

MAHATHIR - CASINO

KUALA LUMPUR, SEPT. 12 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY THE GOVERNMENT WOULD STUDY EVERY ASPECT BEFORE MAKING A DECISION ON THE CLOSURE OF THE CASINO AT GENTING HIGHLANDS.

HOWEVER, THE PRIME MINISTER INDICATED THAT THE FIRST STEP TO DISCOURAGE RAMPANT GAMBLING IN THE COUNTRY WOULD BE TO BAR MUSLIMS FROM GOING TO THE CASINO.

HE WAS COMMENTING ON NEWSPAPER REPORT TODAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CLOSE DOWN THE CASINO AS A FIRST STEP TO PUT A STOP TO GAMBLING ACTIVITIES IN THE COUNTRY.

THE UMNO YOUTH MOVEMENT, AT ITS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THURSDAY, HAD PASSED A RESOLUTION URGING THE GOVERNMENT TO BAN ALL FORMS OF GAMBLING ACTIVITIES INCLUDING THOSE RECEIVING FINANCIAL FUND FROM THE GOVERNMENT LIKE SPORT TOTO AND THE SOCIAL WELFARE LOTTERY.

ELABORATING, THE PRIME MINISTER WHO IS ALSO UMNO PRESIDENT SAID THAT WHATEVER DECISION THAT WOULD BE MADE, CAREFUL STUDY WOULD BE MADE FIRST TO AVOID ANY SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS. -- MORE 1140/PA

MAHATHIR - CASINO 2 KUALA LUMPUR

THINGS LIKE THIS REQUIRE TIME FOR US TO RESPOND TO THE SITUATION. IT REQUIRES TIME BEFORE IT COULD BE IMPLEMENTED, HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD SEE THAT THE GENTING HIGHLANDS AS A BIG BUSINESS ENTERPRISE WOULD NOT COLLAPSE AND A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO DEPENDED ON IT INCLUDING ITS 6,000 EMPLOYEES WOULD NOT BE MADE REDUNDANT.

HE REGRETTED THE NEWSPAPER REPORT ON THE CLOSING DOWN OF THE CASINO AS IT WOULD RESULT IN THE SHARE MARKET GOING DOWN.

HE DECLINED TO COMMENT ON RUMOURS THAT A DECISION HAD BEEN MADE A MONTH AGO TO CONVERT GENTING HIGHLANDS INTO A RECREATIONAL PARK.

THE MATTER SHOULD BE LEFT TO THE GOVERNMENT ... IF IT IS UP FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION, THIS WOULD LEAD TO EMOTIONS AND PEOPLE EXERTING PRESSURES ON THE GOVERNMENT.

WE ARE RUNNING A GOVERNMENT AND NOT A REFORM MOVEMENT, HE STRESSED. -- MORE 1150/PA

MAHATHIR - CASINO 3 KUALA LUMPUR

ON THE CLOSURE OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE LOTTERY AND THE SPORTS TOTO, HE SAID IT WILL DEFINITELY HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT AND LIKE EVERYTHING, IT HAS ITS PROS AND CONS.

HE ALSO DECLINED TO COMMENT ON A CALL BY A PERAK UMNO DELEGATE ON FRIDAY THAT CARCOSA - THE OFFICIAL RESIDENCE OF THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER WERE BE TAKEN BACK.

THE DELEGATE, HAJI HISAN IBRAHIM, IN MAKING THE CALL, SAID IT WAS TIME THE GOVERNMENT TAKE BACK CARCOSA WHICH WAS HANDED TO THE BRITISH ON A SILVER PLATTER DURING THE COLONIAL RULE.

ON A REMARK BY ANOTHER DELEGATE THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD REVIEW THE POLICY OF ALLOCATING LARGE AREAS OF LAND FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS, HE SAID ONE HAD TO LOOK AT IT ON A RECIPROCAL BASIS.

WE HAVE TO ALSO LOOK AT THE ALLOCATION OF LAND BY FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS TO OUR EMBASSY BUILDINGS OVERSEAS, HE ADDED.

-- BERNAMA 1205/PA