

'IT'S A LIE'

Anwar denies reports of Forest City casino licence

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PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has denied reports the government is mulling a second casino licence to revive Forest City in Johor.

In a brief response to the media, Anwar, who is finance minister said: "On the casino licence, it's a lie, that's not right. Nope."

He was asked if reports that the government wanted a second casino licence for Forest City were true.

He said this after attending the

Housing and Local Government Ministry and Communications Ministry joint Hari Raya Aidilfitri celebration here.

A Bloomberg report had claimed that Malaysia was in early discussions with tycoons on opening a casino in Forest City, to revive the RM478.35 billion property project.

Quoting sources, it said Anwar had met Berjaya Corporation Bhd founder Tan Sri Vincent Tan and Genting Group's Tan Sri Lim Kok

Thay last week about the development.

It added that Anwar, senior government officials and the businessmen had lunch and meetings about the possibility of granting another casino licence.

The mega project, backed by Chinese investment led by Guangdong-based Country Garden Holding, is aimed at middle-class Chinese buyers but has had trouble selling real estate to its principal investors in China and

Singapore. The development, which comprises eight phases, had slowed down as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Last year, Anwar announced that the area had been designated as a Special Financial Zone to boost foreign investment and simultaneously invigorate growth in Iskandar Malaysia.

Shares of Genting Malaysia Bhd closed in the red, while Berjaya Corp Bhd gained following the Bloomberg report.