

Dengue takes more lives

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KUALA LUMPUR: Health Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai is at his wits' end on how to check the spread of dengue which has claimed 52 lives and infected 20,187 people in the first five months of the year.

Last year during the same period, only 14,840 people were infected and the death toll was 33.

Liow said: "I need to go on the NSTLive online chat again to let the public know how serious the situation is."

Having to handle the present Influenza A (H1N1) and H5N1 viruses, the ministry is worried that the Aedes mosquito is going to infect and kill more Malaysians than the viruses.

Selangor topped the list with 10,629 cases and 38 deaths followed by Federal Territory and Putrajaya (1,770 cases and six deaths), Perak (1,646), Johor

(1,184 cases two deaths), Penang (1,211), Sarawak (717), Kelantan (580), Terengganu (486), Sabah (416 cases and one death), Kedah (408), Negri Sembilan (394 cases and four deaths), Pahang (373 cases and one death), Malacca (266), Perlis (89), and Labuan (18).

Director-General of Health Tan Sri Dr Ismail Merican said last week 912 dengue cases with four deaths were reported, compared with only 874 cases the previous week.

"We see an increase in dengue cases from the 17th week of the year and some of the states showing a rise in cases are Perlis, Pahang, Sabah, Sarawak, Selangor, Malacca, Kedah, Negri Sembilan and Terengganu," he said.

The ministry has also identified 55 dengue hotspots with 50 of them being in Selangor.

"Residential places and shophouses are still the main areas found positive for Aedes breeding besides graveyards,

construction sites, factories and idle land," said Dr Ismail.

He said the public must take the dengue situation in the country seriously and adhere to keeping their surroundings free from Aedes breeding grounds.

Last week the ministry slapped 366 compound fines amounting to RM59,000 and issued 277 clean-up notices.

As for chikungunya, Dr Ismail said from January to May 16, a total of 1,944 cases had been reported with no death.

Kedah has been placed on alert by the ministry following the high number of dengue and chikungunya cases in the state since last week.

Meanwhile, the first person in the country to test positive for the H1N1 virus had been discharged from Sungai Buloh Hospital, Dr Ismail said in a statement.

The 21-year-old student tested positive for the virus on May 15, two days after return-

ing from the United States.

Dr Ismail also said the quarantine period of two American citizens in Sabah would end today.

They were reported to have come into contact with a H1N1 patient while on a Cathay Pacific flight to Hong Kong.

Dr Ismail said the influenza A situation in the country remained unchanged with only two confirmed cases.

Dr Ismail also said the leptospirosis outbreak at the Juru Immigration Detention Depot, Bukit Mertajam, Penang was under control.

The number of cases under hospital treatment remained at nine.

In Penang, an Australian has been isolated at Penang Hospital with flu and fever-like symptoms.

State Health, Welfare, Caring Society and Environment Committee chairman Phee Boon Poh said the man was warded at 7pm yesterday.