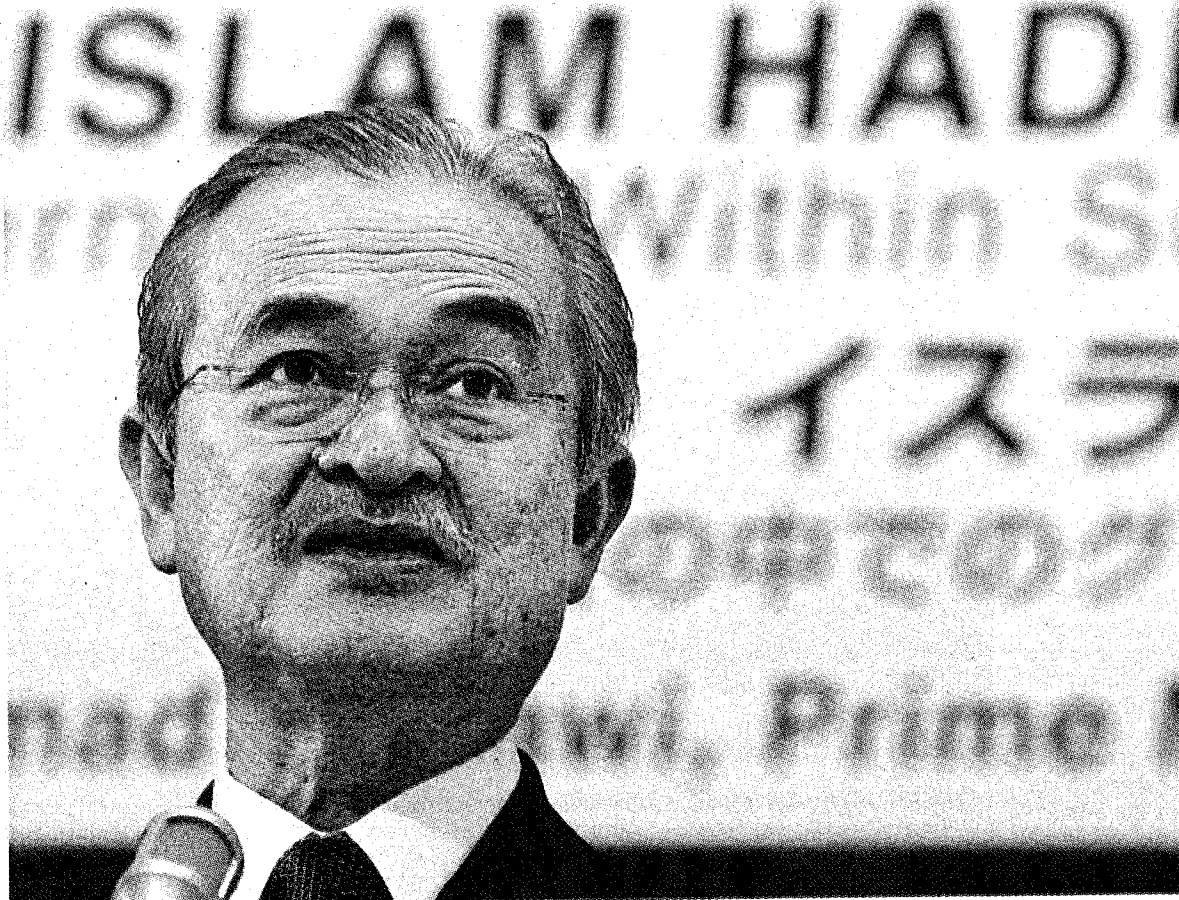


# Japan to help our auto sector

*The Star - 27/05/2006*  
By WONG SAI WAN in Tokyo



THE automotive training centre to be set up by the Japanese Government will help Malaysia realise its aim to be a major automotive hub in the region.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the centre would provide training for workers from the entire automotive industry to upgrade the quality of production.

"The centre is being set up as part of the Japan-Malaysia Economic Partnership Agreement. It will be open to workers from all car and component makers and not only for the national car manufacturers," Abdullah told Malaysian newsmen here yesterday.

Under the agreement, Japan will help Malaysia improve its automotive industry to be globally competitive via training programmes.

In return Malaysia would reduce its tariff on the import of Japanese cars that are not in direct competition with the national cars.

Abdullah said his Japanese counterpart Junichiro Koizumi had also agreed to a training programme for skilled automotive workers so that they could in turn become trainers at the centre.

However, he added that no decision had been made yet on where the centre would be set up in Malaysia.

The agreement was recently passed by the Japanese parliament but has yet to be ratified. It is learnt that the Japanese government would ratify the

agreement soon and it would take effect by the third quarter of this year.

Abdullah said the centre would enable small and medium enterprises improve their component manufacturing capabilities to meet export standards.

Following the Prime Minister's visit here, another Japanese-based institute is also set to be established in Malaysia.

Abdullah witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Malaysian Government and the United Nations University in Tokyo for the setting up of the International Institute for Global Health at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

The institute is the 13th research and training centre set up by the United Nations University throughout the world.

"The university is impressed with our programmes to promote health among our people. Look at our mortality rates - the average age for men is now 73 years and 74 years for women. It is a recognition and vote of confidence for Malaysia," he added.

The Higher Education Ministry said in a statement that the institute would have an international character and would contribute, through research, advance training, capacity building and disseminating of knowledge, to the challenges of global health that are of concern to the United Nations.

PRIME ADDRESS: Abdullah delivering his keynote speech during a seminar hosted by the United Nations University in Tokyo yesterday.