

# Making the ringgit go further

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## Save or if possible switch to green energy to cut back on expenses, says PM

**OSAKA:** Conserve energy, use fuel efficiently and if possible, switch to green energy, such as using solar panels to harvest the power of the sun, as this can not only stretch the ringgit but also help protect the environment.

This is the message from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to all Malaysians.

"If we do this, we can cut down on our expenses. Try using less energy and buy cars that use less petrol. If we do this, we will be able to manage our expenses even without salary increases. If we do not learn how to cut costs, whatever we earn will never be enough," he told Malaysian reporters on the last day of his five-day working visit to Japan here yesterday.

He pointed out that many Malaysians were now living in a "temperate condition" - driving air-conditioned cars, working in air-conditioned offices and living in air-conditioned homes.

Worse, he said, many buildings not only cranked up their air-conditioning but also installed a centralised system.

"That is a waste. If the chief operating officer or a minister wants to come for a meeting on Sunday, they will switch on the air-con for the whole building because it is centrally controlled."

On the issue of solar energy and



**Holding court:** Abdullah regaling a group of Malaysian students during a dinner get-together at a hotel in Osaka before departing for Kuala Lumpur yesterday. — Bernama

other alternative sources of power, Abdullah said the Government was fully supportive of research and development programmes to improve the efficiency of such technology.

Petronas, he said, was currently

involved in such ventures with Japanese partners, particularly in new technologies in bio-fuel production.

On his visit, Abdullah said it had been very successful as he had had the opportunity to brief his Japanese

counterpart Shinzo Abe and several Japanese private sector leaders about the progress of the Iskandar Development Region.

The response to the project, he said, was very positive.

"I will ask Khazanah (Nasional, the

Government's investment arm) to come here for promotional purposes soon," Abdullah said.

On another matter, he was also impressed by the high safety standards practised by lorries on Japanese roads, and wants to see how Malaysia can develop a similar system.

Abdullah said he would discuss with Transport Minister Datuk Seri Chan Kong Choy the possibility of having comparable regulations for big lorries in Malaysia.

"I observed that the lorries here are installed with safety bars near their undercarriage to prevent pedestrians and motorcyclists from being dragged and run over by their tyres in case of accidents.

"I think it is a good idea for our lorries to be fitted with these safety bars."

Later, addressing some 200 Malaysian students from various institutes of higher learning in Osaka and its surrounding areas, Abdullah said all that the Government had done has been for the benefit of the younger generation.

"Work hard, concentrate on your studies and do not think only of yourself.

"You must also be prepared to serve the country. We want you to always love your country and observe the *Malaysia Boleh* spirit," he said.