

Decent pay

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Minimum wage of RM1,200 in near future, says PM

By WAN HAMIDIHAMID

PETALING JAYA: Malaysians will be able to draw a minimum wage of RM1,200 a month in the near future if the people are united with the Government in reviving the economy, said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The projection, conveyed by the Prime Minister to MTUC leaders during a meeting at his office on Friday, was described as "very satisfactory" by the union leaders.

Dr Mahathir said the Government would work towards achieving the minimum wage despite the current setback.

He said there was already a plan to increase salaries but without resorting to industrial action such as strikes.

MTUC secretary-general G. Rajasekaran said the congress was happy with the Prime Minister's stand, which was in line with its

call for wages that commensurate with the workers' contribution to the country.

"The Prime Minister told us it was important for workers to be paid decent wages so that they have strong purchasing power. It will ensure that the growth cycle is enhanced, so everybody will benefit," he said.

At the 52nd MIC general assembly in Subang Jaya yesterday, Dr Mahathir said the Government had a vision of Malaysians being united and prosperous, with workers being paid fair and decent wages based on their contribution to the country.

"We believe that a worker should earn at least RM1,200. It is in our plan for Vision 2020, which we are sure we can achieve before then.

"It is important for workers to be compensated fairly because they have to spend (on family and other commitments). When work-

ers spend, others will benefit.

"I hope employers are not scared when they hear this. We are not implementing this now but we are moving in that direction."

Dr Mahathir said that to increase wages, the Government wanted to enhance productivity through training.

The Prime Minister said the country was lucky to have such a disciplined workforce.

He said that during this economic downturn, unions and workers did not take advantage of the situation by resorting to industrial action.

"I met MTUC leaders to thank them for their efforts. I told them that we want to create as many jobs as possible so that employers are willing to pay more because they need workers.

"In such a situation, surely employers will offer higher salaries," he said.