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PM reminisces how he thought his salaries were never enough

DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad recounted the days when he thought that his monthly salary was not enough and that others could have felt the same way as he did.

The Prime Minister was recalling loud his early working days to students who gathered to meet him at the University of Warwick yesterday.

Some 500 Malaysian students from the university and others nearby had a one-hour meeting with the Prime Minister.

Dr Mahathir had earlier visited the university's engineering department, particularly the research undertaken by the Warwick Manufacturing Group.

The WMG was founded in 1990 and is a partnership between the university and the industrial sector, emphasising on joint research between the academia and manufacturers.

Dr Mahathir's talk to the students was very well-received and the students had mobbed him to shake hands and to have photographs taken with him.

He made the reference to his salary when he advised them that they should work hard so that they can earn a decent living and serve the nation.

"I started working as a clerk and was paid RM80," he said. "Of course I thought that it was not enough. I then decided to further my studies and took up medicine."

"After I graduated, I served as a houseman and was paid RM400, which I thought was not enough as well. Soon after I was made medical officer and earned RM700. Still not enough, I said to myself.

"When my salary rose to RM730, I still felt that this was not enough. I decided to become a private practitioner and was earning between RM2,000 and RM3,000.

"Again, I felt that this was not enough," he said. "Now that I'm Prime Minister, I can't say that my salary is enough but then, you know, money is not everything.

"I find satisfaction in other ways, especially when I weigh this against the achievements our country has gained. There's a great deal of satisfaction from these achievements."

Dr Mahathir said one of the greatest achievements of the country was its ability to manage and grow, much to the surprise of the prophets of doom in the colonial days.

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