

# Infant mortality rate expected to drop further

8

PORT DICKSON: The Health Ministry hopes to match developed countries in reducing the infant mortality rate with its network of healthcare facilities and services available in the country.

Its minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng said the mortality rate has decreased from 40.8 per 1,000 live births in 1970 to 9.1 in 1996, almost at par with developed countries such as the United States and Britain.

"The ministry plans to achieve the target soon," he told reporters after opening the 20th

Annual Congress of the Malaysian Paediatric Association at a leading hotel here yesterday.

Chua said the mortality rate in the United States was currently at seven per 1,000 live

births while it stood at six in Britain.

He also said the neonatal mortality rate had gone down from 22.9 per 1,000 to six over the past two years.

Chua also launched the Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah's Research Award aimed at promoting research among paediatricians.

The first recipient of the award was Dr Hasniah Abd Latif, a medical officer from the UKM hospital.

National AIDS council president Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir presented the award to Dr Hasniah.