

Long-term cure

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Look for ways to overcome shortage of medical places, says PM

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TOKYO: The Higher Education Ministry must look for long-term solutions to overcome the shortage of places for those wanting to study medicine, said Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"The ministry must look at how they can hire doctors who are willing to serve as lecturers, including hiring them on a contract basis," the Prime Minister said, urging the ministry to also look at increasing the number of lecturers and facilities to open up more opportunities for those wanting to study medicine.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Dr Shafie Mohd Salleh had said on Wednesday that the 128 top scorers who were earlier denied places would be absorbed into public or private medical programmes.

The students had all attained the required cumulative grade point aver-

age of 4.0.

Dr Shafie had said that the increased enrolment into medical schools was made possible following a decision by the Malaysian Medical Council to recognise a doctor-to-student ratio of 1:6, compared to the current 1:4.

Abdullah said he was glad that a solution had been found to admit the top scorers.

"I hope the solution that we have found will be accepted by all parties. I hope parents and students will accept whichever institution the students are sent to.

"We cannot consider everyone's preferences because of various constraints," he told Malaysian reporters covering his two-day visit here yesterday.

In Kuala Lumpur, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and Education Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein said the deci-