Group opens its 11th hospital

Health Ministry hopes facility will boost country’s medical tourism industry

COLUMBIA Asia Group of Companies sets its footprint in Petaling Jaya with the opening of the 11th Columbia Asia Hospital in Malaysia, which is also the group’s 28th in Asia.

The hospital in Section 13 was launched by Deputy Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Hilmi Yahaya.

The newest multi-speciality hospital has 85 beds and is equipped with the Care 21 computerised operating system used in all Columbia Asia hospitals.

“The hospital is also in the midst of installing a cardiac catheterisation laboratory for procedures to treat heart disease,” said Columbia Asia chief executive officer (Southeast Asia) Kelvin Tan.

There are 15 resident medical specialists including two orthopaedic surgeons.

“The hospital is capable of handling the majority of spinal problems from trauma to corrective surgeries,” Tan said.

Columbia Asia now owns and manages 11 hospitals across the country, three in Indonesia, three in Vietnam and 11 in India.

In his speech, Dr Hilmi said hospitals should specialise in specific fields to support the country’s medical tourism industry, in line with the Malaysian Healthcare Travel Council (MHTC).

“The National Heart Institute (IJN), for example, is well known for heart treatments. Columbia Asia Hospital can consider orthopaedics as the hospital already has the specialists,” he said.

He added that the hospital could even be a potential training centre to cope with the shortage of specialist doctors.

“Foreign patients from as far as Australia and South Korea fly to Malaysia to seek medical treatment, not because it is cheaper but for the expertise that we have.”

“Penang saw 60% foreign patients, which was the highest, followed by Kuala Lumpur, Malacca and Johor,” said Dr Hilmi.

He said the medical tourism industry generated RM730mil in revenue in 2014 and expected to achieve a 10% increase this year.

Currently MHTC has more than 60 hospital groups registered with it and will be collaborating with hospitals and other ministries to promote Malaysian healthcare facilities and services overseas.

Vision for tech: Dr Hilmi (third from left) looking at a slit lamp used for eye examinations during a tour of the newly launched Columbia Asia Hospital Petaling Jaya. With him are Columbia Asia Group of Companies group medical director and medical advisory board chairman Dr Abdul Rahman Mohamad (left) and chief executive officer (Southeast Asia) Kelvin Tan (second from left).