

# Serve locally, PM urges nurses

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has urged trained nurses to serve locally rather than go abroad.

"About 400 of our nurses leave the country every year to serve overseas.

"I hope the Malaysian Nurses Association (MNA) and the Health Ministry will work together to ensure that our country does not run dry of experienced and capable nurses," he said in his speech to a crowd of about 2,300 nurses at the launch of International Nurses Day yesterday

In his speech, read out by Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, the Prime Minister said professional nurses were fast becoming a commodity in the job market.

According to MNA, there are about 60,000 nurses nationwide.

Abdullah said the Government, in acknowledging nurses with leadership skills and experience, provided them opportunities to become hospital directors. Two nurses, Fatimah Supiah Otet and Ling Heng Choo, are

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DATUK SERI ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI

serving as hospital directors in Sarawak.

Abdullah said that the success of health tourism would hinge on the cooperation and support from the nursing fraternity.

At the event themed *Positive practice environments: Quality workplaces=quality patient care*, three nurses were presented with special awards – Mariam Madhar Ali for her contribution to the community, Lee Siew Hoon for her contribution in education and Zubaidah Mohd Said for her nursing services.

International Nurses Day is celebrated around the world every year on May 12.