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Obuchi `a very good friend'

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he was saddened by the news that Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi was in a coma due to a stroke.

He said: "We regard Obuchi as a very good friend of Malaysia."

Obuchi was admitted to the Tokyo Hospital at 1am yesterday after he complained of fatigue. At 11am today, Chief Cabinet Secretary Mikio Aoki made an announcement that he had assumed the role of acting Prime Minister.

Since the economic crisis began affecting the Asian economy, the Japanese Prime Minister had taken steps to forge stronger regional ties, especially between Asean and Japan.

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