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PM: US should help us revalue ringgit

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday the US should help Malaysia revalue the ringgit since it easily assisted Japan in revaluing the yen.

"We noticed that it was easy to revalue the yen simply by Japan and the US acting together.

"We would like to see the US help us revalue the ringgit. Why help only Japan? Japan is a rich country while Malaysia is in need of money," he told a news conference at the end of the first day of the three-day Umno general assembly in Kuala Lumpur.

Dr Mahathir was asked for his suggestions for Japan to revive its economy following an urgent meeting by the Group of Seven's deputy finance ministers today in Tokyo to discuss the economic woes of Japan and Asia.

He said he read a report in a financial newspaper on what Japan should do to revive its economy.

"According to the report, Japan doesn't know how to do things. It seems that they need expertise from people who write newspapers. I think these people should advise what Japan should do."

Dr Mahathir said Japan had injected US\$130 billion but it was "too little, too late".

Asked on the lessons learnt from Japan, Dr Mahathir said: "We are learning about finance and management of banks, bad loans and so on. We are learning ... the process of learning never stops."

Dr Mahathir also said the US\$300 million loan to Malaysia approved by the World Bank will be used for social development.

"The purpose is for social programmes to help them (the people) overcome financial woes such as in purchasing houses. It is not for the country's economic reforms, but is merely to provide comfort for the people," he added.

On Umno Youth's call for legal action against former Perwaja Steel managing director Tan Sri Eric Chia, Dr Mahathir said action can only be taken if there is sufficient evidence to prove wrongdoing.

"We are not protecting anybody. It has been proven that we have taken action, even against government cronies and menteris besar ever since the late Tunku Abdul Rahman's (Malaysia's first prime minister) time," he said.

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