

**Utusan says loan sharks more trustworthy than Bar Council**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
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**By Shannon Teoh**

KUALA LUMPUR, March 11 — Umno's Utusan Malaysia accused the Bar Council today of being a "wing of the opposition," saying the lawyers have repeatedly backed Pakatan Rakyat (PR) and lost its credibility.

The newspaper questioned today why the council did not defend Umno's Sabak Bernam MP Datuk Abdul Rahman Bakri who was sentenced to six years in jail for graft recently but backed DAP when its former aide Teoh Beng Hock fell to his death while being investigated by graftbusters.

"It has lost its credibility. Given a choice between putting my trust in the Bar Council or a bunch of loan sharks, I will not hesitate to pick the latter," wrote Awang Selamat, a pseudonym for the newspaper's editors, in its weekend edition Minggu Malaysia.

The umbrella body for lawyers in the peninsular had also raised in its annual general assembly yesterday the allegations of "conflict of interest" in a RM2.2 billion highway contract awarded to firms linked to a former chief justice and an Umno lawyer. Council president Lim Chee Wee said it would discuss the issue of the 50km-long Kinrara-Damansara Expressway's (Kidex) award to companies owned by Umno lawyer Datuk Hafarizam Harun and the wife of former Chief Justice Tun Zaki Azmi.

Opposition lawmakers have said the lucrative RM2.2 billion contract is a reward for their help in ensuring Barisan Nasional (BN) were successful in taking over the Perak state government in February 2009.

The Malay daily also pointed today out how the Bar Council has not defended former MCA president and transport minister Tun Dr Ling Liong Sik in his ongoing trial for cheating the government in the RM12.5 billion Port Klang Free Zone scandal.

"Maybe because Ling Sik is an MCA leader, not DAP," it wrote.

It also criticised the council for asking the Attorney General not to appeal against Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's acquittal in January for a sodomy charge.

"The Bar Council itself is denying the rights of ordinary citizens. No other body of lawyers in the world behaves like that," Awang wrote, referring to the opposition leader's accuser Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan.