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Mahathir-Hospital

BETTER REMUNERATIONS IN PRIVATE SECTOR SETBACK TO GOVT HOSPITALS

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 13 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the government can build ultra-modern, fully-equipped paperless hospitals but is not able to match remunerations paid by the private sector to employees.

The Prime Minister said that the government could buy all the sophisticated equipment and expensive drugs and medicines but the most challenging part was to have ancillary staff.

Saying that the people might see that the government was building "white elephants", he said that the government could never match the attractive remunerations offered in the private sector.

"That is the dilemma of the government. I see no end to the dilemma because the more doctors that we produce, the bigger is the demand for their services as the standard of living rises.

"The problem is aggravated by richer countries offering better compensation," he told 750 participants of the 11th annual meeting of the Asian Society for Cardiovascular Surgery (ASCVS) here.

The Prime Minister, however, was happy that on the whole the medical services in Malaysia had improved tremendously and in the field of cardiovascular surgery, the country can be quite independent and relatively less costly.

Dr Mahathir, a medical doctor by profession, said that the people was fortunate that there had been tremendous technological advances in the medical field but was lacking in human touch.

Being a heart patient himself, the Prime Minister said that the surgeon has to empathise with the patient.

"He must understand the worries of the patient and the family. He or she has to be there and figuratively to hold his hand as he goes through the operation and to be there, when he (patient) wakes up with an assurance that everything is going to be all right.

"The human touch on the part of the surgeon is all important," he said.

On the conference, the Prime Minister said that the participants should not emphasise on the techniques and developments of the medical science but to refocus on the broader concerns of health in the society as a whole.

He said that the health of humanity is not as it should be considering the advancement in the knowledge of the human body and the state of modern medical science and technology, and this is because for most people the cost is too high.

"We seem to prefer spending huge sums in developing new ways to kill people rather than saving them. We shall not wipe out Aids, tuberculosis, malaria or any other infectious diseases that plagued the developing world because too little money is being spent on research to cure or prevent these diseases," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that these diseases were common among the poor who would not be able to pay the cost of research through high prices but on the other hand vast amounts were dedicated to the problems of the rich who were keen on restoring their virility.

"The poor are resigned to eventually lose their drive and to fade away," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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