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Work on peaceful resolution, Asean urged

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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has called on the leadership of Asean member countries to work towards a peaceful resolution to end territorial disputes in the South China Sea.

"We will continue to rely on diplomacy and dialogue to peacefully resolve any dispute.

"We will do so in accordance with the norms, customs and principles of international law," he said in his keynote address during a dinner event in conjunction with the 30th Asia-Pacific Roundtable here last night.

The roundtable will host global policymakers and scholars in discussing regional security matters in the Asia-Pacific.

One of the highlights of this year's roundtable is a plenary session on the growing threat of terrorism in the region, with Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein presenting a special address on the matter tomorrow.

Najib said politicians adopting intentionally antagonistic foreign policy positions just for the sake of personal popularity are selfish, shortsighted and self-defeating for their own countries.

"The national interest must come before personal political interest. Developing relations and economic partnerships with other nations promotes peace, stability and prosperity for the people," he said.

He cited Malaysia's work in settling a 20-year deadlock with



Interesting display: Najib looking at a photo exhibition during the 30th Asia-Pacific Roundtable in Kuala Lumpur. — Bernama

Singapore in the 2010 Points of Agreement; with Indonesia, Thailand, Myanmar and Bangladesh in last year's migrants at sea issue as a few examples of mutual cooperation.

Malaysia, he added, had also

facilitated the negotiations to resolve insurgency in the Southern Philippines.

"Stability will also allow the region to prosper and make the seas between the two neighbours safer.

"That will benefit both Malaysia

and the Philippines.

"I think that certainly will be more productive than re-igniting the Sabah issue," Najib said, referring to Philippines' president-elect Rodrigo Duterte's proposal to pursue the republic's claim on Sabah.