

# A-G may head Bar Council

NST 02 JAN 1992

KAJANG, Wed. — Prime Minister Datuk ~~Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad~~ today said making the Attorney-General the head of the Bar Council may be necessary to overcome the actions of a few individuals which have politicised the council.

He said it was not unusual for an Attorney-General to head the Bar Council.

"There are countries, including England, where the Bar Council is headed by a Cabinet Minister and in many other countries, the Attorney-General is chairman of the Council," he said.

"Even in this country, the Attorney-General had headed the Bar Council (before)," he told reporters after attending a Family Day gathering at the Country Heights housing estate here.

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 of this, the credibility of the Bar Council had plunged. There was also a need to safeguard the interests of the public.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on Justice Minister

Syed Hamid Albar's statement yesterday that the Government might amend the Legal Profession Act 1976 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.

The Dewan Negara had yesterday passed the Legal Profession (Amendment) Bill 1991 but it did not contain any proposal for the Attorney-General to be president of the Bar Council.

During debate on the Bill, several Senators had called for the appointment of the Attorney-General as the president of the Bar Council.

In reply, Syed Hamid said the Act had to be amended again to make such a provision as it now only provided for the post to be filled by a member of the Malaysian Bar.

According to Syed Hamid yesterday, after the Bill had been passed, many people had suggested the appointment of the Attorney-General as Bar Council chief.

Syed Hamid had also said that an Attorney-General had been appointed head of the Bar Council under the Advocates and Solicitors Ordinance 1947 which preceded the Legal Profession Act 1976.

## Bar Council