

Dr Hilmi: Govt expects RM1.3b from medical tourists

MHTC also aims to launch narrowed and precise marketing campaigns to further penetrate target markets

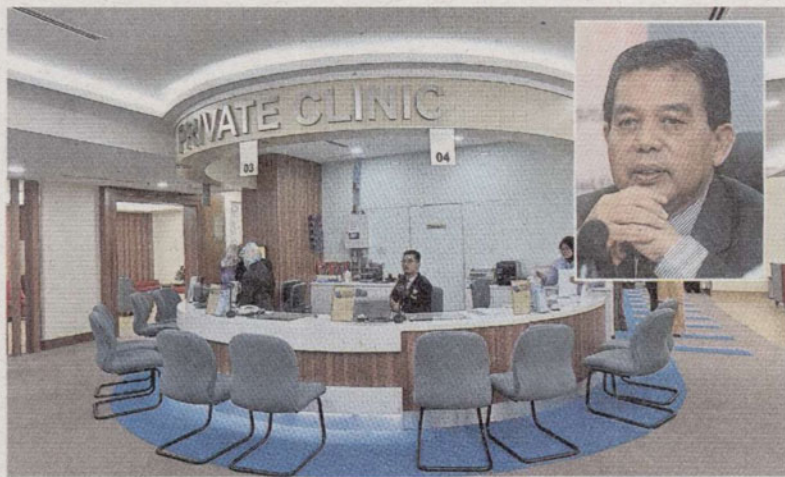
by P PREM KUMAR

MALAYSIA is expected to rake in RM1.3 billion from the medical tourism sector this year, according to Deputy Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Hilmi Yahaya.

The expected revenue this year would be about 13% higher than the RM1.12 billion derived from 921,500 medical tourists last year.

Dr Hilmi said inbound medical tourists between 2011 and 2016 had been expanding 8% on average, while income grew 16.5% on average.

"The government expects receipts from medical tourists to reach RM2.8 billion by 2020," Dr Hilmi told Dewan Rakyat yesterday in a response to Lenggong MP Datuk Dr



The private clinic at National Heart Institute who is one of MHTC's Elite Partners. Dr Hilmi (inset) says the MHTC continues to promote the country as a preferred medical tourism destination globally

Shamsul Anuar Nasarah.

In his query, Shamsul asked the government to clarify on the result of public-private sectors collaboration in promoting medical tourism in the country.

Dr Hilmi said the Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council

(MHTC) continues to promote the country as a preferred medical tourism destination globally.

Among the long-term initiatives identified are greater branding of the country's medical tourism through campaigns, expanding mar-

keting activities beyond traditional markets such as Indonesia and strengthening Malaysia's position as a destination for specialised medical treatments.

MHTC also aims to launch narrowed and precise marketing campaigns to further

penetrate target markets.

"MHTC has identified five countries as the primary focus for the industry — China, Myanmar, Indonesia, Vietnam and India," he added.

Dr Hilmi stressed that the ministry will continue its efforts to improve medical facilities for tourists due to the sector's importance to the economy.

He added that the medical tourism sector's contribution to the economy, after taking into account its multiplier effects, could reach up to RM5 billion this year.

"Tourism sector gives great impact to the country's economy, especially after taking into account the multiplier effects that a medical tourist brings.

"Currently, data is only compiled based on medical costs paid by medical tourists in private healthcare institutions, which do not include primary care, wellness centres, as well as cost of tourism, flight, accommodation and leisure," he said.

Pic by Ismail Che Rus/Muhd Amin Nazhanul