

Govt looking for best formula

PM: No decision yet on contract scheme for new civil servants

KYOTO: The government is looking for the best formula with regard to a proposal to stop making new appointments in the civil service under the permanent and pension scheme to ensure public servants will not lose out, says Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said no decision had been made on the proposal for new appointments to be made under an improved contractual scheme and the Cabinet had yet to discuss the matter.

However, he drew attention to the fact that pension payments had become very big.

"Now we (also) give pension to wives and children (of government pensioners who died). All these have become a burden to the country. So, we (government) may not be able to afford it. This is the problem," he told a media conference at the end of his three-day working visit here yesterday.

Recently, Public Service Department director-general Datuk Seri Borhan Dolah was reported as saying that beginning next year, new appointments in the civil service might be made under an improved contractual scheme instead of the existing permanent and pension scheme.

He said the proposal was decided at a spe-

cial public service reform committee meeting in October 2018 that wanted the service to be minimised in phases and based on need.

It is also aimed at reducing the burden of the pension bill which is now reaching RM28bil.

Asked on the RM28bil figure, Dr Mahathir said he expects the pension bill to continue to increase.

"We want to find a way where the government can afford (to pay) and officers (civil servants) do not lose," he said.

On his blog posting about Malays who are not willing to work hard, he said his writing was directed at those who are lazy.

"There are those who are working (hard); I'm not referring to those who are willing (to work hard)," he said.

However, Dr Mahathir wants Malaysians to emulate the work ethics of the Japanese who are willing to undertake all kinds of jobs and do not hire many foreigners, thus reducing the outflow of funds through money remitted by foreign workers.

"In Japan, they themselves sweep roads and they look after the cleanliness of their country. They are not dependent on foreign

manpower and that is why they are progressive and rich," he said.

On another matter, Dr Mahathir wants the issuance of the second Samurai bond to proceed.

He said Malaysia received an approval from Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe for the bond's issuance, but it was up to the Finance Ministry to continue the negotiations.

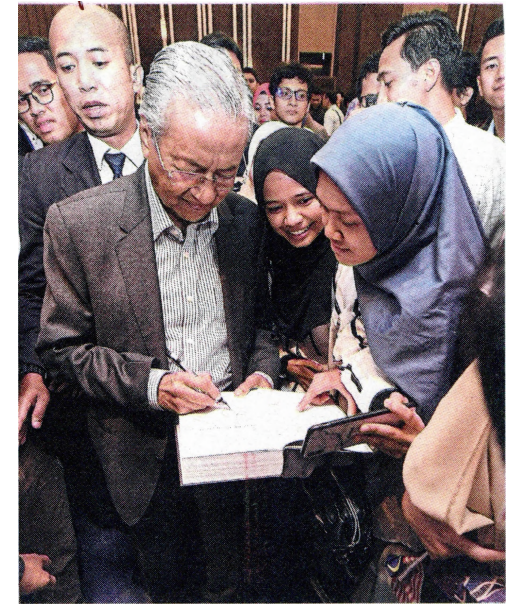
"It is up to the Minister of Finance because he manages (the Samurai bond). This time, Japan offers a lower interest rate of 0.5% compared to 0.63% on the previous Samurai bond," he said.

On controversial preacher Dr Zakir Naik, Dr Mahathir stressed that no extradition request for Zakir was made by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in their meeting recently.

"He mentioned the name in passing only. He mentioned Zakir Naik only once," he said.

Modi's focus throughout their meeting, he said, was to explain the situation in Jammu-Kashmir.

Dr Mahathir and Modi held a bilateral meeting while attending the 5th Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok, Russia. — Bernama



Always popular: Dr Mahathir signing an autograph after a dinner and dialogue session with Malaysians in Kyoto. — Bernama