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Newspaper	THE STAR
Date	23 JANUARY 2017

Dr M again slams *The Star* China - 23/1/2017 investments in Forest City

KUALA LUMPUR: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has continued his criticism of China investments in Forest City in Johor, insisting that foreign ownership of land would undermine national sovereignty.

In an apparent reference to the Sultan of Johor who has defended the project, the former prime minister said at a forum here that his views got more support than "the other person's" when prompted by a moderator during the forum organised by Parti Amanah Negara's Titiwangsa and Seputeh divisions on Saturday night.

Stopping short of naming the Sultan, moderator Maszlee Malik of International Islamic University Malaysia had asked if Dr Mahathir's comments against a certain someone - not Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak - would adversely impact his Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia in Johor.

In a front-page exclusive interview with *The Star* published on Jan 16, Sultan Ibrahim Ibni Almarhum Sultan Iskandar hit out at Dr Mahathir, asking him to stop China-bashing and to cease attempts to sabotage Johor's economy.

The Sultan said the project would be built on reclaimed land, and comprise mostly condominium units built "up in the air", which meant that they were 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," Sultan Ibrahim asked.

In response, Dr Mahathir said that he was neither "anti-Chinese" nor against foreign direct investments but claimed that the project might lead to foreign ownership of land and an influx of property buyers from China that could undermine sovereignty in the long run.

Dr Mahathir admitted that he was merely reacting to a Nov 22 report in Bloomberg which claimed that a company from China would develop Forest City to accommodate 700,000 residents, and was attracting buyers from China.

"The Chinese are welcome to invest in industries in Malaysia. But just as we would not welcome mass immigration of Indians or Pakistanis or Europeans or Africans into Malaysia we have to adopt the same stance on Chinese immigration into Malaysia," he said in his blog.