

Dr M: Bad idea for Bar Council to be involved

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LANGKAWI: Judges will be indebted to the Bar Council if lawyers are involved in the appointment, transfer and promotion of judges via a proposed commission, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

The Prime Minister said the Bench would not be independent, adding: "Lawyers will become more powerful in the appointment of judges, and if judges are afraid of lawyers because they can determine whether judges are promoted or who can become judges, their judgments will no longer be correct."

Dr Mahathir was commenting on a proposed resolution by the council which call for the setting up of an independent

Judicial Services Commission to deal with the future appointment, transfer and promotion of judges.

Dr Mahathir said lawyers were involved in all trials in courts while the Government was not.

"We appoint judges and the judges then can go on with their work. We are not going to meet the judges every day for their trials in court but the lawyers are in court every day. So, if the judges feel that if they do not serve lawyers, then they may not be able to get promotions and the like.

"So, their judgment is no longer independent," he said after lunch at Awana Porto Malai here.

Minister in Prime Minister's

Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim said the council was being disrespectful of the King in contesting the choice of judges chosen for elevation to the appellate courts in the recent promotion exercise.

"For them to now appear before these very judges and utter honorifics like "My Lord" or *Yang Amat Arif* would then be very hypocritical," he said after the handing-over ceremony of the Judiciary Complex by Putrajaya Holdings to the Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Sam-suddin Osman in Putrajaya yesterday.

Dr Rais also challenged the council to prove that the judges chosen for promotion were without capabilities.