

Dr Mahathir, Abe hold bilateral meeting in Tokyo

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TOKYO, Nov 6 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Tuesday held a bilateral meeting with his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe.

On arrival at the Prime Minister's Office in Nagato-cho, Chiyoda-ku here, Dr Mahathir inspected a guard-of-honour mounted by Japanese security forces.

Both prime ministers are expected to hold a joint press conference after the meeting.

On Sunday, Malaysian Ambassador to Japan Datuk Ahmad Izlan Idris said a RM7.4 billion Samurai bond issuance by Malaysia, which the Japanese government has offered to guarantee, is expected to be discussed further during the bilateral meeting between Dr Mahathir and Abe.

The two leaders might also discuss the third national car and the Look East Policy.

The Malaysian government has extended its appreciation to the Japanese government for the offer to guarantee 200 billion yen (RM7.4 billion) Samurai bonds with a 10-year tenure.

In his 2019 Budget speech, Malaysian Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng said the offer was made due to the Japanese government's confidence in the administration and leadership of Dr Mahathir.

The yen-denominated bonds, to be guaranteed by Japan Bank of International Cooperation at an indicative coupon rate of 0.65 per cent, are expected to be issued before March next year.

In his immediate reaction after the tabling of the 2019 Budget, Dr Mahathir said the bonds will be used to retire some of the costly loans taken by the previous government

Dr Mahathir is on the second day of a three-day working visit to Japan.

This is Dr Mahathir's third visit to Japan after becoming Malaysia's prime minister for the second time following the country's 14th General Election on May 9. The first was in June and the second in August.

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