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'Umno needs mix of experienced and new blood'

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PUTRAJAYA: Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak hopes the Umno party elections next month will feature a combination of experienced leaders and fresh talents.

The Prime Minister said there should be a balance between continuity and the need to bring in fresh talents at different levels.

"We need leaders with experience in Umno, and we also need new talents in Umno.

"If we block new talents from contesting, we will face problems later especially when it comes to select-

ing credible leaders when the time comes," he said after attending the Finance Ministry's Hari Raya open house here yesterday.

Najib, who is also Umno president, was asked to comment on news reports that several supreme council members would not be seeking re-election, and whether more senior leaders should make way for younger members.

"We have no suggestion actually.

"What we have done is to allow any Umno member who wants to contest, to freely do so as stipulated

by the party's constitution.

"To those who feel like making way for others, I appreciate it if that is their stand.

"At the same time, I also appreciate those who want to offer themselves (to contest) because they want to contribute to the Umno leadership," he said.

On calls for top party posts not to be contested, Najib said Umno was a democratic party and the leaders should take into account the feelings of party members.

"If the party members want conti-

nunity and stability, that is the view of the party members.

"At the same time, as I said, there must be a right balance between continuity and the need to bring in fresh talents," he said.

Among the supreme council members who had announced that they would seek re-election are Johor Baru division head Tan Sri Shahrir Abdul Samad, Perak Menteri Besar and state Umno liaison chief, Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir, and Finance Minister II Datuk Seri Ahmad Husni Hanadzlah.