

22/05/2003

Slot machines switched off

Tan Yi Kai

BENTONG, Wed. - Bukit Tinggi Resort Bhd has suspended the operations of its slot machines while it seeks clarification from the Finance Ministry on the terms and conditions of its licence to operate such machines.

Its general manager, Teh Ming Wah, said the resort had been granted a licence to operate 250 slot machines, and not a casino licence as had been publicised.

"It is unfortunate that certain parties have misconstrued and sought to politicise the matter, leading to allegations to the media with little regard to factual accuracy."

Yesterday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad refuted claims that the resort had been granted a casino licence, announcing that the Government had not, and will not, issue any new licences for the operation of casinos.

He had also said Bukit Tinggi Resort's licence required it to limit the use of the machines to club members and not for public use.

A visit to the resort showed that the slot room had been closed and bore no resemblance to a full-fledged casino.

In Temerloh, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob said the accusation by Pas leaders that the Government had issued another licence to operate a casino at Bukit Tinggi Resort in Bentong has been proven to be baseless.

The Pas attempt to undermine the Government has backfired.

Dr Mahathir, said Adnan, had made it clear that the Government had not issued a second licence for a casino and would never do so.

"Dr Mahathir made such a clear statement on the matter," he said, before chairing the Temerloh Umno meeting at the district Umno headquarters, here, today.

It was reported recently in Harakah, the Pas publication, that the Government had issued another licence for a casino at the Bukit Tinggi Resort in Bentong.

Adnan had then clarified that the licence was to operate slot machines at the resort and that it was approved at the Federal level and not by the State.