

Sabah Umno, BN capable of facing Shafie's party, says Zahid
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Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi is confident that Sabah Umno and Barisan Nasional (BN) under the leadership of Chief Minister Musa Aman will remain strong and are able to counter any attacks from the opposition.

He said this in response to reports that former Umno vice-president Mohd Shafie Apdal is taking over a political party in Sabah for a platform to contest in the coming general election.

Ahmad Zahid regarded Mohd Shafie's intention as "strange" and likened it to the action by a former Umno president and BN chairperson, together with a former Umno deputy president and BN deputy chairperson, in setting up a new party recently.

"But, we will not deny the right of Malaysians to engage in politics in order to translate the spirit of democracy practiced by the government," he told Malaysian journalists in New York yesterday.

The important thing, he said, was for the Umno and BN machinery to be strengthened to face the 14th general election.

"We will be fair and ROS will be professional in its action, like when we register PPBM (Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia)," said Ahmad Zahid, who is also Home Minister.

He is in New York, leading the Malaysian delegation to the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Mohd Shafie, who is former Rural and Regional Development minister, was reported to have been to the office of the Registrar of Societies (ROS) in Putrajaya to discuss the take-over of a Sabah-based party and to change its name and logo.

He left Umno on July 4 this year after his membership in the party was suspended on June 24.

- *Bernama*

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