

CNS6443

U G E 10-08 00187 EF556

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Mahathir - doctors

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BANGI, Aug 10 (Rernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the government will not match the salaries of government doctors with that of private doctors as this was not the method of stopping them from joining the private sector.

If the government were to increase the salaries of government doctors the private sector would offer even higher salaries and there would be no end to this problem, he said.

The country's progress, expanding economy and people who are willing to pay high fees for the services of private doctors have caused a shortage of doctors in government hospitals, the Prime Minister said.

The Government did not have the allocation to pay higher salaries to doctors, he told reporters after accompanying Datuk Seri Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah to the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) where she received an honorary doctorate in medicine.

If the government were to pay higher salaries to its doctors other sectors of the public service would also ask for higher salaries, he said.

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♥10/08/16-17MST

CNS6444

U G E 10-08 00180 EF557

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Mahathir - doctors 2 Bangi

To overcome the shortage, the government would strive to increase the number of such professionals but many Malaysians were not interested in reading medicine because of the long duration of the course, he said.

They go for courses in which they can get degrees easily and this will continue to cause a shortage of doctors.

Malaysian students should be prepared to make sacrifices and enter fields of study where there was a shortage of professionals, he said.

The government would recruit foreign doctors as one of the ways of easing the shortage of doctors in the country, he added.

On allowing government doctors to serve in private hospitals and clinics, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the government was for this which was long practised in other countries.

Nevertheless the proposal was still being studied, he added.

On the proposal to have more medical faculties, he said the government was considering this to provide more opportunities to those wishing to read medicine. -- Rernama

♥10/08/16-27MST

CNS6457

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Mahathir - doctors 3 Bangi (reopens)

The Prime Minister also said the government would not set up a special services commission to safeguard the interests and needs of local universities.

Even if the special commission were to be set 'so as to' separate university staff from the Public Services Commission, allocation for such a commission would still have to come from the government, he said.

The Prime Minister said this when asked to comment on the proposal by Universiti Malaya Vice-Chancellor Prof Taib Osman that such a commission be set up in the interests of local universities and to prevent academic staff from leaving to join the private sector.

Even if the commission were to be set up, the government was unwilling to increase the salaries of doctors as other sectors of the civil service would also demand higher salaries, he said. -- Bernama

♥10/08/17-03MST