

TOP NEWS

Zika arrives

Sunday mail
4/9/16
mls 3

First man to contract virus locally dies of heart complications

The Health Ministry says the most effective way to prevent Zika is to get rid of Aedes breeding grounds.
— Picture by Azneal Ishak



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PETALING JAYA — A 61-year-old man from Taman Public Jaya Likas, Sabah — the first Malaysian to contract the Zika virus locally — has died of heart complications.

Health director-general Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said the ministry received a report on the locally transmitted Zika case on Friday.

He said blood and urine tests showed the patient tested positive for Zika. The man, however, died at 5.30pm yesterday from heart-related complications.

Dr Noor Hisham said the man also had high blood pressure, chronic kidney disease, kidney stones and gout. The full result of the cause of death is still pending.

The man had been scheduled to undergo heart surgery next month.

In an earlier statement, Dr Noor Hisham said the patient had fever on Aug 27 and received treatment at Luyang Health Clinic on Tuesday.

His fever worsened on Wednesday and he suffered from muscular aches and

diarrhoea. The patient received further treatment and was warded at Queen Elizabeth II Hospital.

As the patient had hypertension, cardiovascular problems, chronic kidney disease, kidney stones and gout, his condition was quite serious when he was treated at the Emergency and Trauma Department of the hospital, he said.

Dr Noor Hisham said the ministry was also investigating the patient's recent travel history.

"There is a high possibility the Zika infection was transmitted locally considering the patient had not travelled out of the country recently," he said.

"Based on the latest findings of the inquiry, the ministry has initiated vector control activities in the residential area of the patient and other places visited by the patient."

He said the ministry had initiated vector control measures for the housing area where the man lived as well as places he had visited.

Checks were also being conducted on the patient's acquaintances and others who may have come into contact with him to verify if they could have contracted the virus.

The latest case came two days after Malaysia confirmed its first imported case of Zika in a 58-year-old woman residing in Bandar Botanic, Klang, who had visited her daughter in Singapore on Aug 19.

Dr Noor Hisham said the number of Zika cases was expected to increase if there were no preventive and precautionary efforts taken by the community.

"The ministry once again emphasises that the most effective way to prevent Zika cases is to ensure your environment is clean and free from Aedes breeding grounds," he said.

It was previously reported that Zika was detected in Aedes aegypti mosquitoes in Peninsular Malaysia in 1969. In 2001, Zika seropositivity was demonstrated in a native Borneo resident, two migrants to Borneo and two Borneo orangutan. A later study found an additional eight orangutan to be seropositive for antibodies against Zika.

A letter published by the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention stated a 45-year-old woman who returned from Sabah in 2014 after a three-week vacation started experiencing fever and maculopapular rash on her arms and legs.

She was found infected with acute Zika virus.

In **George Town**, Penang, Deputy Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Hilmi Yahaya said efforts were ongoing to prevent the virus from spreading.

"We have devices to scan passengers to identify those with high body temperature at our international entry points. Those with high body temperature will be asked to undergo tests to confirm if they have contracted Zika," he said..

He warned Penang folk not to take the warning lightly as the state had one of the highest number of dengue cases in the country.

"We must do the necessary to ensure we are not infected by the virus which can be transmitted through the Aedes mosquito," he said after officiating the national level "World Breastfeeding Week" at Universiti Sains Malaysia.

Penang Health Department director Datuk Dr M. Sukumar, who was present, said the department would double its efforts including intensified fogging at hotspots for dengue cases.

"We are also educating the public on the danger of the virus through health talks in schools and public places," he said.