

KERATAN AKHBAR



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Make Forest City deal public

I DON'T know if it is true about HRH the Sultan of Johor throwing a challenge to me over the development of Johor Baru.

Maybe it is only *The Star* which is interpreting what HRH says as a challenge to me.

But unless HRH denies he is challenging me, I will take the report of *The Star* as the truth.

I admit I am at a disadvantage here. While people can say what they like about me, and I welcome their freedom to say so, I hope that in responding to HRH's challenge I will not be arrested and jailed without trial.

If it is with trial, I welcome the arrest.

Now, what did I say? Nothing more than repeating a report by Bloomberg in the press. But I appreciate why Bloomberg is not challenged nor denied.

What did Bloomberg say in its report on Nov 22 last year?

It said that a China Chinese company will build Forest City in JB which can accommodate 700,000. It went on to say that plane-loads of China Chinese are being flown in to view the man-sized model (with pictures) and they have and will buy most of the properties in Forest City.

I doubt if many Johor Malays and Chinese are buying or going to buy these apartments. There just aren't that many Malaysians to buy all these properties.

Bloomberg, in the same report, mentioned 60 other developments similar to Forest City, and these are

also being sold to mainland

Chinese.

Looking back to 1819, when Sultan Ali of Johor did not lease Temenggong signed the lease. A part of Johor is now a foreign country – well developed no doubt, but a foreign country.

There will be in all more than a million foreigners living in JB Forest City and the 60 other developments. These new places will not become a foreign country but they will have an inordinate percentage of foreign people. If they stay long enough, they will be entitled to become citizens of Malaysia.

Yes, I promoted foreign direct investment. But it was not about buying land in Malaysia, developing them and selling them to foreigners who will stay here.

FDI is about investment in the manufacturing industry. Malaysian companies will construct the building and Malaysians will work in the industries. They will acquire skills and start their own manufacturing business.

Malaysian contractors are completely capable of building all kinds of buildings and develop land. We don't need foreigners to do this.

Look at Malaysia today. Ninety per cent or more of these new buildings and development are by Malaysian companies. Majority of the buyers are Malaysians, and they are the people who stay there.

But when foreigners buy land, there is not even an inflow of capi-

tal. Much of the money will be borrowed locally. And they can do their business with their own banks.

Whatever foreign companies earn will be expatriated, and will result in outflow of capital. When the scheme is introduced wherein you can buy property in China and get one flat or house free in Malaysia, no profit will be made in Malaysia, therefore no taxes will be paid to the Malaysian Government.

Let all transactions be transparent. Publish all documents about the investments, the number of workers, their home countries, the buyers, the banks which finance and all expatriation of funds. Do this honestly. No hiding.

So let the truly international Transparency International examine the exposed official documents. Let the people see the documents to prove their genuineness.

Looking East is not about asking the countries of the East to buy land in Malaysia, develop and sell to the people from these countries. Yes, we have encouraged foreigners to make Malaysia their second home. But their numbers are very small. Looking East is not about mass immigration of hundreds of thousands. It is about Malaysians learning about how these Eastern countries developed themselves.

It is easy to accuse me of being a racist. I have been called a Malay ultra before.

This labelling, this demonising actually exposes the lack of credi-

ble arguments against what I do or say. It reflects a fundamental lack of basis for the arguments against me.

This is a multiracial country. People of different ethnicity, language, religion, culture and even economic wellbeing have lived in this country in peace.

In many countries, even a slight difference in the interpretation of their common religion has resulted in violent conflicts and wars. But relatively speaking, Malaysia is stable and peaceful.

It is stable and peaceful because we accept each other as we are. During my 22 years as PM, there were no significant racial clashes. Differences, yes, but no violence. And the country grew.

Had I been a racist, my period would have seen turmoil and regression in this country. You can dispute what I say. That is your democratic right.

I dare *The Star* to publish what I say in full. It is a measure of the Government fear of the truth that the mainstream media is strictly controlled.

I will accept this article being totally blacked-out because we are living in a kleptocratic country where truth is anathema, only to be whispered but never said aloud. I am a Malaysian born in Kedah. Malaysia is my home and the object of my loyalty. If I have to be accused of *lese majeste* for what I say, so be it.

DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD