

# PM: Centre shows our success in space science

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**BANTING:** The newly launched Malaysia Space Centre signifies the country's achievement in space science, said Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The Prime Minister said the Government was committed to enhancing the country's capacity in space science research and innovation because Malaysia could not become a developed country without building on this important field.

"To compete with developed countries, I believe we have to master the various fields of science and technology, including astronomy," he said when launching the centre yesterday.

The RM100mil space centre is located on a 161.8ha plot of land in Kampung Sungai Lalang here and equipped with state-of-the-art laboratories to assist in work relating to satellite systems.

It has the capability to monitor and communicate with the

Malaysian astronaut who would be assigned to the International Space Station.

Besides this centre, the Government has set up a national observatory in Langkawi, with the country's first robotic telescope to enable the observation of space through the Internet.

On the first Malaysian to go to space, Abdullah said that because the astronaut was a Muslim, the Government had to address how he could practise his religious obligations in space.

"We want our astronaut to show to the world that Islam is not a hindrance to development but can also explore space," he added.

Abdullah later talked via video conferencing with astronaut candidates Dr Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor, 34, and Kapten Dr Faiz Khaleed, 26. Both are currently training in Russia.