

**I am duty-bound to continue to lead, says Najib**  
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UMNO AGM Najib Abdul Razak feels strongly that it would be cowardly and irresponsible for him to give up his post as Umno president.

"I can't just abandon our cause and drop our mission without first ensuring that not only are issues arising resolved but also that the position of the party and members is back to normal," he said in his presidential address.

His speech, lasting nearly two hours and punctuated by applause, dwelled at length on the duties of a leader and what is due to him, and the need for Umno to be united.

The prime minister sees the issues affecting himself and Umno as tribulations that a president of the party must face. And he referred to a verse in the Quran about tests that a leader has undergo to prove his mettle and raise his stature.

He declared himself well-prepared for the manifold tasks of the president: "However mountainous or awesome the challenges, I can never yield but must bravely face and resolve the problems that arise to continue to lead Umno to victory."

Touching on the issues affecting Umno, Najib said: "In the 1MDB affair, I wish to state that it is being handled and is in the process of being settled."

With the sale of the Edra power company, the 1MDB debt had been reduced by RM17 billion, he said.

As for the RM2.6 billion deposited in his bank account, the money - as explained in Parliament and in detail at the briefing for delegates - was political donation from outside the country and not from 1MDB, he added.

The Umno president reminded the delegates of the principle of loyalty to the top leadership which he said had long been practised in Islam.

Najib said the "loyalty rule" was often mentioned in the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet. The Malay annals too advocated loyalty to the top leadership.

The prime minister said that he himself had always adhered to this principle as attested by his action in 1987, when Umno was split.

"With love and respect, I chose to be loyal to Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who was defending his position as Umno president, and by extension as prime minister," Najib said.

Having pressed his point while taking a swipe at his formidable critic, Najib next turned to the relationship between the Umno president and his deputy as stipulated in the party

constitution.

"The deputy president assists in the duties of the president," he read out.

Najib spoke of the "war of perception" being waged against him and his party and government where "half-truths" become "absolute truths".

He said there were those who claimed that Malaysia under him had become a failed state, which was nonsense with the country climbing up two rungs to become the 18th top economy among 144 countries.

Calling again for unity among Umno members, by rallying round the top leadership, Najib said that, for himself and the party, "there shall be no retreat, no surrender".

- Bernama

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