

12/02/2003

Dr Mahathir: Economy's ups and downs are trials for people

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today urged Muslims to accept the ups and downs of the economy as "trials from God", and urged them to be patient, preserve the country's stability and thus help stimulate the nation's economy.

In his Hari Raya Aidiladha message, the Prime Minister noted that despite the global economic uncertainties, Muslims in Malaysia could still afford to perform a proper haj without difficulty.

"Malaysians are enjoying higher social and economic status although the cost of everything has escalated," he said. "However, the cost of living in Malaysia has not shot up more quickly than an increase in our income. Hence, although the cost has risen, the quality of our living has also improved."

He said those who saved money with Tabung Haji enjoyed additional benefits from investment dividends.

"It's true that profits from investments have decreased recently. We must remember, however, that there is no business that provides fixed profit continuously unless we practise usury."

He said those who reap large profits during sound economic growth should also accept the reality that when the economy fully recovers, higher savings would be enjoyed. He said although many Muslims performed the haj more than once, there were still many at loggerheads with one another.

He said such actions had caused Muslims and Islam to suffer more humiliation from others.

"Muslims are now the targets of slander and attacks, resulting in many killed and seriously injured. Sanctions have been imposed on Islamic countries, cutting them off from food and medicine.

"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 we perform has an influence on us only during the pilgrimage and not after that?"

Dr Mahathir said that while greeting and asking forgiveness from family and friends this Hari Raya Aidiladha, Muslims should reflect on the teachings of the haj and sacrifice, to safeguard and redeem the dignity of Muslims and Islam.

"I pray that all Malaysian pilgrims who are now in Mecca will be able to perform their obligations satisfactorily.

"My wife and I pray that everyone will always be in the best of health and have a safe journey home."