

Bio-technology to fuel new era of co-operation

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BIO-TECHNOLOGY has emerged as an impetus for a new era of co-operation between Malaysia and Japan.

Just two days into Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's visit here, the Prime Minister had met several Japanese experts and businessmen connected with this industry.

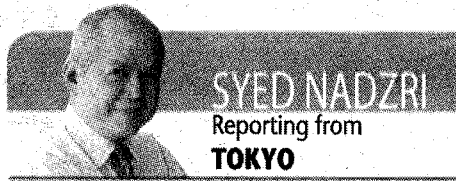
Yesterday, at a bilateral meeting with his Japanese counterpart Junichiro Koizumi, Abdullah said bio-technology featured prominently.

It marked, as he said, a new era of co-operation between the two countries — from simple foreign direct investment in the manufacturing sector three decades ago to the more complex information and computer technology, automotive industry.

"And now this," he said after the meeting.

"We talked a lot about co-operation in this field. But it doesn't have to be confined to bio-fuel. There are many more areas — pharmaceutical, cosmetics and herbal industries,"

Abdullah said his discussions with Koizumi



also touched on the broad-based Japan-Malaysia Economic Partnership Co-operation which had just been approved by the Japanese Diet.

One of the more immediate aspects of the arrangement is the establishment of a specialised training centre to cater to Malaysian workers in the automotive industry.

The Prime Minister, who met Malaysian journalists yesterday, was also asked for a more analytical view of the Sarawak elections.

He said parties in Barisan Nasional should

put more thought into why nine seats fell to the Opposition.

SUPP, especially, had to conduct a deeper study on why it lost eight seats because it might be more than just a case of fielding the wrong candidates, he said.

"We are concerned about the decrease in the total number of popular votes. Whatever affects our performance is of concern to us. If there are weaknesses, we must seek to address them. If we find our strengths, we have to ride on them.

"I'm sure most of the people in the State would want BN to rule because they want the State Government to work closely with the Federal Government and make a success of the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

"But all in all, it is good that BN secured more than two-thirds majority," said Abdullah, who is BN chairman.

The BN won comfortably in its stronghold but saw its popular vote drop by eight per cent.