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Mahathir-Herbal

MAHATHIR VISITS YANGON TRADITIONAL MEDICINE HOSPITAL

By: Rohana Mustaffa

YANGON, Aug 19 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad wrapped up his two-day working visit to Myanmar by visiting the Yangon Traditional Medicine Hospital this afternoon.

The 50-bed hospital, set up by the Ministry of Health Department of Traditional Medicine, specialises in, among others, traditional physiotherapy, traditional bone setting and neurological disease treatment, gynaecology and traditional wound healing method using herbal-based medicines.

He spent about 30 minutes touring the hospital and examining a variety of locally produced herbal medicines.

Yesterday, the prime minister, during his meeting with his counterpart, Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) Senior General Than Shwe, expressed interest in Myanmar's herbal industry.

The department's Director-General Dr Thein Swe, when briefing Dr Mahathir, said that the Myanmar government had encouraged the development of traditional and herbal medicines, and this year it set up a Traditional Medicine University which offers degree courses.

Research activities on diseases like diabetes, hypertension and cancer are being conducted at its clinical research centre.

There is a herbal garden at the hospital for teaching aid and pharmaceutical uses. In fact, the government has developed nine herbal gardens throughout the country for the production of raw materials and preservation of rare species of medicinal plants.

According to Dr Thein Swe, the majority of the 50 million people in Myanmar use herbal medicines.

There is a special drug division in the department responsible for the production of traditional medicine drugs that are mainly used in hospitals and clinics.

He said it was their vision to modernise and promote Myanmar's traditional medicines for use by the entire community.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir visited several places after opening the Myanmar-Malaysia Technology Conference and witnessing the signing of three MoUs and agreement between several Malaysian agencies and their Myanmar counterparts at the Sedona Hotel.

He had a meeting with members of the Malaysian Association of Myanmar (MAM) at Micasa Hotel before heading for the Myanmar Information and Communications Technology (MICT) Park.

The MICT is located in the University of Yangon and its latest information and communications technology project is the development of the e-passport similar to the one used by Malaysians. To date, MICT has produced 5,000 e-passports.

The prime minister then made a stop at the Basic Education Primary School in the Kamayut Township.

The school adopts the smart-school concept and the entire facilities in the school are developed by the Multimedia Development Corporation (MDC) of Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir left for home at about 5.20pm local time, accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali.

At the airport to bid him farewell were Than Shwe, Vice-Chairman of the SPDC General Maung Aye and Secretary 1 of SPDC Lt Gen Khin Nyunt.

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