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NORMAL FOR AG TO HEAD BAR COUNCIL, SAYS PM

Mahathir - council

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KAJANG, Jan 1 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir & -
Mohamad said today it was not unusual for an attorney-general to head the
bar council, not only in Malaysia but in any other country.

+There are countries where the bar council is headed by a Cabinet
minister and in many countries the attorney-general is chairman of the
council,+ he said.

+Even in this country, the attorney-general had headed the bar
council,+ he told reporters after attending the +Family Day+ gathering at
the Country Heights housing estate here.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on Justice Minister Syed
Hamid Albar's statement yesterday that the government might amend the Legal
Profession Act 19'16 again to provide for the attorney-general to be
appointed chairman of the bar council.

Syed Hamid had said there had been requests for more provisions under
the Act to make the bar council more professional. -- more

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Mahathir - council 2 (last) Kajang

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the bar council almost resembled a
political party and did not pay much heed to what lawyers did.

+The people are dissatisfied because when there is a case of cheating
by lawyers, the bar council does not act fast because it is more interested
in politics,+ he said.

The Prime Minister said that as a result the credibility of the bar
council had plunged while there was a need to safeguard the interests of
the public.

According to Syed Hamid yesterday, after amendments had been made to
the Act in Parliament recently, many people had proposed that more changes
be made. The last session of Parliament approved the Legal Profession
(Amendment) Act.

Syed Hamid had also said that an attorney-general had been appointed
chairman of the bar council under the Advocates and Solicitors Ordinance
1947 which preceded the Legal Profession Act 1976. -- Bernama

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