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Technical university to be set up for Asean students

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DATUK Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi enjoyed fruitful discussions with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi during a bilateral meeting yesterday which ended with both parties giving their full commitment towards the establishment of a technical university in Malaysia for students from Asean countries.

The Deputy Prime Minister said Koizumi had focused on educational co-operation during discussions and gave his full support towards the setting up of the Japan-Malaysia Technical University, which would open its doors to students "very soon".

Saying that a site for the university has been identified, Abdullah said discussions between Malaysia and Japan on the matter would continue.

Abdullah told a Press conference at the Imperial Hotel that he also met Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Takeo Hiranuma; Finance Minister Masajuro Shiokawa; Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi and 16 Japanese corporate leaders.

The proposal to set up the Japan-Malaysia Technical University was made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at a Asean+3 meeting in Brunei two years ago which was also attended by Koizumi.

The university, to also take in lecturers from Japan, will be the first public higher educational institution to be set up with foreign assistance.

Abdullah said Koizumi also urged for more student exchange programmes to be introduced and wanted Malaysian students to pursue medicine in Japan.

"Medical universities in Japan are into e-medicine, and even offer tele-conferencing facilities for their distance learning programmes," he said.

Abdullah said the 16 corporate leaders he met were assured that Malaysia would continue to create a friendly environment for trade.

"I told them we will continue being friendly to the private sector. I also touched on the importance of small and medium enterprises to the economy and they expressed interest in this sector and in the information and communications technology sector."