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Mahathir-Koizumi

JAPAN SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT OF MALAYSIA'S BIO-DIVERSITY

By: Jamaluddin Muhammad

TOKYO, June 8 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Japanese government is prepared to help Malaysia in researching its bio-diversity for medical purposes.

He said research could be made on the structure and coding of Malaysia's natural resources.

"However, the study must be made in Malaysia and the natural resources cannot be taken out," he told a news conference at Hotel Imperial here after calling on Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi at his (Koizumi's) office here.

Dr Mahathir is on a four-day visit to Japan starting yesterday.

He said the research centre must be set up in Malaysia and he had sought the help of the United Nations University here to conduct the research.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia also hoped that Japanese companies would help in the research.

He said Koizumi agreed that Japan would continue to provide loans to Malaysian to develop its infrastructure facilities.

This is the first meeting between Dr Mahathir and Koizumi since Koizumi became prime minister in April this year.

Dr Mahathir said Japan also agreed to continue investing in Malaysia.

To another question, he said Malaysia had problems with its smartcard and he was interested in the smartcard produced by Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation (NTT) because it had a chip that could store a lot of information and protect confidential data.

The smartcard known as government multipurpose card (GMPC) contains four applications -- identification card, driving licence, immigration information and e-cash -- and two optional applications, namely health information and public key infrastructure.

It had its soft launch in April this year and is currently available in the Klang Valley and the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC), a 750km area south of Kuala Lumpur designated as a multimedia hub.

Dr Mahathir said NTT was the first company with MSC status to set up its R&D centre in Cyberjaya.

The centre is undergoing expansion and is expected to be ready in two or three months.

He said the Japanese companies also wanted to continue investing in the MSC.

-- BERNAMA

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