

CNS9762

U GE 15-03 00165 EA860

aae

BAR COUNCIL INFLUENCED BY OPPOSITION POLITICS, SAYS DR M
Mahathir-bar

bm

KUALA LUMPUR, March 15 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said the Bar Council has been influenced by the political thinking of the opposition.

As such its upholding of a vote of no confidence in the Lord President Tun Hamid Omar was unbecoming of lawyers, he said.

Its action was born out of frustration for not being able to gain power to rule the country through the democratic process, he said.

+We know the Bar Council is influenced by political thinking, especially that of the opposition. It is very much involved with the opposition,+ he told reporters after launching World Consumers' Day at the Putra World Trade Centre here.

He said the government would not be influenced by a group which could not decide fairly and had instead abused whatever little power it had. --
more

▼15/03/13-34MST

Attention editors: correction

Here repetition correcting third para. Please read ... the Malaysian Bar reaffirmed.... and not as sent.

Mahathir-bar 2 Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir said, however, the government could not act against the Bar Council.

It was up to the people to judge whether the Bar Council was actually behaving like one or as a political party, the Prime Minister said.

At its annual general meeting yesterday, the Malaysian Bar reaffirmed its 1988 no confidence resolution against Hamid and rejected a motion to recognise and acknowledge the Lord President.

This caused council president Manjeet Singh Dhillon to resign saying he disagreed with the move.

The Prime Minister said the Bar Council's refusal to recognise the Lord President would have no effect on the country's judicial system.

On the other hand, if the Bar Council truly believed in the independence of the judiciary, it should not have meddled in judicial affairs, he said.

-- more

▼15/03/16-21MST

CNS9792
U GE 15-03 00195 EA866
aae

Mahathir-bar 3 Kuala Lumpur

+The judicial system should be independent of all parties and not the government alone. It can't be regarded as independent if it is dictated by the Bar Council,+ said Dr Mahathir.

He said the Bar Council was bent on interfering with the judicial system to the extent of demanding that the selection of judges be referred to it first.

This proved that it had no principles and was practising double standards, he said.

While asking the government not to suppress the judicial system, the Bar Council had not only interfered but also breached the constitution by way of the no confidence motion against Hamid for contempt of court based on rules which the council itself set, he said.

+While scorning the government for following the law in acting against Tun Salleh Abas, they do not hesitate to take action against Tun Hamid,+ he said.

Dr Mahathir said it was the Bar Council which had committed contempt of court by refusing to accept the court ruling that the Lord President had not committed contempt of court. -- more

▼15/03/15-14MST

CNS9799
UGE 15-03 00223 EA869
aae

Mahathir-bar 4 (last) Kuala Lumpur

On whether the Attorney-General's Chambers would be asked to study the matter, he said it would be difficult for the government to act against the Bar Council because what it considered as contempt of court was regarded otherwise by the council.

Dr Mahathir said it seemed that now the Bar Council wanted to be its own judge as despite the court having made its ruling, it still refused to accept that decision.

+Will the Bar Council only respect the judicial system when the judges are those who side with them?+ Dr Mahathir asked.

On the possible introduction of a new method to pick the leadership of the Bar Council, he said the government was not interested in controlling the council.

Being learned people, the lawyers should be able to decide whether their action all this while was based on justice and the law, he said.

He dismissed the possibility of the government introducing a code of ethics for lawyers as he said they had even ignored their own code.

On Manjeet Singh's resignation as Bar Council president, Dr Mahathir said Manjeet's action was a brave one as he (Manjeet) was bound to be severely criticised and accused of changing his stand. -- Bernama

▼15/03/15-58MST