

Big money lured Dr M into politics

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During his more than two decades in power, Dr Mahathir Mohamad has been accused of numerous things, ranging from being a despot to a corrupt politician.

His supporters, on the other hand, herald him as a great leader who was responsible for developing the nation and putting Malaysia on the world map.

The undeniable fact is that Mahathir is a master in statecraft.

However, the 89-year-old doctor-turned-politician now believes that he should have continued in the medical profession but admitted that it was better wages which drew him to politics.

During his speech at Perdana University today, Mahathir reminisced, albeit with a swipe at students who now participated in street rallies, about his time as a medical student.

"In those days, we did not complain, we did not demonstrate, we did not have to change the government," he said.

As for his experience as a medical practitioner, Mahathir said he did not earn much.

"When I was a private (medical) practitioner, I charged RM3 per person, with injection it is RM5, house visits; RM6.

"I wasn't very rich at that time, but I managed somehow, which is why I focused more on politics," he said, drawing laughter from the audience.

Admitting that the pay of a prime minister was "fantastic" compared to that of a medical practitioner, Mahathir (right), however, confessed that he should have continued as a doctor.

"I didn't need much for me to have a roof over my head. I thought the government was being very generous to pay an ex-doctor that amount of money (for something he was not trained for).

"I should have continued to be a doctor as that was what I was trained for, but there were other attractions," he quipped.

On the same note, Mahathir said he was glad he was no longer in the medical field because he is certain that he would not be able to perform surgeries.

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