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Mahathir - Hospital

TIME FOR UKM HOSPITAL TO PROVE METTLE, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, July 14 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said it is time that the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia teaching hospital (HUKM) to prove its mettle in international medicine while providing quality service at reasonable costs.

In the globalisation era, he said, there was no reason why the hospital could not be a world pioneer in developing new technologies and unravelling mysterious diseases through rudimentary, clinical and epidemiological research.

"It is our hope that patients from all over the world will come to HUKM for specific treatment which is HUKM's speciality," he said when opening the RM400-million hospital.

The hospital, which became operational last July 1, is the country's third teaching hospital after University Malaya's university hospital here and Universiti Sains Malaysia's Kubang Kerian Hospital.

HUKM is run by medical specialists who are also its professors and lecturers.

Dr Mahathir expressed optimism that HUKM could compete in terms of the types of services and options offered based on the premise of quality, valued-added and hassle-free services which the common people could afford.

Dr Mahathir said the government's decision to approve the construction of the HUKM was proper given that facilities for teaching and research at the Kuala Lumpur Hospital (HKL) was unsatisfactory as it mainly concentrated on servicing and treating patients.

"Besides, the government wanted to see the growth of excellent medical and health care centres in an academic and smart environment," he said.

Previously, for the past 26 years UKM had shared facilities with the Kuala Lumpur Hospital to produce medical practitioners and specialists, he said.

Dr Mahathir later toured several service centres of the hospital which was built on a 23-hectare area alienated by the Health Ministry.

At the surgery department, the prime minister witnessed a laparoscopy performed by Prof Madya Dr Jasmi Ali involving a small incision in the size of 2mm to 10mm in the abdominal area to enable a special telescope be inserted by the surgeon to detect a patient's problems.

Earlier in his speech, UKM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Anuwar Ali said the university's medical, dentistry and associated health science faculties, now occupying its Jalan Raja Muda campus, would be relocated to the hospital's health and medical academic centre.

The university's medical faculty has so far produced 2,500 doctors and 703 specialists, he said.

At a press conference later, Dr Mahathir said government hospitals should use locally-produced medicines and not branded drugs.

He said the country was now producing most of the medicines for domestic use while the government has been encouraging the local private sector to be involved in the manufacture of medicinal drugs.

-- BERNAMA

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