

# KERATAN AKHBAR

## NAMA AKHBAR: THE STAR (NATION)

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### Spike in dengue cases in neighbouring countries as well

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The spike in dengue cases is not just seen in Malaysia, but also in many neighbouring countries, while new cases are now seen in places that used to be dengue-free.

Health director-general Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said the World Health Organisation's Dengue Situation Update report showed that the increase in dengue cases has occurred in Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and China by between one and eight times higher compared to the previous year.

In Malaysia, the iDengue website reported that as of Dec 17, as many as 125,785 dengue cases have been reported, higher than the last highest figures recorded, which was 120,836 cases in 2015.

However, the 174 deaths this year are lower than the 336 recorded in 2015. From WHO Dengue Situation Update report (Dec 5), the Philippines saw as many as 402,694 cases,

including 1,502 deaths reported as of Nov 16.

On Dec 1, *The Guardian* reported that rising temperatures across Asia and the Americas have contributed to multiple severe outbreaks of dengue fever globally, making 2019 the worst year on record for the disease.

Despite all the warning signs, apathy abounds, as far as environmental cleanliness is concerned.

"Human behaviour such as illegal rubbish dumping and littering has led to the abundance of human-made or used containers in the environment that provide places for the Aedes mosquito to breed and spread the dengue virus," said Dr Noor Hisham.

Meanwhile, those infected with the dengue virus carry the virus to other non-endemic areas and the presence of Aedes mosquitoes in those areas spread the virus to other individuals, he said.

According to WHO, before 1970, only nine countries had experienced severe dengue epidemics but today, it is now endemic in more than 100 countries.