

Mahathir unaware of Umno-owned company going into casino business

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UMNO president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday he was unaware that an Umno-owned company is looking into the possibility of going into the casino business.

He said this to reporters after opening an international seminar on Muslim unity at the Islamic Centre in Kuala Lumpur yesterday morning.

Asked whether the Umno leadership had approved such a move since this went against the party's policy of opposing casino activities, Dr Mahathir said he had not received any report on the mat-

ter. When told that there had been several Press reports recently on the Faber-Merlin Group applying for a licence to run a casino in the Pacific region, the Prime Minister said: "Faber-Merlin is not wholly owned by Umno... there are other shareholders."

The *Business Star* reported on Sept 4 that the Merlin Hotel group — Faber-Merlin's hotel arm — had applied for licences to operate one casino in a country in the Pacific and take over an existing hotel-cum-casino in the US.