

# M'sia can be a biotech hub, says Japanese expert

STAR - 9 SEP 2002

**KUALA LUMPUR.** Malaysia has what it takes to be a biotechnology hub with its rich rainforest resource and the IT infrastructure of Cyberjaya, said renowned Japanese eco-architect Dr Kisho Kurokawa.

"About 90% to 95% of new species or genome of the future will be found in the rainforest and if this resource of biotechnology is developed, it will become a huge industry in this country. I think that this natural resource will be bigger than the oil resources in the world," he said after being conferred an Honorary Doctorate of Architecture by Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) at its 26th Convocation 2002 on Saturday.

He added that the area of Cyberjaya and Putrajaya could provide the perfect site for an "Eco-Media City" and "Bio-technology Valley" concept that he hoped the Government would take up.

"I have already met Prime Minister (Datuk Seri) Dr Mahathir (Mohamad) and I think that his response to the idea has been positive but we would still need to conduct more preliminary studies before any decision can be made," he said, explaining that the biotechnology industry would require a huge number of specialists and experts,

which would take some time to establish in Malaysia.

Dr Kurokawa, 64, of Kisho Kurokawa and Associates, has designed numerous art galleries, high-rise buildings, domestic airports and participated in urban planning projects around the world. KLIA was one of his latest which incorporated his philosophy of symbiosis between nature and technology.

UPM Vice-Chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Mohd Zohadie Bardaie said the university was confident that it would be able to meet the country's demand of biotechnology experts and knowledge with its new Rainforest Centre.