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2008/12/22

Government hospitals with private wings offer top service

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Dr Kuljit Singh

KUALA LUMPUR: Government hospitals with private wings have succeeded in balancing the needs of the public and giving first-class service to those who can afford it, said the president of the Malaysian Society of Otorhinolaryngologists-Head & Neck Surgeons.

Dr Kuljit Singh said the system was mutually beneficial to patients and doctors.

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Practised by two teaching hospitals -- University Malaya Medical Centre (UMMC) and Hospital Universiti Kebang-saan Malaysia -- the system allows for specialists to see patients after working hours for a higher fee.

This allows the doctors to earn more money and gives patients the chance to be treated by the best medical brains.

Dr Kuljit, who was with UMMC from 1998 till last year, said when the system first took off, it used to be only after working hours, in the eve-nings. But it has now been extended to the late afternoons, too.

"It is sometimes easier to see a professor in the private wing because in the public wing you end up seeing a junior or an assistant.

"This is because in the public wing, professors, senior doctors, junior doctors and assistants to professors work together. So, if you go to the public wing, there is no guarantee that you will be assigned to a professor."

However, he said, there was no great disadvantage to those who went to the public wing as complicated cases were referred to professors anyway.

The slight disadvantage of the system is that it could lead to doctors being overstretched due to the longer hours they worked.

Asked if allowing doctors to provide extra services on their own time would avoid the brain drain to the private sector, he said it did not really make a big difference.

"Those who want the shorter hours, better perks and higher salaries of private practice will leave anyway, while those who have the passion for research and teaching will stay on."

On the proposal by Sime Darby to take over the National Heart Institute (IJN), Dr Kuljit said it would not be a big deal if it was just a change in ownership.

"But if it involves a change in the operating mechanism of the hospital and how it is run, then it is not good for the poor and the pensioners who depend on the IJN."



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Focus



YOUR HEALTH: Drops of Jupiter

HOMER called it "liquid gold". In ancient Greece, athletes ritually rubbed it all over their bodies. Its mystical glow illuminates history.

Drops of it seeped into the bones of dead saints and martyrs through holes in their tombs.

Learning Curve

ADAM'S BUDGET	
Month: JAN	Expense: RM
Salary	3,000
Life Insurance premium	200
Auto	1,000
Auto	1,000
Auto	1,000
Payment of PPF loan	300
Car maintenance/repair	300
Gift to parents' Birth	1,000
Food	400
Hotel	400
Car maintenance/repair	300
Insurance	300
Outgoing Entertainment	300
Supplements	300
Total Income	6,000
Total Expenses	5,000
Balance at month end	1,000

YOUR MONEY: Owing your dream house

AFTER their honeymoon in Bali, Adam and Aida were back home. They had such a good time there but now it's time for them to live as husband and wife and it will take some adjustments.

Sunday Interview

Catching up with



No price too high for a satisfied palate

The gloom and doom of a possible economic meltdown will not stop Chinese Malaysian in the city from dining out for what is arguably the most important dinner of the year, writes CHAI MEI LING

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▶ TECH

Thingamajiggy: Enjoy the wash



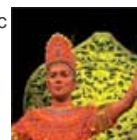
▶ MUSIC/GAMES

Play: Sora's back



▶ MOVIES/THEATRE

Makyung Magic



▶ ART/BOOKS

Hotel keys in to Unlock Art



▶ FASHION

Strong colours for strong women



▶ HEALTH

Two-pronged route to better health



▶ DECO

Comfort in your living room



▶ TRAVEL

Where the action never stops



▶ FOOD

Crispy bites



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