

## Wuhan outbreak: Malaysian health authorities on high alert



**Dr. Noor Hisham Abdullah**

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian health authorities are on high alert following the Wuhan novel coronavirus outbreak.

Health Ministry director-general Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah (*pic*) said thermal scanners are used to screen travellers.

"Our preparedness and response team at all international entry points and health facilities particularly the KLIA (KL International Airport) health office are on high alert following the Wuhan novel coronavirus outbreak.

"The thermal scanners and the Health Quarantine Centre at KLIA terminal are prepared and on high surveillance.

"The roles played by these various health units at the airport and also other international entry points are very important in safeguarding the country from various potential communicable diseases from high-risk areas," he said in a statement on Monday (Jan 20).

The World Health Organisation (WHO) had confirmed that the new coronavirus had already spread to Japan and Thailand.

The pneumonia outbreak linked to the new type of virus had been traced to seafood and animals, suggesting a possible zoonotic origin, according to the WHO.

Health Minister Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said the ministry was now in the process of collecting data on previously "non-notifiable" influenza cases following the emergence of the Wuhan virus.

"Influenza was not one of the notifiable diseases.

"However, (in the wake of the outbreak in China,) we need a little bit more time to collate all the data.

"We will collect all the information and data from the Health Ministry, Education Ministry and the East Malaysian state governments of Sabah and Sarawak.

"It will take a bit more time. The ministry's CPRC (Crisis Preparedness and Response Centre) is carrying out surveillance and will update soon," he said Monday.

Dzulkefly also confirmed that, so far, the new coronavirus has not been detected in Malaysia. – **thestar.com.my, January 20, 2020**