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# Don't **blame** Najib, says Zahid

> 'PM tried his best to deal with global economic slowdown'

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak did his best to keep the nation's economy on a fairly sound footing despite the fall in world commodity prices.

"It is not right to blame the prime minister for the turbulent economy the country faced over the past year," said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

He said the economic slowdown was due to the country's reliance on the global market.

"This economic situation is not only felt by our country, but also elsewhere in the world.

"Najib tried his level best when global petrol and gas prices went down, and this problem is not his fault," he said when officiating at the Malaysia Makkal Sakti Party annual general meeting here yesterday.

Ahmad Zahid said if there were any former prime ministers claiming that the economy was much better during their time, it was because commodity prices were much higher then.

He said one should also not compare Najib's tenure as the country's leader to those in the past, as "all leaders have their own challenges because of the political cycle".

Ahmad Zahid also dismissed MCA religious harmony bureau chairman Datuk Ti Lian Ker's suggestion that Umno practises "scare tactics".

Ti said in a statement last week that Malays today can no longer be "cowed into succumbing or falling into or under the Umno



AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THESUN

Ahmad Zahid flanked by Makkal Sakti national president Datuk R.S. Thanenthiran (left) and deputy president Datuk R.K. Ramesh and party members after officiating at the party's annual general meeting yesterday.

political umbrella" while their insecurity complex can no longer be exploited.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also Umno acting deputy president, criticised Ti for denouncing the party, saying such matters should be discussed privately among coalition members.

"Whatever personal opinion that any Barisan Nasional party leader may have, it is best discussed through the right channel," he said.

Meanwhile, Ti slammed Umno supreme council member Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz for being arrogant about Umno and its "election-winning capabilities".

In a strongly-worded statement yesterday, Ti reminded the Tourism and Culture minister that being "his usual arrogant self" was only possible due to Barisan Nasional (BN).

"He can display his arrogance today because he is still a minister, as a result of the

strong foundation of BN and all its component parties. The achievements of BN are a result of the efforts of all component parties, whereby Umno is at the helm today."

Ti's response came after Nazri said on Saturday that it would be better for Umno to be a "jaguh kampung" (village champion) unlike MCA, which only has seven parliamentary seats compared to Umno's 88 seats.