

Newspaper	THE STAR
Date	16 JANUARY 2017

# Political spin angers Sultan

Johor Ruler slams Dr M over Chinese investment comments

By WONG CHUN WAI  
and NELSON BENJAMIN  
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

**JOHOR BARU:** The Sultan of Johor has said he is "deeply offended and hurt" by the political spin used by certain politicians against mainland Chinese investments in the state, saying if this is left unchecked, it would drive away investors.

In a no-holds barred interview, a visibly upset Sultan Ibrahim Ibni Almarhum Sultan Iskandar singled out Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad for "putting political interests above Malaysian interests, particularly Johor".

"Enough is enough. I have so far restrained myself from commenting on the controversy on Forest City generated by Dr Mahathir and his supporters.

"But Dr Mahathir has gone too far with his twisting of the issue. He is making allegations that 700,000 mainland Chinese will stay in JB, and that citizenships will be given away, and that huge tracts of land have been sold to the Chinese.

"He is giving the impression that Johor is surrendering land to the Chinese and that we are giving up our sovereignty, comparing even how we gave up Singapore to the British," he said in an interview at Istana Bukit Serene here.

**Dr Mahathir has gone too far with his twisting of the issue. He is making allegations that 700,000 mainland Chinese will stay in JB, and that citizenships will be given away, and that huge tracts of land have been sold to the Chinese.**

Sultan Ibrahim Ibni Almarhum  
Sultan Iskandar

His Royal Highness said he did not wish to intervene in politics but he had to set the record straight as "the facts have been twisted by people with twisted minds and intentions".

"Let me ask him this - Forest City is to be built on reclamation land and most of these units are condominiums. In simple language, these units are up in the air. They are strata units.

"I would like to ask Dr Mahathir if these foreign buyers can just take their apartments back home or carry off an inch of the reclaimed land.

"Take a look at the number of foreigners who have bought properties in Singapore. Are the Singaporeans in that tiny island republic worried? No, they are not and they, in fact, welcome affluent expatriates there.

"Here, we have Dr Mahathir creating fear, using race, just to fulfil his political motives. He's not stupid, he's just selfish and opportunistic," he added.



**Enough is enough:** Sultan Ibrahim stressing a point during an exclusive interview with The Star.

Sultan Ibrahim was responding to a series of comments and blogs posted by Dr Mahathir who claimed that huge tracts of land around Johor Baru were being sold to foreigners with no restriction, and there would be mass immigration to take up residence in these new cities.

Dr Mahathir cited Forest City developed by a China-based company, claiming "already thousands of units have been completed and sold to mainland Chinese."

He also quoted Bloomberg reports as saying that 700,000 mainland Chinese would stay there and that there were 60 similar projects which could house more than a million people.

Muhyiddin, the Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia president, in an interview with *Sin Chew Daily*, had also accused Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak of inviting mainland Chinese investments into the country, which he claimed was "robbing the rice bowl" of Malaysians.

Forest City, when completed, will sit on four artificial islands developed by Country Garden Pacific View.

TuanKu said the mixed development project in Forest City was not just for Chinese investors, but for anyone around the world, including Johoreans.

"This project will increase Johor land size and sovereignty," he added.

Sultan Ibrahim said the spillover effect would be enormous, including revenue for the state government in terms of taxes and about 200,000 job opportunities.

He also pointed out that land matters were under the purview of the state government and not the Federal Government.

He said that SP Setia, a Malaysian company, was involved in the development of the Battersea Power Station Apartment in London and the British government welcomed the project and investment.

"Does Dr Mahathir or his children own properties overseas?" Sultan Ibrahim asked.

He added that many investors coming to Forest City were also taking advantage of the Malaysia My Second Home (MM2H) programme, which was launched in 2002 during Dr Mahathir's time.

**Dr Mahathir and his allies are only talking negative things, most of which are a figment of his imagination and evil thoughts. I feel sad for him because he had to lower himself to this point. It is okay to disagree but please do not concoct things.**

Sultan Ibrahim Ibni Almarhum  
Sultan Iskandar

"During his tenure as prime minister, he was asking Malaysians to Look East but now he is criticising when Chinese investors come here to invest."

As prime minister, he said that Dr Mahathir had paid a lot of attention and priority in developing Langkawi over other islands in the country.

Sultan Ibrahim added that Dr Mahathir was "playing the politics of fear and race which have no place in Johor as I do not believe in racial politics".

"He is insulting these rich Chinese property investors. They are not hard up for Malaysian citizenship. Many of them have properties in other countries including Australia and the United Kingdom.

"They buy homes here because they can see the strategic importance of Johor.

"JB is just minutes away from Singapore and Batam - two different countries.

"JB is also set to be the next Klang Valley with just a 90-minute train ride once the High Speed Rail is linked between KL and JB.

"Anyone can see how the property price of JB will shoot up but Dr Mahathir prefers to create fear," he said.

Sultan Ibrahim said Johor Baru would be the next major Malaysian city, after Kuala Lumpur, like New York-Los Angeles, Beijing-Shanghai and Sydney-Melbourne.

Dr Mahathir, he said, had left out the spin-off effects of these property developments, citing the hundreds of thousands of businesses and jobs that would be created as a result of this transformation.

"Instead of Johoreans going to Singapore or KL to look for jobs, we will see people from Klang Valley flocking to JB instead.

"Not only will foreigners be spending money in Johor but Malaysians from outside JB will also spend money in the state," Sultan Ibrahim said.

"Dr Mahathir and his allies are only talking negative things, most of which are a figment of his imagination and evil thoughts.

"I feel sad for him because he had to lower himself to this point. It is okay to disagree but please do not concoct things.

"He used to hate western press but now he is quoting everything from the western press. He has forgotten many things he has done," he said.