

## **Najib: We can emulate Dubai's success with Forest City**

MalaysiaKini.com

Jan 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Citing Dubai's success, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has defended the government's attempts to draw foreign investment to the Forest City project in Johor.

He told a crowd of low-cost flat dwellers this morning that Dubai used to be nothing but a barren desert landscape, but was able to draw foreign investment by selling land for development.

"Today Dubai has become a great metropolis and its people earn high incomes. If Dubai can succeed, we too can develop land," he said.

Responding to his predecessor Dr Mahathir Mohamad's claims that the sale of Forest City land to Chinese investors would undermine national sovereignty, Najib said the land was being sold on a 99-year leasehold basis.

Hence, the issue of sovereignty did not arise, he said.

"When they buy houses, the houses are built on our land. Where does the issue of sacrificing our sovereignty arise, ladies and gentlemen? It's not like we're giving away citizenships.

"He (Mahathir) has made a false statement - a big slander actually, to the Johor and Malaysian governments - that supposedly we are going to give them citizenship.

"They are Chinese citizens - the biggest economic powerhouse in the world. They're rich. They have no intention of becoming Malaysian citizens," he said.

Najib added that even if the investors at Forest City enrol under the My Second Home program, they would only gain permanent residency and not citizenship.

Instead, the expatriates would bring their family to Malaysia and spend their money in the country, and Malaysia stands to gain from that.

With the revenue, he said, government programmes can be implemented to help the people, such as the RM6.5 million he announced earlier in his speech to repaint the low-cost flats in the area.

He also announced that 1,500 units of public housing would be built under the People's Housing Program (PPR) near the nearby Sri Perlis flats. This would accommodate 6,000 people and would be built in phases.

These came at the request of the local MP Johari Abdul Ghani, who is also the second finance minister.

He also launched the nationwide "Jom Bantu Rakyat" campaign at the event, as well as a new 1Malaysia Internet Centre. The "Jom Bantu Rakyat" campaign is aimed at helping low-cost flat dwellers.

"If there is no revenue, where are we going to find the money? I wouldn't even dare to see you if there is no revenue because wherever I go, people would surely ask me (for favours). For sure!" he said.

Meanwhile, at a rare press conference later, Najib fielded questions regarding the "Jom Bantu Rakyat" programme.

When asked about the decline in the ringgit's value, however, he declined to answer the question.

"No, no, no, I don't want to comment about the ringgit here, don't ask me about the ringgit here.

"We can talk about the ringgit later. The ringgit is getting better, Insha'Allah," he said.

Copyright © 1999-2017 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd

Source: <https://www.malysiakini.com/news/369920>