

PM: DOCS SHOULD STAY FEES

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ALOR STAR: The Government prefers no increase in private medical fees and that of other services, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

The Prime Minister said ideally, the price of goods and services should be kept low.

"The Government prefers no price increases ... rates should be maintained," he told newsmen on arrival at the Sultan Abdul Halim airport here.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on the new fees schedule proposed by the Malaysian Medical

Association (MMA).

Under the schedule, minor consultation per visit is RM15, RM25 (intermediate), RM35 (major) and RM50 to RM100 (complex).

The Health Ministry's private-public sector consultative panel will set the terms to decide the various consultations given by private doctors.

Health Minister Datuk Lee Kim Sai had described the proposed new schedule as high.

Dr Mahathir said he was informed that the fees schedule only referred to the maximum payment and that patients would not be charged as much.

However, he said the MMA

should be asked to explain the reasons behind the proposed high charges.

"Usually, the fees charged by private doctors are not determined by the MMA. The doctors do it individually," he added.

Dr Mahathir, who was greeted by the Mentris Besar of Kedah and Perlis Tan Sri Haji Osman Aroff and Dr Abdul Hamid Pawanteh respectively, was also asked about the issue of the Kelantan throne.

He said it was up to the authorities concerned to verify the questioning of the Sultan of Kelantan's legitimacy by Arau MP Shahidan Kassim in Parliament.