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PM: Mufti should not issue fatwa arbitrarily

JITRA, Thurs. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said mufti should not issue the fatwa arbitrarily as such a move would cause a split among Muslims.

Expressing his regrets that certain mufti had gone overboard by labelling those refusing to accept their fatwa as apostate, the Prime Minister said the mufti had caused disunity.

"I am not referring to all mufti or those who claim to be ulama ... I am referring to certain mufti who made a statement in a newspaper that those who do not want to accept their fatwa are apostates," he said when addressing a gathering at Dewan Jitra.

Dr Mahathir said he was not questioning the knowledge the mufti acquired, but for them to freely accuse people of being apostate was overboard as this could split the Muslims.

"We give the power to the mufti (to make fatwa) but when the mufti takes action which we regard as not being in accordance with Islam, we have the right to speak out," he said.

Dr Mahathir said certain mufti had labelled him as "near apostate" because he did not agree with the arrests by religious enforcement officers of three beauty contestants.

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