

BE GRATEFUL FOR HARMONY

Appreciate benefits in country, says PM in Hari Raya message

KUALA LUMPUR: Muslims in Malaysia should be grateful that they are not faced with major problems like those which frequently assail other Muslims and their countries.

In his Hari Raya message to the nation, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Muslims should also be thankful to be living in an environment of peace and harmony.

He said that by virtue of the strong economy and political stability, Muslims in the country were endowed by Allah with all kinds of opportunities and benefits.

"We live in an environment of peace and harmony, including between Muslims and non-Muslims.

"We should also feel grateful because our country is free from serious calamities like cyclones, floods, earthquakes or volcanoes with lava flowing for miles and miles, destroying houses and trees and killing thousands of people.

"In addition we are not attacked or

conquered by enemies or confronted with civil war.

"If ever there is a society which should be grateful in this critical age for Muslims, we should be the one," he said.

Dr Mahathir said while Muslims should be grateful, they should not rest and wallow in complacency on the belief that everything was predestined by Allah.

"Predestination does not mean that since things have been preordained, we should not do anything to influence events."

"The truth is that a sizeable portion of our prosperity and stability is the result of our approach, attitude and efforts," he added.

He said that for continued peace and increasing prosperity, greater efforts by all parties — the Government, private sector, workers and the general public — were crucial.

"These efforts require patience, concentration and sacrifice, all of

● **TURN TO PAGE 3**

Mahathir: Do not forgo religious duties in seeking success

● FROM PAGE ONE

which are characteristics which develop with the act of fasting. For fasting brings with it benefits which are far more than the rewards in afterlife," he said.

Dr Mahathir said there was evidence that efforts to put the nation, people and religion at a higher esteem had succeeded.

Other Muslim countries now accepted Malaysia's role in the attempt by the *ummah* in general to bring back the Golden Age of Islam, he said.

"This has placed on our shoulder a greater responsibility which could not be neglected as it is part of the duty to Allah,"

he said.

In Malaysia, Dr Mahathir said, equal emphasis was given to success in this world as well as in the other world.

To neglect worldly success would certainly affect success in the life hereafter. That was the reason Muslims regard poverty as a threat to their faith, he said.

He said it was possible to achieve worldly success and wealth without having to forgo religious duties.

"The greatest fear when achieving worldly success is the tendency for successful societies to neglect religion.

"Among some successful non-Muslims, we no-

tice how they have not only lost faith in their religion but they have also lost their moral and ethical values.

"The emergence and spread of AIDS, for instance, is the result of homosexuality, promiscuity and the breakdown of the institutions of marriage and the family.

"But if education and religious teachings are focused not only on the performance of religious rituals and life after death, but also on moral values and the attitudes necessary in facing challenges in this modern world, God willing, if we become developed, we will not discard those moral values which can protect us from

being destroyed by our success and our wealth," he said.

Therefore, he said, we should not be afraid of success in this world.

In addition, he said, we should remember "that only if we are successful can we help protect other Muslims from being oppressed, as with the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina and elsewhere."

"Muslims who were weak and cannot serve others, indeed they cannot even protect themselves. Muslims who are successful are more capable of serving their religion and mankind," he said.

Dr Mahathir said everything had been or-

dained by the Almighty.

"The things planned and strived for were merely attempts on our part. The year 2020 is still far away but in the history of mankind it is a short period."

Thus, he said, efforts must start now and we must be cautious.

"Nevertheless, we need to make preparations. No other preparations are more important and effective than shaping a character that is consistent with the objectives.

"For that reason fasting plays an important role. A lot can be learnt from the act of fasting.

"While we celebrate our success in completing 30 days of fasting, the

many lessons of fasting and the discipline that goes with it should not be forgotten.

"Still, on this Hari Raya day we are entitled to celebrate. We ought to give precedence to family ethics. We know how important the family is in safeguarding our morals and our traditions," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the custom of *balik kampung* on Hari Raya was a good custom.

It revived and preserved the family values as enjoined by Islam and our culture, he said.

"It contributes to the shaping of an honourable personality which we need to build an honourable and respected soci-

ety.

"Maybe we never think of the benefits of returning to the kampungs. But the benefits are certainly there. If we are aware of these benefits, their effects in terms of learning will certainly be greater," he said.

Dr Mahathir, however, reminded Muslims to be extra careful while on the road so that all the joy would not turn to sorrow.

The Prime Minister wished Selamat Hari Raya Aidilfitri to all Muslims, including those on duty and studying abroad.

To the non-Muslims, Dr Mahathir called on them to join their Muslim friends in celebrating the auspicious occasion.