

Dr M warns JB could slip from Malay hands
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Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad has warned that the rapid development in Johor Baru, geared for the upper class, could see the bastion of Malay nationalism slip away from Malay hands.

In a blog posting today, Mahathir acknowledged the mushrooming of skyscrapers that could see what he described as “Johor Baru Baru” (JBB), or New Johor Baru, outdoing cities like New York.

“But the question is, who will live and work in these skyscrapers? Where will they come from? From Johor Baru? From Malaysia?” he asked.

Mahathir said the buildings would surely be made out of marble and granite while the top floors will host luxury flats that would be rented out at tens of thousands of ringgit a month.

“Could it be that these luxury offices will be filled by companies from Majidee or Gelang Patah?

“And its occupants will be Johor Baru Malays and from the surrounding villages? The worry is they will not be,” he said.

Mahathir appeared to be referring to the Iskandar Malaysia development region, which is undergoing rapid growth, spearheaded by development companies from China and Singapore.

Mahathir then likened the current situation to the Temenggong (governor) of Singapore, who in 1819 signed the island away to the British for 60,000 Spanish dollars. Singapore at that time belonged to Johor.

“Foreigners began to flood Singapore and the original inhabitants were drowned in the city that was built.

“Such is the huge size of foreigners that turned Singapore into a foreign country that was never returned to Johor when the British withdrew from the colony.

“What is the likelihood that this beautiful and luxurious city (New Johor Baru) will become another Singapore?” Mahathir asked.

He said the ongoing development area would give rise to new electoral boundaries and any

foreigner who lived in there for 10 to 12 years would eventually be entitled to Malaysian citizenship.

“Even if we were to combine these (electoral) areas with the majority of the (local) population, it would still comprise new citizens,” he said.

Mahathir did not elaborate who these “new citizens” are, but merely lamented on the accusations of racism.

“Nowadays, we cannot mention the Malays. It is racism.

“It does not matter even if there are no Malays, as long as those who vote for their elected representatives have Malaysian citizenship,” he said.

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