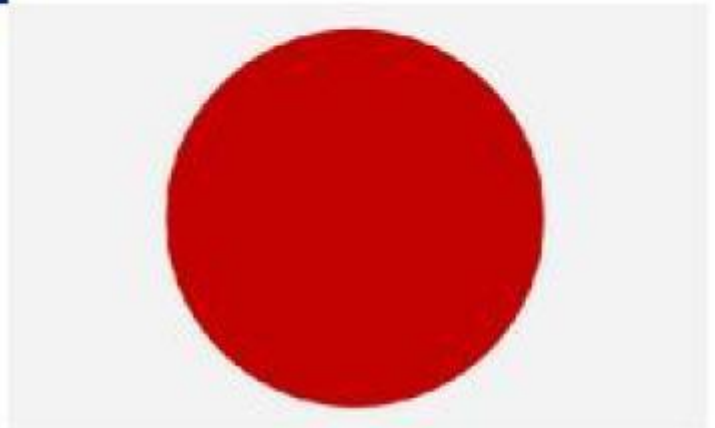


Japan Sees Rising Business Interest in Cuba



CUBA

JAPÓN



Havana, May 1 (RHC) — Japanese business interest in Cuba is likely to intensify because of the thaw in U.S.-Cuban relations, Japan's foreign minister said Thursday as he arrived in Havana for a visit.

Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida is scheduled to meet with his Cuban counterpart, Bruno Rodriguez.

Kishida said Japan "supports and welcomes" the start of negotiations between Washington and Havana, adding that this development would "positively influence relations with Japan."

"For now, it is hard for Japanese companies to do business with Cuba because in doing so they face the prospect of sanctions from the United States under the U.S. trade embargo imposed in 1962," said Ken Okaniwa, the foreign minister's spokesman as quoted by AFP.

Okaniwa said bilateral trade now stands at just 35 million dollars a year, two thirds of it are Japanese sales to Cuba.

Cuba exports tobacco, coffee and fish to Japan, and mainly buys Japanese machinery, he added.



Radio Habana Cuba