



A chest x-ray of a TB patient will be filled with patchy opacities and cavities indicating infection waiting to rupture and disperse germs into the air. — Filepic

Latent carriers, he said, did not display any symptoms and could unknowingly spread the bacteria to others.

"We would also be looking at working with Combi (Communication for Behavioural Impact) units involving local councillors, residents representatives and community leaders to help with awareness programmes and report cases," added Dr Mas.

The department suggests that MOH give a quantum of RM500 in financial aid to needy patients to encourage them to complete the six-month treatment course.

This, said the department, could be disbursed after the patient had ingested the prescribed drugs by taking it in front of a trained medical personnel where he is seeking treatment.

### Not just foreigners

From statistics given by Selangor Health Department tuberculosis and leprosy unit medical officer Dr Annabella Edwin, 85% of cases involve Malaysians.

"The disease is a local problem and cases

are increasing together with population size," said Dr Annabella.

But she warned that illegal immigrants who had not taken the mandatory screening for the disease required by the Foreign Workers Medical Examination Monitoring Agency (Fomema) would be a cause for worry.

She said the state Health Department was not going to close an eye to the problem.

"If a foreign worker has TB, he can come in with a referral to any government clinic and receive treatment for free," she assured.

In a circular issued in April by Health Ministry secretary-general Datuk Seri Dr Chen Chaw Min, it was stated that foreigners would be exempted from paying fees for outpatient treatment, lab tests and medical investigative procedures for cases involving contagious diseases such as Ebola, yellow fever, typhoid and tuberculosis.

Conditions, however, are subject to guidelines set by an earlier circular issued in 2017 which states that walk-ins and health tourists are not eligible for such exemptions.



(From left) Roshidi, Hasan, Talaat, Ahmad Suaidi, Rafial, Harun and MBI secretary Mohd Zakuan planting a tree at the event.

park, Ahmad Suaidi applauded MBI Retirees Association for bringing together some 500 former staff at the event.

"We are the first local council in Malaysia that manages to gather all its staff and retirees together for an event!" he said.

Those present included former Ipoh mayors Datuk Rafial Mokhtar, Datuk Seri Talaat Husain, Datuk Hasan Nawawi, Datuk Harun Rawi and Datuk Roshidi Hashim besides other ex-officers and employees.

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