

## **Circus performance interrupted by hoax over escaped tigeress**

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — A false alarm over a tigeress which "escaped" from its cage caused panic among 800 spectators at a Royal London Circus performance at Bukit Jalil tonight.

Lee's International Entertainment (which owns and operates the Royal London Circus worldwide) executive director Kenneth Lee told the New Sunday Times that one of the stagehands overheard someone saying that a tigeress had escaped from its cage about 7.55pm.

"As part of our security procedures, the stage manager asked the spectators to evacuate the performance area," he said.

When everyone was safely evacuated, a check was conducted by the security staff on the wild animals' cage located behind the performance tent.

Lee said that two Bengal tigeresses were accounted for by their Nepalese keeper, Dawa Sherba.

The circus was reopened to the public at 8.15pm after Lee had ascertained that none of the wild animals, which consisted of the two tigeresses and three lions, had escaped.

Lee said in the 17-year history of the Royal London Circus worldwide, none of its animals had ever escaped. "This is attributed to the security measures which we have taken to ensure the safety of our spectators," Lee said.

In the event of a wild animal escaping, Lee said they had an air taser, a stun weapon that discharges an electric shock over a distance, which could even immobilise an elephant.

Lee said whoever pulled off the hoax was very irresponsible. "It was a joke made in bad taste." However, spectator Ahiruddin Attan claimed that they were told by the stage manager to leave as a fire had broken out. "When my family was safely out, I went back into the tent only to be told that a tigeress had escaped," he said.