

Dr M: Japan more receptive to EAEC

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PETALING JAYA: Tokyo is now more receptive to the East Asia Economic Caucus concept, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said on his return from Japan.

He said the Japanese Government and its business community appeared to be interested in finding out more about the EAEC.

"This is a new development as previously there

were no such efforts.

"It looks like they want to know (about the EAEC) in-depth now. This is good," he told a press conference at Subang airport yesterday.

The Prime Minister returned home after a seven-day visit to Hong Kong and Japan.

He was met on arrival by Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Kahmat, Chief Secretary to the

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Government Tan Sri Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid and other senior officials.

Dr Mahathir said he was interviewed by the largest Japanese business newspaper *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* in which he was able to elaborate on the EAEC.

On his meeting with Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa, Dr Mahathir said Miyazawa responded favourably to the proposal to jointly ensure safe

navigation in the Malacca Straits.

Malaysia has proposed to Japan that there should be combined efforts by all concerned in the use of the straits to mobilise rescue operations in the event of accidents.

Asked whether he had discussed the EAEC proposal with Miyazawa, Dr Mahathir said: "The meeting was not an official one. We just had talks on several minor issues."