

I am 101pct loyal to Najib, says Ahmad Zahid
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Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has said he is 101 per cent loyal to Najib Abdul Razak and is always ready to help the prime minister and Umno president in the government and party.

The deputy prime minister and Umno vice-president said that tasked with discharging the duties of Umno deputy president, he had to be with the president in safeguarding the party and addressing all challenges.

Ahmad Zahid said he was not too concerned about his position in the party as he left it to Allah (God) to determine the course of his political career.

"I just eat from the plate in front of me, the rice and dishes served to me. I will not go to other tables to help myself to the rice and dishes, even if I don't have enough food.

"This means that I have to respect the existing institution, and it happens as per the will of Allah," he said in an exclusive interview with *Bernama* ahead of the 2016 Umno general assembly scheduled for Nov 29 to Dec 3.

Ahmad Zahid also reminded the Malays about the sixth pillar of faith, namely belief in fate and destiny, which should be embedded in their hearts so that they could accept Allah's will with pleasure.

On this year's Umno general assembly, he said he was excited at having been given the honour to simultaneously open the general assemblies of the party's three wings - Wanita, Youth and Puteri - scheduled for Tuesday.

"The Umno supreme council has given me the mandate to open the general assemblies of the three party wings on that night and, after 21 years of not wearing the Umno Youth attire, Insya Allah (God willing), I will don it at the opening to give me that personal feeling of nostalgia," he said.

Commenting on his being perceived as an 'ultra-Malay', Ahmad Zahid said it was just a term but he was always aware of the fact that Malaysia was a multiracial country.

"The keyword is 'national' and this does not mean that when we are championing Islam and the Malays, we marginalise other religions," he said.

He said that as the No 2 in the government as well carrying out the tasks of the No 2 in Umno, he must be fair to all.

"I wish to portray that I am a Malay and Muslim through and through, but it does not mean that I have to disregard the other religions and races.

"I have to be fair to all Malaysians and the ummah and the international and global society,"

he said.

Ahmad Zahid became actively involved in politics when he was elected Bagan Datoh Umno Division Youth chief in 1984 and climbed the political ladder to become Umno Malaysia Youth chief (1996-1999).

His political stars began to shine brightly after he was elected to the party Supreme Council for two terms (2000-2003 and 2004-2007), and subsequently he was elected as one of the three vice-presidents for two terms (2008-2011 and 2013-2016).

Ahmad Zahid was appointed as deputy prime minister on July 28, 2015, to replace Muhyiddin Yassin who was dropped in a cabinet reshuffle.

- *Bernama*

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