

21/05/2003

PM: No casino in Bukit Tinggi

Firdaus Abdullah

DENGKIL, Tues. - The Government has not and will not issue any new casino licences, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Refuting claims that the Government had issued a licence for a casino at Bukit Tinggi in Pahang, the Prime Minister said there was no such approval.

"We don't issue any more licences for casinos; there is no casino in Bukit Tinggi" he said.

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

Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob refuted the Pas claim and said the licence was to operate slot machines at the resort and that it was approved at the Federal level and not by the State.

Dr Mahathir said the controversy was over a club in Bukit Tinggi which was issued with a slot machine (one-arm-bandit) licence.

Speaking at a Press conference after attending the ground breaking ceremony of BioValley Malaysia near here this morning, the Prime Minister said the club was issued with a slot machine licence which has since been revoked as the club breached conditions stipulated in the licence.

"We have revoked the licence. The machines are supposed to be in the club, not for public use. It was for the club's use to raise money among its members.

"I don't know who branded it as a casino. Actually the licence was for slot machines in the club, the same type of one-arm bandit machines which can be found in many other clubs.

"Anyway it's not a casino like Genting Highlands but somebody, of course in order to cast the Government in a bad light, called it a casino. It's not a casino," Dr Mahathir said.