

# Within our means

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## PM: Muslims can still go on haj despite economic uncertainties

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Muslims in Malaysia can still afford to perform the haj without any obstacles despite global economic uncertainties, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said Malaysians were enjoying a higher social and economic status although the cost of everything had escalated.

"The cost of living in Malaysia did not shoot up suddenly, did not rise more quickly than the increase in our income.

"Hence, although costs have gone up, the quality of living has also improved," Bernama quoted him as saying in his Hari Raya Aidiladha message.

Dr Mahathir said the cost to perform the haj had not increased to the extent that Muslims could ill-afford to perform the religious obligation, unless one was really poor.

He said those who saved money in the Haj Fund Board (Tabung Haji) enjoyed additional benefits for their savings from the investment dividends made by Tabung Haji.

Dr Mahathir said: "It's true that profits from investments have dwindled recently. We must remember that there is no business that gives fixed profit continuously unless we practise usury," he said.

"Just like the people reaping huge

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Dr M: Be  
thankful  
for enjoying  
peace

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profits when the country enjoyed sound economic growth, they should accept the reality that during lean times, their profits would slide," he said.

He said Malaysians should be grateful because in some other countries there was no return at all from investments made.

"When the economy has fully recovered, the people will enjoy higher savings.

"All these are tests of God. The Muslims must be patient and help towards ensuring the country's stability, which will help stimulate the economy faster," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Islam and its believers would not be exploited and humiliated by anyone if the qualities and attitude possessed when performing the haj were maintained after the pilgrimage.

Although many Muslims performed the haj more than once, there were still many who were at loggerheads with one another, still slandering each other and were divided, he said.

"They and their religion suffer worse humiliation now than before from others," he said. Dr Mahathir said Muslims were now the targets of slander and attacks, resulting in many being killed and seriously injured, and having sanctions imposed on them.

"While we criticise and condemn others, is it not necessary for us to think and ask ourselves the reasons for all the misfortunes that have befallen us?

"Is it not because we have not practised all the teachings and guidance in our daily prayers? Is it not because the haj and *umrah* (minor haj) we perform have an influence on us only during the pilgrimage and not after that?" he asked.

In Jitra, Dr Mahathir also told Muslims in the country to be thankful for enjoying a peaceful life.