

# PM: Japan must lead

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‘It can help bring the world back to its senses’

**TOKYO:** Japan, with its size, wealth and world class technologies, can be successful and do many things if it decides not to follow but to lead the others, particularly East Asian nations, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said with globalisation and today's war, which is more economic than military might, Japan can help bring the world back to its senses and revive the world's economy if it takes on the leadership role.

“East Asia and indeed the world needs Japan, its dynamism and its single-minded dedication. Today's world is in shambles.

“The abuses of the free trading system, the unlimited greed of a considerable number of speculators, the fumbling and incompetence in the handling of problems have resulted in the world losing its way,” he told participants of a seminar on the 20th anniversary of the Look East Policy.

Mahathir said that no one could dispute that Japan achieved a miracle when it rebuilt itself after World War II. It did it in its own way, without being advised by other people, he said.

“As a foreigner from a small country, it is not for me to tell Japan what it should do in order to again become a model for us. But with apologies, I would like to put in my penny's worth,” said Mahathir, who introduced the Look East Policy soon after becoming prime minister in 1982.

Expressing concern over the sluggish economic recovery of Japan, he said that although Japan had tried many of the ways suggested to boost its economy, results had been hard to come by so far.

Saying that Malaysia understands the Japanese desire to westernise its system, he said that the existing system should not be suddenly changed, even if it is for the better, as it would cause severe disruption.

“It is far better to stick to the system which works. And the Japanese system has worked very well for the Japanese ... it made Japan the second most powerful economy in the world,” he said.

Mahathir said that as Asians are looking east at Japan, they would prefer to learn from its success than its mistake and in this context, Japan must rise.

He said that the rapid changing of government, for instance every two years, is not the best way to manage recovery, even during a normal situation, as a government could not understand problems, execute plans properly, correct mistakes and achieve success.