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BERNAMAPIX

Sultan Ibrahim and Najib inspect a scale model of the Forest City project. With them is Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Khalid Nordin.

'A very big mistake'

> Two former senior Umno leaders' move to work with Opposition: Najib

JOHOR BARU: Umno views Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin's decision to work with the Opposition as a very big mistake, said Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak.

The prime minister and Umno president said the action of the party's former senior leaders had also incurred the wrath and disappointment of Umno leaders and members.

"I see most of the Umno leaders, they are very angry and disappointed with Tun Dr Mahathir's decision to work with the Opposition," he told reporters after officiating the opening of the Urban Transformation Centre (UTC) at Kota Raya here yesterday.

Responding to questions whether he still had the mandate to rule the country, Najib said: "I still have the mandate as Barisan

Nasional holds the majority in Parliament."

He added that the general election is the litmus test as to whether he still had the people's confidence as prime minister.

"But in between the elections, we serve the people and carry out development projects," he said.

Meanwhile, in Iskandar Puteri, Najib announced the granting of duty-free status to the Forest City development to spur business activities and tourism on its four man-made islands.

The duty-free status was one of four incentive packages he announced at the official launch of the project, officiated by Johor Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar.

Three other packages are corporate tax incentive for green developers and green development managers; corporate tax incentive for qualified service sector employers, or Iskandar Development Region Class companies in tourism, health and education sectors; and no restriction/equity conditions for foreign shareholders in companies that are eligible for the

corporate tax incentives introduced.

"These packages are designed to ensure the success of the Forest City project based on its masterplan and target of becoming a smart and green city," Najib said.

He said Forest City is a large-scale project that incorporates sustainable development in its approach towards becoming an environment friendly and smart city.

The prime minister said sustainable developments like Forest City would be the future development of the country. "We need to prove we are serious in developing the country according to our own development model and mould."

Najib said the project could attract foreign investment worth RM175 billion. "For the next 20 years, that is by 2035, it is expected to create as many as 220,000 jobs for Malaysians in high value-added sectors such as finance and e-commerce."

The project is located along the Straits of Johor close to the Second Link and Port of Tanjung Pelepas.

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