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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak said the fact that he is the first Umno president elected through a system that is more open and democratic after the amendment of the party constitution should be respected by all party members, reports Bernama.

Thus, he said, calls by several parties for him to relinquish his position were improper as they ignored the wishes of the majority of party members.

"As the party president, I am most thankful for your support, and why was I chosen? Through what process? Through the election process in the party, where the party constitution was amended (in 2009)," he said when

addressing the guests at the Umno Veterans' Evening With the President, at the Putra World Trade Centre, here yesterday.

Najib said the election system for the top leadership now was more open and transparent compared to the previous system, where it used the bonus vote and quota system to retain the top party posts.

He said that if he had wanted to retain the top leadership post for 22 years like the fourth prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad (1981-2003), he would not have agreed with the suggestion to amend the party constitution.

Regarding the "negative perception" on the iMalaysia

Development Berhad (iMDB) investment fund, Najib said he was optimistic the matter could be resolved using the right formula.

He reminded everyone against politicising things carried out by the government, for example the purchase of the Tun Razak Exchange (TRX) land by Lembaga Tabung Haji (TH) recently.

"TH made a purchase, what was good became bad. The story was twisted as though the depositors' funds were used for the purchase... (they) became angry when they only hear but do not know the facts. "But after knowing, they hit their foreheads, (they) say the TH should have kept it, because it can earn more than RM180 million in profits," he said.