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10,000 dentists to gather for congress

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - More than 10,000 dentists and members of the dental profession will gather at the Putra Stadium in Bukit Jalil for the 89th FDI World Dental Congress 2001 on Thursday.

To be opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, it will showcase the country's dental technology and services.

Jointly organised by FDI World Federation and the Malaysian Dental Association, it is expected to put Malaysia on the world dental calendar.

Local organising committee chairman Datuk Dr A. Ratnanesan said Malaysia would also derive economic benefits from the conference from hotel bookings and tourism revenue.

"It took us eight years of lobbying and campaigning to host the congress. We won the confidence of the FDI in 1996 to host it this year," he told the New Straits Times today.

He said this showed the FDI's confidence in Malaysia's political stability, leadership and infrastructure as host for the mammoth event.

Dr Ratnanesan will also be the first person from a developing country to take over the presidency of the FDI World Dental Federation.

He said the post would come with high expectations and heavy demands, and though he has a slight tinge of apprehension, he feels that he is well-equipped to handle the job.

He said he was looking forward to the congress, themed "Dentistry in the New Millennium - A High Tech Revolution".

Dr Ratnanesan said participants would also discuss the misgivings on the use of amalgam fillings.

"We will have a French scientific commission and project leaders to talk about the latest findings and medical literature on amalgam and its safety. We will probably issue public health statements with regards to this," he said.

Dr Ratnanesan, who is the Malaysian Dental Association president, has, on several occasions, said that amalgam restorations were effective and safe.

He argued that the alleged ill-effects of amalgam restorations were incorrect.

The congress will also see top experts in various specialities talk about the latest advancements in dentistry and 400 exhibitors will display their products and equipment at the exhibition.

The business meetings are scheduled from tomorrow to Thursday, while the scientific programme and World Dental Exhibition would be held from Sept 28 to Oct 1 at the Putra World Trade Centre.

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