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Najib still going strong

Prime Minister marks 40th year in politics in grand style

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KUALA LUMPUR: Throughout his 40 years in politics, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has been able to maintain strong support in Umno without ever asking party members to follow him blindly.

The Prime Minister and Umno president said he has always cherished the support from his friends in the party as it was given sincerely and in return, he would always help them whenever he could.

Najib said he was ready to accept criticism but it must be channelled in the right manner and using the appropriate avenue.

"I value loyalty not because I ask for blind loyalty but don't criticise in a manner that will destroy the party.

"As if we don't have enough enemies out there, let there not be enemies within," Najib said in his speech at a gathering to mark his 40th anniversary in politics.

Najib became a politician exactly 40 years ago today when he won the parliamentary seat of Pekan on Feb 21, 1976 uncontested after the death of his father Tun Abdul Razak Hussein.

The gathering was organised by his network of friends who had served him when he was Umno Youth chief from 1987 to 1993.

Najib reminded all those who were attacking him to examine his track record.

He said he had never caused the downfall of anyone in Umno and would only vie for a position in the party if there was a vacancy.

Najib said politics was a unique profession because unlike other jobs, it allows a person who has the right intention to initiate changes that could improve the fate of the people and country.

"That's why I regard my profession as a noble struggle because it allows me to do something that can bring about an impact that is far bigger compared to other careers," he said.

Najib said that when his father - Malaysia's second prime minister - died on Jan 14, 1976, he



Important milestone: Najib sharing a light moment with his deputy Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and visiting imam from Mecca Syekh Mohammad Idris Al Mashrafe during the special prayer session.

reached a crossroads in his life.

"I asked whether it would be the right thing to do to enter politics and whether I should do it and was capable enough.

"Many people said I was too young and told me to wait and be patient," he said, adding that he decided to jump in because party members and voters would give him a clear signal during the elections.

Looking back, Najib said that he was glad that he made the jump in politics.

Responding to earlier speeches during the

event by his friends who among others, praised him for his patience, Najib agreed that he was a patient man.

"However, let me state that my patience has its limits. Don't think that you can do as you like and that I won't act if someone crosses the limit," he said to applause from the audience, comprising about 2,000 of his close friends in the party.

Najib also urged Umno members to maintain unity.

"If we remain united, nothing is impossible. But we will fall if we are divided," he stressed.