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Zahid to chart new agenda to strengthen party

FORMER Umno Youth chief Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, who sparked a controversy during last year's assembly by speaking about cronyism and nepotism, said he was now charting a new agenda to strengthen the party.

He said he accepted the remarks by party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in his opening speech at the assembly yesterday with an open heart.

Likening the remarks to "an advice from a father to his son", Zahid vowed to give his full support to the party leadership.

In his speech, Dr Mahathir spoke at length on how his former deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had attempted to topple the Umno leadership by using his henchmen to openly accuse the Government of nepotism and cronyism.

Dr Mahathir had singled out Zahid, who was then the Umno Youth chief, as having been directed by Anwar to speak on cronyism and nepotism when addressing the Umno Youth general assembly last year.

"This has become history in my political career which I consider closed. As division chief, I have a responsibility towards the people under my division."

He said he would make a resolution to chart a new agenda to strive to strengthen the party.

"I realise it is pointless to argue over issues which are irrelevant to the party and that there is a bigger agenda for the Malay community to focus on."

Speaking to reporters after Dr Mahathir's policy speech, Zahid said a lot needed to be done to preserve Umno's strength.

He urged members to avoid friction among themselves as this could jeopardise the conducive climate that has contributed to the economic growth and harmony among the people.

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