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Mahathir - EAEC

ARE THEY TRYING TO AVOID DECISION ON EAEC?

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KUALA LUMPUR, July 26 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today expressed the hope that China, Japan and South Korea are not asking for more time with a view to avoiding a decision on joining the East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC).

The question of giving them more time to hold further discussions before they decided to join was no problem, he said.

"However we hope that this is not a way for them to avoid making any decision," he told reporters after launching the centenary celebrations of the Malaysian Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Services, at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here.

News reports from Bangkok said that the three countries had asked for more time to make proposals as to how EAEC should function before they decided to join the body.

"We have explained umpteen times that we have no other ulterior motive apart from safeguarding the free trade system," Dr Mahathir said. -- more

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Mahathir - EAEC 2 (last) Kuala Lumpur

"Intra Asian trade has increased by 40 per cent, we have made trade foremost for East Asia hence they should seriously view the efforts being made to safeguard East Asian interests," he said.

Dr Mahathir said efforts to forge co-operation with four other countries in Southeast Asia -- Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam -- were a good move which could strengthen Asean and Asean decisions involving East Asia. -- Bernama

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