

Stay on longer, Dr M tells docs

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ALOR STAR: Government doctors and nurses should remain in service longer to help ease the shortage of medical personnel, the Prime Minister said yesterday.

Opening the RM12 million Jitra district hospital, ~~Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad~~ said the profession was "noble" and material gain should not be the only consideration.

The Government would have to woo more foreign doctors and specialists to serve hospitals if local ones kept opting for private practice to earn more, he said.

"We want to avoid this as there are bound to be communication problems

between patients and the foreign doctors," he said.

The 89-bed hospital, located in Dr Mahathir's Kubang Pasu parliamentary constituency, started outpatient services on Oct 1 and inpatient services on Feb 14.

Dr Mahathir said the Government had striven to provide better health care for the people, with rural folk now having full confidence in modern medicine.

"Through better health care, certain diseases once prominent in the villages are now extinct. We have also managed to promote good health with better hygiene," he added.

Dr Mahathir called on doctors and nurses to do their best to be kind and courteous to patients even in "hard pressed times."

He said later that state leaders should not overreact and instead accept criticisms levelled at them by federal leaders.

He said in "one big family," it was at times necessary to correct one another.

As Prime Minister he said it was his duty to criticise, adding that the press had the freedom to do so, too.

"Let us not be too sensitive . . . in Malaysia, we can't afford that," he said.

Dr Mahathir was asked

his opinion on the criticisms levelled at the Kedah and Perak governments by International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik recently.

The ministers came under fire from both state administrations, with the mentris besar of Kedah Tan Sri Haji Osman Aroff and Perak Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib rebutting their statements.

Dr Mahathir said he had also expressed dissatisfaction with the action of some state leaders who obstructed and hindered investors.