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Sacking workers and failing to pay them their salaries
in lieu of notice is unbecoming of a global group from
the US, the country that just re-elected Obama. >S7

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SUNDAY
Star
The people's paper

>FASHION
**SPOILT FOR
APPAREL
CHOICES**
Shopping mall
showcases collections
from outlets in its
new wing. >S8 & S9



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Wrong call

The Health Ministry says the recent call for a ban on Ayamas products by the Sarawak Veterinary Authority did not adhere to the standard operating procedure, which cites that any decision on food safety issue should have been forwarded to the ministry before being made public.

> See Page S2 for report by YU JI



**I don't
want any
confusion.
There is one
decision
only. There should
be no overlap. There
is no ban on the sale
of Ayamas products.
There will be no ban
unless there is a
positive sample.**

— DATUK SERI LIOW TIONG LAI



**Prized
specimen**

Ligno Biotech Sdn Bhd's chief executive officer Ng Szu Ting showing the rare Tiger Milk mushroom during the Ninth World Congress of Chinese Medicine 2012 at Borneo Convention Centre Kuching. The fungus has been used in Chinese medicine for over 400 years to treat chronic respiratory and bronchial allergies, as well as painful joints and skin problems. **See stories on Page S3.** — ANDRE OLIVEIRO / The Star

Public-private partnership to improve facilities at Sarawak General Hospital

KUCHING: The Government has approved a project under public-private partnership (PPP) programme to improve facilities at Sarawak General Hospital (SGH). Health Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai said the programme would involve building, among other things,

multi-storey car parks, daycare centre, pathology laboratory, medical apartment, and a blood bank at a total cost exceeding RM300mil. "The most important is the multi-storey car parks due to the congestion in the hospital compound. The project tender will be called soon.

"As for the cost breakdown for each project, it has not been ascertained yet," he told reporters after a working visit to SGH yesterday. He said the programme was a priority under Budget 2013 which had allocated RM193mil for 35 approved healthcare development

projects in the state next year. "A lot of these projects including clinics under the Budget are already going on as they are under the rolling plan," he said. Under the Budget, the Government had approved an allocation of RM1.9bil for 257 projects nation-

wide. Besides these projects, Liow also revealed that a RM35mil clinical research centre and a RM3mil acute psychiatric ward at SGH would be ready by next year.

> TURN TO PAGE S3

Gaining wider recognition

30,000 practise Chinese traditional/complementary medicine in Europe, Australia and US

By YU JI

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KUCHING: Chinese traditional and complementary medicine, slowly but surely, is gaining acceptance in the Western world, said the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies.

"Chinese traditional medical knowledge is definitely becoming more popular in Western countries across Europe, Australia and also the US, where there are about 30,000 practitioners — 10,000 of them alone in the state of California," said federation vice-chairman Li Zhenji.

"Generally, the acceptance also depends on the local population. In the US, wherever there are more Chinese, where exposure to the Chinese people and culture is more, these are also places that acceptance of traditional medicine among non-Chinese is higher. Of course, Malaysia is another good example of where Chinese traditional and complementary medicine has gain a foothold."

He was speaking to reporters at the opening of the Ninth World Congress of Chinese Medicine at the Borneo Convention Centre Kuching yesterday.

Li said each of the congresses had grown larger in attendance, especially editions held in countries like Australia and the UK.

"Next year, this congress will be taking place in the US. We expect a lot of people to attend."

Traditional medicine, he added, was often more about disease prevention



Good response: Visitors browsing various traditional medicines displayed by exhibitors during the Ninth World Congress of Chinese Medicine 2012 in Kuching. — ANDRE OLIVEIRO / The Star

rather than disease treatment.

He said traditional forms of healthcare could save individuals from incurring larger medical costs by preventing diseases from becoming serious in the first place.

Federation chairman She Jing said Chinese traditional and complementary medicine could now be found in 160 countries worldwide, and that in countries like Malaysia, had gained official government recognition.

"I think governments are now

realising that, on healthcare in general, traditional knowledge has its role to play. Among traditional and complementary healthcare practitioners, there is also an increased emphasis on harmony between mental health, people's bodies and their surrounding environments. I think that is something quite appealing to a lot of people," she said.

In his opening speech, Health Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai said the development of the sector

would depend on "evidence-based practices".

He pointed out that the Government "strongly encouraged" local practitioners to embark on evidence-based studies.

"Currently, there are 11 government hospitals in Malaysia that provide traditional and complementary medicine services. The services include acupuncture and traditional Malay massage for the management of stroke patients and for pain relief,"

Liow said.

He added that herbal medicine had also been used by these centres as an adjunct treatment for cancer patients. "It is the ministry's sincere intention to not only facilitate the development of traditional and complementary medicine in Malaysia but also to ensure that these services are of high quality in terms of safety and efficacy."

The two-day conference ends today.