

Speech did not offend any Islamic nation, says PM

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday his allegedly anti-*ulama* speech made during the recent World Economic Forum in New York had not offended any Islamic nation.

In fact, he said, many Muslims, including leaders from other Islamic countries, stood up to support him while he was making the speech.

"I did not offend any Islamic country or even any other person, except those sitting in front of me (in the Dewan Rakyat).

"Other people have not made any comment or complaint about my speech.

"However, here, I don't expect to receive the support of the *barua-barua* (stooges) sitting over there," he said in the Dewan Rakyat in reply to Pendang MP Datuk Fadzil Noor.

The Opposition Leader and the PAS block sit in front of the ministers' seats in the Dewan Rakyat.

Responding earlier to an original question from Fadzil, Dr Mahathir said his speech in New York was not "anti-*ulama*" as claimed by certain groups, which had even published a book "to make my name look bad."

"But it is anti those *ulama* who have their own interests, *ulama* who divide Muslims to the point that they are enemies and at war with each other, deviant *ulama* who call others *barua*, deviant *ulama* who claim others as anti-*ulama* or turn questions into accusations for their own political gains," he said.

To a remark by Fadzil that in making the allegedly "anti-*ulama*" speech, Dr Mahathir "had fallen into a Western trap," the Prime Minister said:

"I haven't been trapped by anybody. In fact, Malaysia is recognised by the world as the only country capable of criticising anyone who has committed a wrong, including the superpowers."