

Zahid: My appointment is a calling from God

PUTRAJAYA: Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said his appointment as Deputy Prime Minister was not a reward but rather a calling from God.

“This is a calling that I could not avoid. Najib and I go way back. I was his political secretary when he was youth and sports minister,” he told the press here yesterday.

Dr Ahmad Zahid had first walked into a packed press conference room at the Prime Minister’s Office yesterday alongside Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak before the high-

ly-anticipated press conference, a move taken by many there as confirmation of intense speculation that he would replace Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

A cheerful-looking Zahid was then mobbed by reporters and supporters after Najib announced his new Cabinet line-up.

But Dr Ahmad Zahid stressed that he never expected anything in return from Najib, having worked for him in the past.

“I never expected anything in return, but Allah has determined

that this is my destiny,” he said, adding that it was a responsibility that he must shoulder “for Malays and Malaysians”.

Dr Ahmad Zahid, who retains his portfolio as Home Minister, believed Najib’s decision to drop Muhyiddin was not an easy one.

“I urge my Cabinet colleagues, Umno supreme council members, division and wing leaders, as well as the Barisan Nasional leadership to give strong support to Najib,” he said, without taking questions from the press.

Dr Ahmad Zahid started his political career in October 1987 as political secretary to Najib, then Culture, Youth and Sports Minister and Defence Minister.

He contested the 1995 general election in his birthplace of Bagan Datoh and won the parliamentary seat, which he has retained since.

He was elected to the Umno supreme council in 2004 and became one of three vice-presidents in 2009.

Dr Ahmad Zahid, who holds a PhD in communications from

Universiti Putra Malaysia, served in the Tourism Ministry and Information Ministry as deputy minister between 2004 and 2008.

He later became a Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department for a year before becoming Defence Minister, a position he held until 2013 when he was named Home Minister.

In September 1998, he was detained for 10 days under the Internal Security Act (ISA) following the sacking of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as deputy prime minister.