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Zahid admits benefiting during Anwar's tenure

AFTER a long silence, former Umno Youth chief Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has admitted that he benefited during Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's tenure as deputy prime minister and finance minister.

"I was given (by Anwar) business opportunities including shares of companies listed on the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange," he told reporters at the 53rd Umno general assembly in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

He also distributed his prepared statement to the press after meeting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the last day of the three-day Umno general assembly. In the list released by the Treasury on Saturday, Zahid was listed as having 6.75 million shares or 4.5 per cent of Tekala Corp Bhd as at February 10 1996. He was also named a major shareholder of Pantai Dalam Sdn Bhd, which has been given the privatization contract to re-develop Kampung Abdullah Hukum. Zahid is also chairman of Kretam Holdings and Bank Simpanan Nasional.

He also admitted that Anwar had asked him to raise issues on nepotism and cronyism at last year's general assembly. When asked why it took him a long time to issue such a statement, Zahid said, "I was not given the opportunity."

"I only had the opportunity to meet (Dr Mahathir) today (yesterday) and I was given the opportunity to explain some of the issues pertaining to Anwar.

"I apologised to Dr Mahathir for what I had done when I led the party's Youth wing.

"I pledged my loyalty to Dr Mahathir as prime minister and the president of Umno, the party's struggles and uphold the party's dignity.

"I hope this explanation will put to rest any accusations questioning my loyalty to the party and its struggles. I call on all members to consolidate efforts to ensure that Barisan Nasional wins the next general election."

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