

Annuar 'open' to contesting Youth top post

By ZARINAH DAUD

KEPALA BATAS: Rural Development Minister Datuk Annuar Musa said yesterday that he was leaving his options "wide open" as to whether he will contest the Umno Youth chief's post next year.

However, the Kelantan Umno deputy chairman said he would not take advantage of the current situation faced by the Umno Youth leadership.

He said he would leave it to Youth members to evaluate the present leadership before he (Annuar) could make any commitment.

Annuar, who contested unsuccessfully for the Umno Youth top post in 1996, was asked whether he was prepared to vie for the post again in view of recent developments over Youth chief Datuk Zahid Hamidi's remarks on nepotism and cronyism.

"It is not proper for me

to criticise the present leadership under Zahid but I have to give him time to settle the whole issue," he said.

"The question of whether I should take on Zahid does not arise now because we should give him time to rectify the situation.

"Zahid is only approaching two-thirds of his term and there is still plenty to be done," he told newsmen after visiting several cottage industries under his ministry.

Noting that there had been confusion among Youth members following Zahid's remarks, Annuar said it was important now for the movement to consolidate its position.

"Zahid's remarks had created confusion because there is a proper channel (the supreme council) for him to express his views," he said.

He said that when party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad re-

sponded to the matter, it was made in good faith.

"The Youth movement should be critical but at the same time apply wisdom when handling issues.

"One should be able to discuss matters with the party leadership instead of screaming for attention," he said.