

Dr M urges Muslims to adopt Prophet's values

By Farush Khan

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today called on Muslims to use Prophet Muhammad's *hijrah* (migration) as a lesson to adopt noble values such as patience, diligence, the willingness to sacrifice and make changes, enhance brotherhood and face challenges.

The Prime Minister said Muslims would be left behind and become weak if they were not ready to face challenges, make sacrifices, strive and strengthen the spirit of brotherhood among themselves.

He said Muslims in Malaysia were fortunate to be able to live in peace, enjoy benefits and were spared from large-scale misfortunes and disasters. The Prime Minister said this in his *Maal Hijrah* message.

"They are not only able to perform their religious obligations to the fullest extent as required by the religion, but get all kinds of facilities and assistance from the Government to enable Islam become the way of life for them and in the process, exalt Islam," he said.

He said they should also be thankful for being able to live in harmony and to cooperate with non-Muslims in a multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural country.

"Harmony and co-operation has enabled the country to become stable, progressive and prosperous and the Muslims could enjoy rapid economic development. Today, Muslims in this country can be proud because they have a strong economic position under the administration of the Government led by Muslims.

"Although we could be regarded as successful, we should not become complacent."

The Prime Minister said: "There are still many things for us to do in the interest of the religion, race and country.

"We have only placed the foundation that was needed to achieve more success and record greater excellence in the future.

"We have only started to

Vital for Muslims to equip themselves with skills

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move towards making Malaysia a developed nation. Certainly the route towards the desired goal is full of tests and challenges.

"It is here that the Muslims could learn from the *hijrah* of the Prophet," Dr Mahathir said.

In a continuously changing world where science and technology were very important, the Prime Minister said it was the responsibility of Muslims to equip themselves with various skills and knowledge in these areas.

Only through this, he said, could Muslims develop and succeed in strengthening their economic and social standings and safeguard themselves from all forms of oppression.

In this country, he said, the Government emphasised on education and skills training in science and technology because it wanted to ensure that the development achieved was not solely materialistic.

"We want Muslims in Malaysia to continue to hold strongly to moral and religious values," he added.

He said violence, extremism and infighting should not exist in the Islamic world as they would be detrimental to all Muslims.

He said Islam abhorred its followers from being violent or extreme in their actions.

He said: "We don't want the impression that Muslims would be the first to be blamed if there were violence.

"Such an image of Islam should be eliminated. The move to correct the impressions should not be made through demands by Muslims, but by Muslims themselves proving that they reject violence and instead, love peace.

"If Muslims do not like to be accused, then we should not make unsubstantiated accusations. Only with this can the good image of Islam and Muslims be restored."

In conjunction with this year's *Maal Hijrah*, Dr Mahathir said Muslims should upgrade their determination to consolidate their position and avoid from any form of extremism so that they would always be respected and not oppressed or humiliated.

He said that Muslims could learn a lot from the *hijrah* of the Prophet and his followers from Mecca to Medina over 1,400 years ago.

The *hijrah*, he said, had changed the fate of the Muslims from a community which were suppressed and disrespected to one that was successful and strong to the extent that Islam was respected and spread widely.

"Let us ponder the *hijrah* incident and learn from it. *Insya Allah* (God willing), with relentless efforts and strong commitment, the Muslims in this country will achieve greater success and become exemplary for other Islamic countries," he said.