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NAJIB: DR M'S REMARKS SLANDEROUS

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Malaysia to gain more from foreign direct investments, says PM

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TUN Dr Mahathir Mohamad's back-peddalling has led him to commit a "huge slander" against the federal and Johor governments on the Forest City project, Datuk Seri Najib Razak said.

Dr Mahathir had reportedly alleged that Chinese nationals and investors coming to Johor following the RM100 billion project would be given Malaysian identification cards to allow them to vote in the next general election.

"This Tun Mahathir... Tun 'U-turn' Mahathir. I call him 'U-turn Mahathir' because he made lots of U-turns," the prime minister said.

"Because of committing too many U-turns, Dr Mahathir has now made a false statement and, in truth, he has committed a huge slander against the federal and Johor governments," he said.

The prime minister explained that the Johor government had approved the Forest City project, which saw lands being reclaimed and sold to buyers.

Najib said Chinese nationals who participated in the "Malaysia, My Second Home" programme were not entitled to Malaysian citizenship although they lived in this country.

"So, (in what way is) our sovereignty being sacrificed, ladies and gentlemen? We are not providing them with citizenship," he said.

In his speech at the "Jom Bantu Rakyat" programme here yesterday, Najib said on the contrary, Malaysia stood to gain more from foreign direct investments (FDIs).

"(The investors) are from China, which is the world's largest economy. They are immensely rich and do not wish to be Malaysian citizens.

"If they live here, they will spend their money in Malaysia. They'll

bring their families here and stay for about three to four months. Who stands to gain the most? We do!

"If we profit (from foreign investments), we will gain additional income and, of course, we can use it... to give the flats a fresh coat of paint.

"But if we do not have development, where can we gain revenue from? Where can we get the money? I will not be able to bring myself to see you if I can't bring in revenue.

"That is the reality. Please stop inciting and confusing the people," Najib said.

The prime minister also asked whether there would be any difference between nationals of other countries who bought houses in Kuala Lumpur and the Chinese who purchased such properties in Johor.

"Is the purchase of houses in Kuala Lumpur by Americans and Japanese acceptable, but the purchase of houses in Johor by the Chinese otherwise?

"There is no difference in this matter. What is important is that our economy will develop further with such policies."

He cited the success of Dubai,

which was once a barren land, but is now a great metropolis with locals earning high income as a result of foreign investments and land development policies.

"If Dubai can be successful due to its policies, we, too, can (emulate and) develop our land," he said.

In his speech, Najib also took another swipe at Dr Mahathir after speaking about the importance of providing the people with an efficient public transport system.

"For example, the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT). We made plans for it more than six years ago. It was only on paper. I made a decision to execute the MRT (project) as prime minister.

"This is because our transport system before I came to office was a mess and not integrated.

"That was because someone who was the prime minister did not give much attention towards (the importance of) public transportation.

"I feel that is not right since any modern, world-class city must have an efficient, world-class public transportation system. And, we shall have that too."