

Destiny is in your hands, says PM

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By RASHID BAKAR

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — The destiny of Muslims would not change if they refused to initiate the necessary changes themselves, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said timidity, lack of effort and dependence on others were demeaning attitudes that were abhorrent to Islam and against the spirit of *hijrah* (migration).

Dr Mahathir said Muslims should give priority to *ikhthiar* (being resourceful) because the migration of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina itself symbolised resourcefulness.

Muslims, he added, were prohibited from surrendering everything to Allah.

Instead, they should strive to make a suc-

□ FOCUS ON MAAL HIJRAH
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cess of whatever project or activity they undertook.

"We should not blame fate for our failure because it is also in our fate to succeed ... if we strive."

The Prime Minister was speaking at the *Maal Hijrah* celebrations to mark the Islamic New Year of 1408 at Pusat Islam here.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir was presented with the *Maal Hijrah* mandate from Encik Ismail Noor, representing the 1,408-member *Maal Hijrah* group.

The mandate symbolises the trust and aspirations of the Muslims in the Government in undertaking Islamic programmes.

Among those present were Muslim Cabinet Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Ambassadors from Muslim countries.

Dr Mahathir noted that currently, the unemployment figure was much higher compared with the last decade.

Similarly, the acreage of idle land had also increased, he added.

"Here, our resourcefulness is the key to overcome these problems. In line with the spirit of *hijrah*, unemployed youths should be prepared to soil their hands and engage in cottage industry.

"We should also strive to utilise knowledge by introducing innovations that could help modernise the agricultural sector and help develop cottage industries in the rural areas.

Dr Mahathir said *hijrah* also "teaches Muslims to be prepared for any challenges or eventualities" and through such an attitude they would be able to avert any untoward event.

Challenges

Before embarking on the historic *hijrah*, he said, Prophet Muhammad had already forged ranks with the leader in Medina and signed agreements and an oath of loyalty to him.

When in Medina, the adherents of Islam had to go through hardship meted out by the *Jahiliyah* group who were bent on taking over Medina.

All these challenges were overcome by the Prophet and his followers — they were prepared to face them squarely.

Hijrah helped Muslims to change their position, said the Prime Minister.

Prior to *hijrah*, the Muslims were humiliated, tortured and even obstructed from carrying out the demands of the religion, but after *hijrah* they no longer received such a treatment.

The support given to the Muslims in Medina, as well as their ability to free themselves from the grips of the *musyrikin* (unbelievers) in Mecca, had raised them above oppression and humiliation.

The economic position of the Muslims also changed with *hijrah*. In Medina, they had

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Hijrah spirit helped Muslims:

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the opportunity to build their economy and were successful at that.

Hijrah had also helped to bolster the Muslim population which later made possible the formation of an Islamic State in Medina.

The emerging Islamic State grew strong to such an extent that it could compete with neighbouring Governments.

The leadership quality displayed by the Prophet in Medina and which was later emulated by his companions made it possible to extend the frontiers of Islam to Europe and Central Asia.

Dr Mahathir said the Prophet was prepared to withdraw and take other routes that were more secure to ensure the growth of Islam.

"The same applies to us Muslims at a time of economic slowdown.

"If we are weak we should find ways to strengthen ourselves before tackling the challenges.

He said a temporary withdrawal did not mean defeat. "It's merely a strategy."

Reality

"We should not be arrogant about our status to the extent that we are not prepared to do something that is regarded low or humiliating, whereas such actions could help us when the situation changes.

"In fact, when Muslims admit and accept reality and adjust their steps in the interest of long-term success, they are doing the *hijrah*, the spirit of which is not far different from that of the *hijrah* of the Prophet.

"In line with the struggle of the Prophet to purify and strengthen faith, improve and upgrade the economy, develop and upgrade knowledge as well as form the Islamic Government and thereby protect it, this Government too, is currently working towards that direction."

Dr Mahathir said if the Government called for thrift, it was because it accepted the reality of the economic slowdown and hence, the need to modify strategies for future success.

"We move one step backwards in order to make two steps forward. We are in fact carrying out a *hijrah*."