

# Keen on aerospace research

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## Abdullah wants closer cooperation with Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency

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**TOKYO:** Malaysia is interested in having closer cooperation with Japan in aerospace research to help expand the country's budding venture into the sector.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said he had informed the president of Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (Jaxa) of Malaysia's interest during his visit to the centre in Tsukuba near here yesterday.

He said that although Malaysian agencies involved in aerospace research had already established links with Jaxa, there was still space for more cooperation.

"I was very glad when informed by them (Jaxa officials) about the healthy state of cooperation with Malaysian agencies. But I told them that we are interested in strengthening that cooperation and that it has the full support of the government," he said.

Abdullah, who spent about an hour at the centre, was briefed about its research and development activities and current satellite development.

He also visited the space station test building and spacecraft integration and test building.

Jaxa, a core organisation for Japan's aerospace technology, was set up in 2003 through the merger of the Institute of Space and Astronautical Science, the National Aerospace Laboratory of Japan and the National Space Development Agency of Japan.

Japan, which launched its space exploration programme more than 33 years ago, has launched several satellites for information gathering, infrared imaging and research.

It has trained eight astronauts, two of them women. Several of them have taken part in space missions, including woman astronaut Dr Chiaki Mukai who flew into space in 1985 and 1994.



**Impressive display:** Abdullah (far left) showing a keen interest in the various satellite launchers during a tour of Jaxa's facilities yesterday. — Bernama