

HDB neighbours preview new hospital in Yishun

By JOAN CHEW

THE rooftop of the new Khoo Teck Puat Hospital (KTPH) in Yishun is looking more like that of a hotel than a hospital.

More than 100 fruit trees have been planted there, along with vegetables cultivated for consumption. Power-generating solar panels covering an area as big as an Olympic-sized swimming pool have also been installed.

Residents of housing estates in northern Singapore invited for a sneak preview of the hospital visited its rooftop yesterday as part of their guided tour of the place. More than 11,000 invitations had been sent out.

The guests also saw the specialist outpatient clinics, which will welcome their first 200 patients today.

The guided tours, given to residents in groups of between 10 and 15, were KTPH's way of saying "thank you" to them for putting up with the dust and noise as it was being built over the last three years.

The preview showcased the work done on a facility that will serve these residents and go some way to ease the strain on the beds and emergency services of other public hospitals.

KTPH, the first such hospital to open here in more than a decade, also opens its pharmacy, day-surgery suites and laboratories today. Patients with appointments at its specialist outpatient clinics will be seen to by the hospital's first batch of medical staff moved over from Alexandra Hospital.

The rest of the 550-bed hospital will open from July.

Yesterday's preview guests, mostly Yishun residents but including people from Sembawang and Woodlands, started streaming in at 8.30am. The guest of honour was Member of Parliament for Nee Soon Central Ong Ah Heng.

Health-care cluster Alexandra Health's chief executive Liak Teng Lit explained to the first group of guests that the diabetes, eye and geriatric clinics had been sited together on the fourth level of the tower housing the specialist clinics because elderly patients were likely to go to more than one of these clinics.

What the guests did not see, however, was hospital staff pulling long hours to get the place ready for the visitors; doctors had even gone right down to helping to arrange tables and chairs.

The guests would also not have seen all the toilets being flushed at the same time, as part of a stress test on the hospital systems, just to be sure they would be able to take intensive use.

Transport has also been ironed out: Starting yesterday, bus service 858, going via Yishun Central 2, has a stop at the hospital; a shuttle bus will also ply between the Yishun bus interchange and the hospital from today.



Mr Liak Teng Lit (left), chief executive of Alexandra Health, taking visitors around during an open house tour yesterday of the specialist outpatient clinics at Khoo Teck Puat Hospital in Yishun. SEE HOME PAGE B3

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STEPHANIE
YEOW