

Dr M: We must be frank about EAEC

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — The East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC) issue may be discussed at the forthcoming Asean Summit in Bangkok, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

"I think it's important that we have a frank discussion on the matter," he told reporters after launching Hawkers' Day 1995 at Hotel Dynasty here today, reports Bernama.

The Prime Minister was asked to comment on his recent statement that the

EAEC could be established without Japan's participation.

Yesterday, a Japanese corporate figure said his country would be left out of the Asian community if it did not participate in the EAEC.

The executive managing director of Mitsui & Co Ltd, Tan Sri K. Suzuki, said he regretted that Japan had not stated its stance despite several calls by Malaysia to join the EAEC.

Asked if the caucus could

be formed before 2020, Dr Mahathir said he would not speculate on this.

"But we will not give up, we will wait even if it takes a long time," he said.

Dr Mahathir blamed interference by superpowers for the delay in establishing the EAEC, describing it as a new form of colonialism.

"This is what people call oppression by the superpowers ... we want to do a thing, they prevent and oppress," he said.

"Because of this we often

voice our opposition towards this ... as long as they have the power, they use it for their own interest."

On the application by former Parti Bersatu Sabah deputy president Datuk Amirkahar Tun Mustapha to join Umno, Dr Mahathir said he was free to do so and would be an ordinary member.

He said it was clear that the majority of the people of Sabah now realised that only the Barisan could work for their well-being.