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PM: Right balance in our democratic governance

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VIEWS HEEDED: Dewan Negara and Dewan Rakyat not 'rubber stamps'

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MALAYSIA has struck a balance between democracy and the governing system. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said it was this balance that

must be safeguarded to uphold the parliamentary institution's authority and dignity.

"Democracy is alive in Malaysia and it isn't a dysfunctional democracy. *Alhamdulillah* (praise be to God), we have found a balance between democracy and a system that does not prevent the smooth admin-

istration of the country.

"I think we have struck the right balance and this is what we must defend."

He said difference of opinion in a democracy was not something unhealthy, as long as it was within the parliamentary standing orders.

Stressing that the Dewan Negara and Dewan Rakyat were not "rubber stamps", Najib said the government took into account the views and suggestions from both the lower and upper house. He said this at a

farewell dinner for Dewan Negara president Tan Sri Abu Zahar Ujang here, last night.

Najib later launched the *Yang di-Pertuan Negara ke-16* book.

Present were Najib's wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, Abu Zahar, and Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia.

Abu Zahar served as Dewan Negara president for the last six years and will officially retire on Monday. He began his tenure on April 26, 2010, replacing Tan Sri Wong Foon

Meng. After reading law at Lincoln's Inn London and obtaining his Certificate in Legal Practice from Universiti Malaya, Abu Zahar began his career as a police inspector in 1964.

He was a deputy superintendent of police, before leaving the force after a 15-year service.

Abu Zahar also served as Kuala Pilah member of parliament and Kuala Pilah state assemblyman between 1986 and 1999.