

PM: Japan can help us develop quality biofuel

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JAPANESE research technology can help Malaysia turn its palm oil into the quality biofuel the world is looking for in view of the high price of crude oil.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi pushed for this as he secured firm commitments on co-operation from leading Japanese experts in the field yesterday.

This took place at two successive meetings Abdullah had with the Japanese private sector and key government officials. Abdullah described these sessions as very fruitful.

"Japan is at a stage where they are doing all kinds of research to develop the quality of biofuel and they believe there is real hope in this pursuit."

Abdullah spoke to Malaysian journalists after lengthy meetings with officials from top-notch companies such as the Nippon Oil Corporation, Toyota Motors and the Energy Business Group.

He said the officials had to work closely with Malaysia which has a sustainable supply of palm oil.

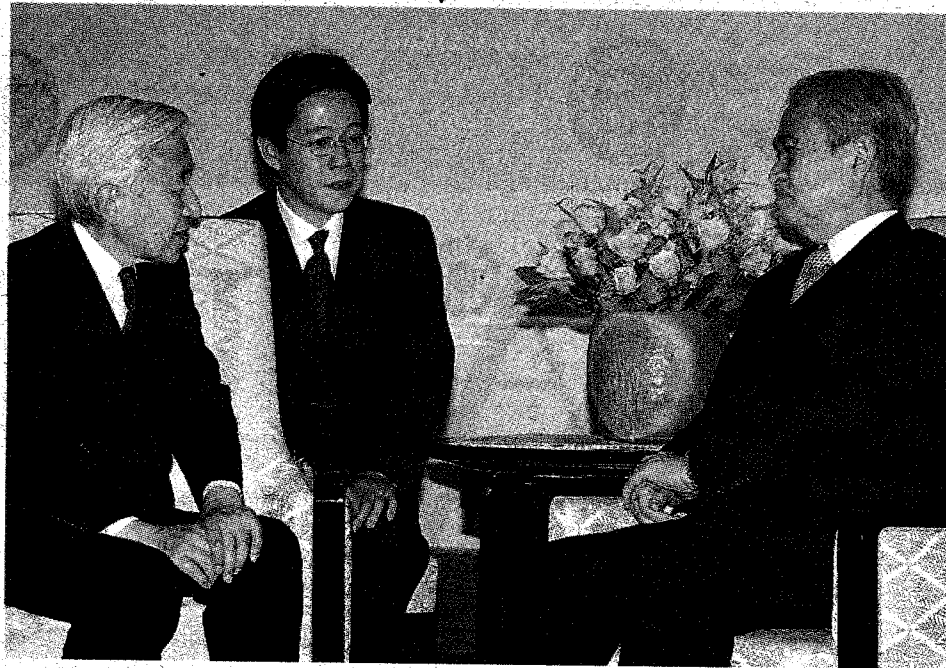
"I told them there could be mutual benefit in this."

He said Malaysia had experience in diversifying the use of palm oil and this could be married with the research capabilities of the Japanese to turn palm oil into high-quality biofuel.

The prospects, he added, looked very good.

The Prime Minister, who is on a six-day working visit to Japan, earlier had an audience with Emperor Akihito during which he conveyed Malaysia's pleasure in receiving the Emperor when he makes a state visit next month.

"Most of the itinerary will be in Perak because the last time the Emperor was in Malaysia (13 years ago), he did not have the



Abdullah with Emperor Akihito. — Bernama picture

opportunity to see these places in Perak," he said.

Abdullah will speak at the Nikkei conference tomorrow.

Among the international luminaries attending will be former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Singapore Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew, former United States deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and Indonesian Finance Minister Dr Jusuf Anwar.

The *New Straits Times* is a media partner of the annual conference.

Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, who had been invited, is not attending but Abdullah is staying in the same hotel as the senior Lee.

They met briefly on Monday night for the first time since Malaysia called off its plan to build a bridge on its side of the Johor Strait to replace the Causeway.

But nothing was said about the bridge, which had been one of the main contentions in previous discussions to resolve outstanding bilateral issues.

"Yes, I met the Minister Mentor but we didn't talk about anything but general international issues related to China, India, East Asia ... those connected with the topics at the conference," Abdullah said.

Earlier, Abdullah spent 90 minutes at the Panasonic Centre at Ariake, a high-technology park on the outskirts of the city.

He was given a briefing on the state-of-the-art products being designed by the company, one of the largest electronic manufacturers in the world, by its president Datuk Kunio Nakamura.

Among the products was a 103-inch plasma TV, the world's largest, which is expected to make its debut at the end of the year.