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Attention editors: repetition removing embargo '''

HEALTH SERVICES SHOULD PROMOTE PREVENTION SAYS MAHATHIR

Mahathir-health

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 6 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister ^{9/} ~~Datuk~~ ⁰ Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight called for flexible planning of national health services to accommodate changing situation and problems.

Health services formed an important aspect of the nation's social development plans and as such the people should have access to the latest modern health care facilities to enjoy a better standard of living, he said.

The Prime Minister was speaking at the dinner of the 7th Asean Congress of Anaesthesiologists here.

He said: + To provide effective patient care programmes we must be innovative and look for new ways to improve medical and health services in our respective countries, +

Earlier in the day, his wife Datuk Seri Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali delivered a key-note address at the five-day congress which is attended by some 350 delegates from 24 countries.-- more

♥06/11/20-37MST

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The Prime Minister said Malaysia had made substantial improvements in the provision of medical and health care facilities since independence.

Infant mortality rate declined from 75.5 per 1,000 live births in 1957 to 13.2 in 1989 while maternal mortality rate, from 2.8 per 1,000 live births to 0.2.

Life expectancy increased from 55.8 to 69 years for male and 58.2 to 73.5 years for female during the same period.

The Health Ministry had actively decentralised specialist services to meet the people's need for greater accessibility to and coverage of medical care and services, he said.

Surgical, medical and obstetric and gynaecological services were now provided in district hospitals, added the Prime Minister.-- more

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The ministry planned to provide sub-speciality services in general hospitals while developing the Kuala Lumpur General Hospital as the National Referral Hospital, he said.

Post-graduate training for doctors was now done locally besides sending them abroad so that the expansion programme, including the setting up of private hospitals, was not hampered by the lack of anaesthesiologists, he said.

Malaysia had kept itself in the mainstream of advances in medical technology by acquiring new equipment and techniques for its hospitals, he said.

He said as the country moved to a developed status by the year 2020, the government needed to continually address changing disease patterns and re-examine the role of its medical and health services.

+Since curative medicine is becoming increasingly expensive, the government has been promoting the concept of primary prevention of diseases by focussing on healthy life styles and habits.

+By encouraging people to practise healthy life styles, the government hopes that our people will be free from diseases, such as AIDS, cancer and chronic diseases,+ he said. -- Bernama

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