Perusahaan Otomobil Kedua Sdn Bhd (PERODUA) as part of a government program to develop domestic automotive companies that would sell affordable, well-made compact vehicles for the local market.

Backed originally by UMW Corp., MBM Resources, Daihatsu Motor, PNB Equity Resource Corp., and Mitsui & Co. as shareholders, the company launched Perodua Kancil the following year.

"We have a respectful and trustful partnership with the Japanese. DMC is a strategic partner as their engineers support our local research and development, and the transfer of technology enables us to confidently localize our production and R&D capabilities," says Managing Director Ainar Rashid Salleh.

When the company restructured in 2001 the role of the DMC and Mitsui partnership increased. Today, Ainar plans to further the localization of parts manufacturing.

"We would like to synchronize the development process with Daihatsu in Japan and ultimately design and engineer the full upper body to suit our local market," he says.

With more than 10,000 staff, annual produc-



Perodua Managing Director Ainar Rashid Salleh

tion capacity at around 250,000 units and an extensive sales network across Malaysia, Perodua is stepping up its domestic growth.

"We sold 95,000 units in the first six months of this year and we're looking at a domestic market demand of 185,000 vehicles this year," adds Ainar.

Currently, the Perodua Myvi is Malaysia's top-selling vehicle while its recently-launched Alza has emerged as the market leader in the MPV category.

Perodua has also grown its export activities as it assembles the Avanza model for Toyota and exports its Perodua vehicles to seven countries, including the U.K. and Singapore.

"The confidence in Malaysian-made vehicles with Japanese technological know-how is an important component of our international branding, which focuses on quality, cost, delivery and productivity," says Ainar.

"When you follow this up with consistent customer service, this is how we will remain No. 1," he adds.

Perodua is also committed to improving its engines and vehicle design by maximizing the environmental efficiency of the existing technology.

Earlier this year, the company sponsored the Perodua Eco-Challenge, a competition among university students to design and develop modifications to improve the energy-efficiency and performance of donated Perodua vehicles.

The event was such a success that the Ministry of Higher Education asked Perodua to make this an annual event.

For the coming year, Ainar has clear objectives.

"We will focus back on the basics this year and the coming years. Our goal is '333.' We'll hold 33 percent of the market, manage a 30 percent cost reduction and continue to be one of the top 3 in both Showroom Satisfaction Index (SSI) and Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI)," he says. ♦ www.perodua.com.my



Perodua's sales surged due to the popular Myvi Elite.

Kansai Paints is keen on keeping top spot

Having earned the prestigious No.1 position in Malaysia, Kansai Paints knows that its continued success depends on its ability to develop its human resources particularly because the coating industry, the company's field of expertise, relies strongly on advanced R&D.

Managing Director Anthony Tan is confident that his company can maintain the top spot because of its clear and strategic business direction, its highly professional and dedicated staff, as well as vital support from its Japanese headquarters to focus on its key

strength and seek more markets outside Malaysia.

Kansai Paint first burst into the Malaysian market as the supplier for homegrown automobile giant Proton in 1984 before forming a joint venture, Sime Kansai Paints, with Sime Darby in 1995.

"Along the way, we developed a very strong technical force. We have the strongest technical teams in the country," says Tan.

Today, the company caters to all automotive and automotive-related sectors as it built an impressive client list that includes Proton, Perodua, Honda, Toyota, Nissan,

"We developed a very strong technical force. We have the strongest technical teams in the country."



Sime Kansai Paints Managing Director Anthony Tan

Kia and Hyundai. As a leading automotive paints supplier with 30 factories all over the world, Kansai Paints operates two factories in Klang, Malaysia, with total staff of 400.

From the two factories, it also exports automotive and non-automotive products to ASEAN markets such as Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia, as well as to Pakistan.

"Our headquarters in Japan have put a lot of trust in us here. They have given us an opportunity to expand business not only in the local market but also abroad. We are expanding our network further and

have begun to export to various markets such as India and Middle East countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates and others," says Tan.

"We want to strengthen our market share. In the end, we want to be a significant player in the auto re-finishing market in the region," he adds.

Tan believes the company can contribute significantly toward Kansai Group's vision of becoming among the world's top 5 paint manufacturers by looking into non-traditional business areas throughout the regions. ♦ www.kansai.co.jp

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