

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

November 23 - 29, 2023

WEEKLY EVENTS

- Reports from local media in Vietnam revealed the country's first death due to mpox. The deceased was a 29-year-old male who was infected with the HIV/AIDS virus. He sought treatment at the Tropical Medicine Hospital in Ho Chi Minh City on October 2nd, exhibiting symptoms of fever, blistering sores on the body, and concurrent pneumonia. The infection subsequently spread to multiple organs, leading to shock and eventual fatality. Since the beginning of 2023, at least 20 cases of mpox have been identified in Ho Chi Minh City. Currently, 18 patients, all male except for one female, are still undergoing treatment in hospitals, with laboratory tests confirming the presence of HIV in each case.
- Information from the surveillance report of the Department of Disease Control for Week 47 (November 20-26, 2023) indicated two cases of suspected leprosy. Both cases were males of Myanmar nationality. The first case, a 10-year-old, resides in Mae Ta district, Tak province. He had a history of close contact with his father, who is currently undergoing treatment for leprosy. While this patient exhibits leprosy-like symptoms, laboratory test results have not yet confirmed the diagnosis. He is currently receiving treatment at Mae Sot Hospital in Tak province. The second case is a 39-year-old who has been residing and working in Thailand for seven years and currently lives in Bangkok. Earlier in 2022, he was imprisoned. Subsequently, he began showing signs of illness, initially with the appearance of bumps on his left leg, which later spread throughout his body. After receiving initial treatment at Ratchathun Hospital, his condition did not improve. On November 23, 2023, he sought medical attention at Ratchawithi Hospital, where the diagnosis of leprosy was confirmed.

AVIAN FLU BEING PREPARED AND STAYING SAFE

On November 23, 2023, the ASEAN Health Emergency Operations Center Network announced that the Ministry of Health of Cambodia reported one confirmed case of Avian Influenza (H5N1) in a 21-year-old female residing in Kampong Cham Province, located in the southeast of Cambodia. The patient is currently receiving treatment at the Friendship-Kem Sokha Hospital. The patient had a history of exposure to dead chickens in her village. Dating back to the beginning of 2023, Cambodia has reported five confirmed cases of avian influenza, with three fatalities in the Prey Veng and Svay Rieng provinces, which are close to Kampong Cham Province and share borders with Vietnam.

Thailand has not any human avian flu cases since 2006. However, the Ministry of Public Health has implemented a robust system for managing potential outbreaks of avian influenza. Strict measures have been taken for disease control at border crossings. In case of any abnormal events, surveillance can be scaled up in collaboration with other agencies such as the Customs Department, Animal Quarantine Stations, and the Communicable Disease Control Points responsible for monitoring incoming travelers to the country.

Given that the initial symptoms of H5N1 avian influenza are similar to other respiratory infections, early diagnosis can be challenging. Additionally, since there is an ongoing season of respiratory infections, it is crucial to provide detailed information on potential exposure, such as contact with sick or dead poultry, during medical consultations. This approach aims to ensure accurate and timely treatment for patients and helps prevent the potential spread of the disease on a broader scale.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

The local administration, Provincial Livestock Offices and the Provincial Public Health Offices should coordinate and disseminate information regarding the avian flu situation in Cambodia. If residents notice abnormal incidents such as unexplained bird deaths, they should report it to the village head, the local administration (VHS), or the District Livestock Office (District Livestock Office).

It is prohibited to consume poultry that has died from an unknown cause. If necessary, individuals should avoid touching the carcasses, and if contact is essential, they should use gloves and wear protective masks. Deceased animals should be properly buried. If there are individuals showing symptoms similar to avian influenza, and have a history of contact with poultry or residing in close proximity to poultry environments, immediate reporting to health and district livestock authorities is essential. Furthermore, officials should conduct training sessions, public awareness campaigns, and informal discussions with residents to provide accurate information and guidance on proper practices for the continuous observation and self-protection against avian influenza.

INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY

Multisectoral Capacity Development Program for Public Health Emergency Detection and Response in Border Areas

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- Image courtesy of: <https://mgronline.com/indochina/detail/9660000103951>