

Don't listen to speculation:

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KUANTAN, Mon. — The Prime Minister today warned against speculation that the burning of mosques in Pahang was the work of Christian Indonesian illegal immigrants or Muslim apostates who have embraced Christianity.

“Such speculation is dangerous and could lead to riots and possible clashes between Muslims and Christians in the country.”

Datuk Seri **Dr. Mahathir Mohamad** said the speculation could be the work of those who were out to undermine the peace and harmony between the races and followers of various religions in the country.

Investigations were under way and so far there was no evidence to show that the acts

of arson were committed by apostates or Indonesian illegal immigrants.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Home Minister, said it was unlikely that Christian Indonesian illegal immigrants would want to draw attention to themselves by such activities as they were here to earn a living.

He also denounced allegations that 2,000 Muslim Felda settlers had embraced Christianity and that there were 66,000 apostates in the country.

“I have yet to come across an apostate who has embraced Christianity. Surely, police investigations would have uncovered some of them if their number is as large as alleged? Surely they are not invisible?” he said.

He said he was aware of instances where converts reverted to their original religions after they had been divorced by their Muslim spouses, he told a Press conference here before leaving for Kuala Lumpur.

“But police have yet to discover a single Malay Muslim who has embraced Christianity.”

Various religions

He asked newsmen not to accept these stories if they themselves could not produce evidence to substantiate the allegations.

“These stories are dangerous and could lead to riots between Muslims and Christians. We do not want to see this in our country.”

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He said followers of the various religions in Malaysia have always lived in harmony.

Asked whether the “small group” believed to have been responsible for the razing of the mosques had been identified, he said: “The group is small in number only. We are yet to determine who they are.”

If the group were big, things would have leaked out by now, he added.

“Police have uncovered new evidence but we can't disclose it as yet since investigations are being carried out.”

He said the government viewed the incidents seriously and was grateful to the Pahang Government for containing the situation and preventing emotions from running high.