

Headline : Dream of Unesco listing for Belum forest  
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# Dream of Unesco listing for Belum forest

## Najib calls for study of forest's heritage and economic value

By IVAN LOH

**GERIK:** The Government wants to see the Royal Belum-Temengor forest reserve listed as an Unesco World Heritage site, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

However, he recognised that further studies need to be conducted before the government could recommend the rainforest for Unesco's consideration.

"Related agencies need to study its heritage and economic value.

"Tourists visiting here will need to be controlled in a managed environment," he said during the ceremony marking the completion of the second phase of Emkay Group's Belum Rainforest Resort project at Pulau Banding here yesterday.

At nearly 2,900sq-km or four times the size of Singapore, the rainforest is about 130 million years old, making it older than the Amazon.

Najib said he was impressed with the setting of the resort, and re-

marked that it seems suitable as a meeting place for leaders.

"The resort can be our own Camp David. We can have meetings of heads of state here," he said.

Camp David is the country retreat of the President of the United States located about 100km north-west of Washington D.C., and every president since Franklin D. Roosevelt has made use of it.

In 1978, Jimmy Carter brokered the Camp David Accords between Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin.

Emkay Group CEO Ahmad Khalif Mustapha Kamal said getting the Unesco world heritage status would bring in more tourists to the area.

However, Ahmad Khalif said as Malaysia was currently a Unesco board member, it could not submit any dossier on any place for consid-

eration as heritage site for two years.

"We could start the ball rolling again in the following year," he said.

He noted that Emkay has a research centre with ample facilities to accommodate scientists and researchers conducting studies on the rainforest.

At the ceremony, Najib, Perak Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abd Kadir and their spouses also visited an orang asli village and the research centre.

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— DATUK SERI NAJIB TUN RAZAK

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**GERIK, 9 Mei:** Najib Tun Razak trying his hand at the 'sumpit' or blow pipe during his visit to the orang asli cultural village in Tanjung Satu after launching the second phase of the Belum Rainforest Resort di Pulau Banding. Looking on is his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor. — Bernama