

**Rise of Zahid, from Najib's political secretary to DPM**  
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Newly appointed Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi rose up the ranks from being a political secretary to Datuk Seri Najib Razak in the late 1980s to home minister in 2013, having bounced back from a period in his career when he was ostracised for criticising then prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The 62-year-old, who was a one-time ally of former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, was left out of the government when he had called for an end to cronyism and nepotism during the 1997 Umno general assembly.

Having held his parliamentary seat of Bagan Datoh since 1995, Zahid was appointed deputy tourism minister by Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and following that was promoted to full minister in 2009.

Zahid, who is Umno vice-president, courted controversy when it was made known he had written a letter to the Federal Bureau of Investigation regarding alleged gambling kingpin Paul Phua Wei Seng, who had been arrested in the United States.

Following criticism, the former banker said the letter was not meant to defend Phua who is facing trial but to clarify the status of Phua and the existence of the 14K triad in Malaysia. – July 28, 2015.

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