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Najib confident of Zahid's loyalty

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> Zahid has been with me through thick and thin: PM

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SHAH ALAM: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak has expressed confidence in the loyalty of his deputy, describing Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi as a friend in good and bad times.

Najib, who is also Umno president, said the two of them have had a long history of friendship - spanning more than 30 years - backing each other through the ups and downs of politics.

His defence of Ahmad Zahid came just days after former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad claimed Ahmad Zahid had met him in the past to topple Najib.

"He has been with me since 1986, through thick and thin. I once defended Zahid as the Bagan Datoh Umno Youth chief. I went there as the Umno Youth

chief when he was detained under the Internal Security Act in 1998, during Mahathir's tenure.

to defend Zahid and he won by 11 votes," he said.
"It is illogical that after he became the deputy prime minister, he would go to Tun to topple me. This is impossible and wrong, it is an outright lie," Najib said.

"Don't let this kind of story revolve. Believe that the leadership of Umno is strong. I will remain confident with Ahmad Zahid as my deputy. End of story," he said in his speech at the opening of Shah Alam Umno division meeting at SMK Seksyen 18 here.

Last Tuesday, Mahathir alleged the meeting between Ahmad Zahid and him was held just days after the latter was appointed as the deputy prime minister in July 2015.

In response, Ahmad Zahid, despite confirming the meeting, stated that he had never suggested for Najib to be toppled, adding that he had a voice recording of the meeting.

Najib also said Ahmad Zahid was forced to resign from his post as the Umno Youth

chief when he was detained under the Internal Security Act in 1998, during Mahathir's tenure.

Najib said his deputy was then being pressured "as if a gun was pointed to his head" during Mahathir's leadership to sign a letter stating that he had voluntarily resigned from the Youth chief post.

In his call to Barisan Nasional (BN) to win back Selangor, Najib warned that the federal coalition could lose the state forever if it fails to wrest back Selangor in the next general election (GE).

"We lost the first time (GE12) and were left with 20 seats in Selangor. The second time (GE13) we were reduced to 12 seats. Don't let there be a third time," he said.

Najib said the fight for Selangor could only be won by capturing the hearts of voters in the Shah Alam parliamentary seat.

"If we want to bring changes to Selangor's political landscape, if we want BN to return to power, it must start with Shah Alam, which is the state's capital," he said.