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## Thais suffer severer dengue outbreak in 1st half of 2010

BANGKOK, June 8 (Xinhua) -- Thailand's Public Health Ministry reported Tuesday that dengue fever infected 17,587 people and claimed 20 lives nationwide in the past five months, with the infection number increasing by nearly 60 percent year-on-year, Thai media reported.

The Nation online quoted the ministry's permanent secretary Paiji Warachit as saying that the number of dengue fever patients this year has increased by 58 percent when compared with the same period last year.

Paiji said the dengue fever outbreak would peak during Thailand's rainy season from June to August.

Most dengue victims were aged between 10 to 24 years, said the ministry. The Central region was the hardest hit with 7,945 cases, followed by 4,264 in the South, 3,753 in the Northeast, and 1,625 in the North.

The Department of Disease Control's director general Manit Teeratantikanont said the dengue virus type 1 has been widely spreading this year, but people are also at risk as most do not have immunity against dengue virus type 2 and type 3.

To tackle the outbreak, the ministry has set up a committee teamed up with 23 people from state agencies including the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration and the Ministry of Interior. The committee will be chaired by the ministry's deputy permanent secretary Siriwat Thiptaradol.

Talking about specific measures, Paiji said the health officials are required to report any disease cases found within 24 hours and mobile teams will be sent immediately to counter the outbreak.

Local authorities have been advised to spray insecticide at least once a week to eradicate the dengue-bearing adult *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito which bites humans in the daylight hours, he said.

Patients who catch a fever above 38.5 degrees Celsius for several days and have red spots on their skin are advised to take only paracetamol to reduce the fever before seeking medical advice.

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