

# More doctors to serve the people

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## Shortage of doctors in govt service a major concern

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By **Sharon Tan**  
and **Martin Cavalho**

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**MALACCA, Tues:** The government intends to produce more doctors to a point where the remuneration in the private sector will no longer be attractive, forcing them to opt for service with rural government hospitals.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said besides losing doctors to private practice because of higher wages, the government is concerned with the overall shortage of doctors in the country, particularly those attached with the government.

"It is the government's intention to flood the market with doctors. We will do it up to a point where they have no choice but to accept work in rural areas," he said when opening the Melaka-Manipal Medical College here today.

Mahathir said the government can build hospitals and equip them but it is difficult to get the doctors to run them.

"If we want to manage these hospitals, then we must have more doctors. Only if there is surplus can the government manage its hospitals. And we will produce more doctors until the private practice is no longer lucrative," he added.

"I hope the industry will understand that service for the government is more important, as it is an obligation to repay the people for what they have given." To address this, Mahathir said the government welcomes the setting up of private medical colleges or twinning medical programmes as the move will also help the government achieve the ratio of one doctor to 800 patients similar to that of a developed country.

Increasing the intake of medical students at local universities will also be considered an option.