



The hotel industry should enjoy an extended boom with simpler procedures initiated by Pemudah.

Hotel industry gets an express ride

THINKING of setting up a hotel? Instead of sweating over the numerous permits and licences you had to apply for previously, you will need to apply for only one from the local authority.

Even more heartening is the fact that it now takes just one day to register your new business with the Companies Commission of Malaysia (CCM), instead of five days.

All this is thanks to the Special Task Force to Facilitate Business, known as Pemudah.

Malaysian Association of Hotels vice-president Ivo Nekvapil said the establishment of a one-stop centre where the setting up of a hotel requires just one licence instead of the usual 15 licences and permits, will enable the local hotel industry to become more competitive regionally.

Tourism is without question

one of the main contributors to the country's foreign earnings. It is therefore vital for the government to implement initiatives like these to encourage the growth of the hotel industry to address the needs of local and international tourists.

Other initiatives include combining the two licences needed to sell liquor at hotel premises into one, and the introduction of online applications.

The National Council for Local Government has also agreed to extend the validity of the Composite Licence for Hotel to three years from the previous one year, and incorporate Temporary Entertainment Permits into the Composite Licence.

The Composite Licence will be issued based on the hotel's star rating valuation by the Tourism Ministry.

Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers president Tan Sri Yong Poh Kon, who co-chairs Pemudah with Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Sidek Hassan, said the positive results from getting a business registered within a day would improve Malaysia's ranking on the "ease of doing business" in the coming years.

Malaysia is currently 24th on the World Bank's Doing Business ranking and hopes to break into the Top 10 by 2010.

Yong said Pemudah had set up five focus groups to meet this target.

Regardless of whether the goal is achieved, should Pemudah continue to simplify and speed up application procedures in a number of crucial areas, its efforts will go a long way in attracting greater foreign and local investment.

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Saw explains
how the stem
cell treatment
works.

- Chondrocytes (cartilage cells) surrounded by extracellular matrix
- Ineffective in responding to injury - unless subchondral bone is penetrated



Stem cells help treat joint injuries

by **Bernard Cheah**
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A COLLABORATIVE effort of the Kuala Lumpur Sports Medicine Centre (KLSMC) and StemLife has resulted in a new treatment that utilises stem cells for cartilage regeneration in joint injuries.

A brain child of KLSMC consultant orthopaedic surgeon Dr Saw Khaw Yong, the treatment was tested two years ago at the University Veterinary Hospital.

"We began animal trials and it produced good results. It was a success," Saw said in Petaling Jaya.

First of all, arthroscopic or keyhole surgery is carried out on the bone surface with defective cartilage. This provides a scaffold for cartilage regeneration.

Then, adult stem cells are harvested from the patient. After arthroscopic surgery, the stem cells, mixed with hyaluronic acid, are infused into the area of injury through several injections administered in a clinic. This is done once a week for five weeks.

This results in the articular

cartilage forming on the joint's damaged area, hence allowing the natural use of joints for a longer period without the need for prosthetic implants.

"This can be done not only for cartilage injuries, but also fractures with bone loss, tendon and ligament injuries, nerve injury and muscle tears," Saw said.

To date, 50 patients have undergone the procedure and are recovering.

"It was hard to walk up and down the stairs," said Fauziah Fadzil, the first to undergo the procedure in March last year.

The 44-year old kindergarten administrator suffered constant pain from a knee cartilage injury, but is now able to walk better.

National hockey player Zulkifli Rejab, who suffered articular joint injury to the knee, is undergoing the same procedure.

"Too early to tell, but I hope to recover soon," he said.

The total cost of the procedure for a knee injury together with stem cell extraction and processing is between RM32,000 and RM38,000.

For more information,
visit www.klsmc.com