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*Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad looking at the 'Heartware', a smaller and lighter artificial ventricular support device during the Association of the Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgeons of Asia 22nd Annual Congress in Kota Kinabalu yesterday. Pic by Edmund Samunting*

## 'Overseas doctors vie to study at IJN'

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**KOTA KINABALU:** Malaysia should take pride in having a facility like National Heart Institute (IJN), which is on a par with other developed countries in performing heart and lung surgeries.

Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who was previously treated at IJN, said the specialist hospital for heart patients also received recognition from foreign countries.

This was proven when more patients and students from outside Malaysia seek treatment and training at the institute.

"It took IJN 20 years to build a reputation by providing sophisticated equipment and training their specialists," he said after presenting a keynote address during the Association of the Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgeons of Asia (ATCSA) 22nd Annual Congress here yesterday.

"In the past, we had to send our medical students for training overseas, but now I was told doctors from other countries are lining up to study at IJN. This include those from Vietnam, Thailand, Japan, Brunei, Sudan and Indonesia."

IJN conducts an average of 4,000 heart and lung surgeries annually and has treated about 130,000 outpatients.

Dr Mahathir hoped that IJN would continue to improve and that the government would provide more allocation to the institute to update its facilities. The former prime minister was also proud to see the developments of heart-related facilities in this country.

"Sabah now has its own heart-related experts and facility, and almost all states except Perlis and Terengganu have their own heart surgery units."

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**Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad**