

MAHATHIR-CASINO

82 (P)
KUALA LUMPUR, OCT. 21 (BERNAMA) -- THE GOVERNMENT IS "GOING TO WORK OUT HOW TO BAR MUSLIMS" FROM THE GENTING HIGHLANDS CASINO, PRIME MINISTER (DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD) SAID TODAY.

"WE HAVE TO KNOW WHO IS GOING TO DO THE JOB OF IDENTIFYING MUSLIMS AND NON-MUSLIMS," HE TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE HERE.

THE PRIME MINISTER FELT THAT THE CASINO SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN THE BURDEN OF IDENTIFYING WHO IS A MUSLIM AND WHO IS NOT.

ON WHETHER THE PROPOSAL WAS TO BAN MUSLIMS FROM GAMBLING OR FROM ENTERING THE CASINO, HE SAID: "FROM GAMBLING."

"BUT THEY DON'T HAVE TO ENTER THE CASINO," THE PRIME MINISTER ADDED.

-- MORE 1537/LK

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DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT THIS MEANT THE CASINO'S MUSLIM WORKERS WOULD HAVE TO GIVE UP THEIR JOBS.

"THEY MAY HAVE TO LOSE THEIR JOB," HE ADDED.

TO A REMARK THAT MUSLIMS WERE SITTING ON THE BOARD OF GENTING HIGHLANDS, HE SAID: "THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GAMBLING AND OWNING A BUSINESS THAT HAS LOTS OF OTHER INTERESTS BESIDES GAMBLING."

ON WHETHER MALAYSIA PROPOSED TO IMPOSE THE MANDATORY DEATH SENTENCE ON DRUG TRAFFICKERS, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT IF FORCED TO DO SO BY CIRCUMSTANCES IT WOULD DO SO.

"WE MAY HAVE TO MAKE TRAFFICKERS AND FOREIGNERS WHO BRING IN DRUGS FACE THE FULL SEVERITY OF MALYSIAN LAWS," HE SAID.

-- BERNAMA 1540/LK