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Malaysia welcomes Japan's summit proposal

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MALAYSIA welcomes Japan's idea for a Japan-Asean summit but Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Badawi says it needs further consideration by the leaders of the seven-nation grouping.

The idea was proposed by Japan Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto during his visit to Singapore last Tuesday.

Abdullah told reporters Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had agreed in principle to the proposed summit when it was suggested by Hashimoto during his visit to Malaysia.

"Dr Mahathir had said Malaysia can consider the idea. Nonetheless, the system, structure and formation of the summit must be looked into," he said after opening an exhibition on Persian carpets in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Abdullah said the idea of Japan and Association of South-East Asian Nations having an informal or formal meeting is not new, and has existed under Asean's Post-Ministerial Conference.

Abdullah said he is confident that other Asean heads would welcome Hashimoto's suggestion.

On Asean's anniversary to be launched in Kuala Lumpur, Abdullah said Wisma Putra has agreed that it is proper to invite the leaders of Asean's trading partners to attend the celebration.

Commenting on the landmark deal between Israel and Palestine extending Palestinian rule to the flash point West Bank city of Hebron and beyond, Abdullah said any peace pact will bring positive outcome.

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