

# Lab to use varsity research to produce plant tissue cultures

**KLUANG:** The first government-linked tissue culture laboratory in the southern region will tap into research findings from institutions of higher learning to produce plant tissue cultures for commercial use.

Johor Plant Tech Sdn Bhd will work in cooperation with Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Malaya (UM) and the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM).

Johor Biotechnology and Biodiversity Corporation (J-Biotech) chief executive officer Datuk Abd Karim Hassan said the RM4mil laboratory was fully equipped to produce four million plant tissue cultures every year for three years.

"Our capacity will increase to 12 million plantlets by the fourth year," he said in his speech at the signing ceremony between Johor Plant Tech and UPM, UM, FRIM, Malaysian Pineapple Industrial Board, state Agriculture

Department and Zenith Dragon Sdn Bhd on Monday.

Abd Karim said Johor Plant Tech would not conduct its own research but would depend on commercially viable products based on local research.

Plantlets are plant tissue cultures that are grown inside sterilised bottles or containers, different from seedlings, which are plantlets that have hardened or taken root inside poly bags.

The laboratory, which will be launched by Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman on Aug 4, will begin selling its seedlings to local farmers and plantation owners by end of September.

Johor Plant Tech general manager Sanusi Jamari said the laboratory would start off by selling only around 10,000 banana seedlings of the *berangan* variety.