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A platform for the young

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Feeling GREAT:
Najib posing within an Instagram frame while visiting exhibition booths after launching the GREAT 2016 event at the Borneo Convention Centre in Kuching. — Bernama

Borneo 744 project in Bintawa to nurture upcoming traders

KUCHING: A Blue Ocean Entrepreneurs' Town, the first of its kind in Malaysia, will be set up here to nurture creative talents in entrepreneurship.

Named Borneo 744, it will be a joint Federal-state project at a 4ha site in Bintawa.

Announcing this here yesterday, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the site, which now houses unused warehouses, would become a hub of creativity and innovation for young entrepreneurs.

"We will encourage collaboration and networking. It will be a place where young people can do business, experiment with new products and get guidance or start-up capital.

"We want to make this a model of creative entrepreneurship," said the Prime Minister when opening the Gathering of Rising Entrepreneurs Act Together (GREAT) 2016 event at the Borneo Convention

Centre yesterday.

Najib said he was excited by the Borneo 744 venture.

"The future lies with the young. We must tap their energy and creativity.

"They don't want the Government to interfere, they just want us to facilitate, by providing the premises and start-up capital," he said, adding that GREAT would be a platform for this.

On another matter, Najib said he was ready to take on his critics.

He said he was given two T-shirt sizes for the event — XL and XXL.

"I'm proud to say that I chose XL and can wear it. The message is clear ... I'm fighting fit and will take on anyone."

Treasury secretary-general Tan Sri Dr Mohd Irwan Serigar Abdullah said Borneo 744 was still in the planning stages, with the design and cost yet to be finalised.

"We are in discussions with the

state government and landowner, Cahya Mata Sarawak, which has offered us a 15-year free lease.

"Once we sign the lease agreement, we can put in our budget. The Prime Minister is very supportive and has already said we will allocate the amount needed," he said after the opening ceremony.

Irwan said Borneo 744 would include eateries, entrepreneurship training, creative arts and technology-based companies, among others.

"We will also have space for extreme sports because our concept is work, eat and play.

"All will be operated by Sarawakians, young people and entrepreneurs from the private sector," he said, adding that the warehouses at the site would be refurbished for the purpose.

Later, Najib also took time off from his busy schedule to launch a special commemorative exhibition on his late father, Tun

Abdul Razak Hussein.

Najib, who was accompanied by Sarawak Social Development Minister Tan Sri William Mawan and Sarawak State Secretary Tan Sri Morshidi Ghani, spent about 15 minutes touring the exhibition located on the ground floor of The Spring shopping mall.

The gallery showcased some historic moments during the visit of Tun Abdul Razak, Malaysia's second Prime Minister, to Sarawak in the 1970s.

Organised by the Sarawak Museum Department and Yayasan Cemerlang, the exhibition is on until May 3.

Visitors at the mall were also seen shaking hands and taking photographs of the Prime Minister and his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor.

Later, Mawan presented Najib with a black and white photograph of his late father playing golf. — Bernama