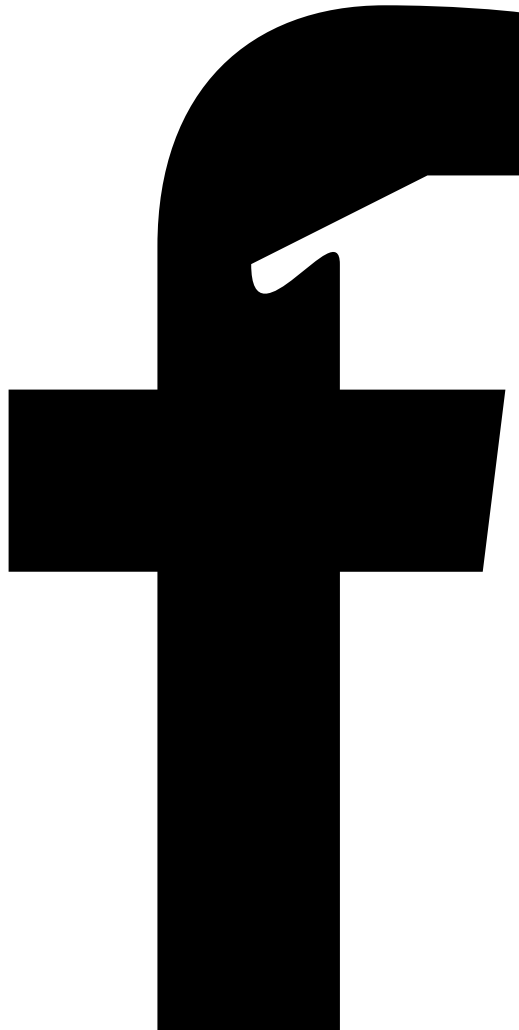


Dengue fever cases on rise in Indonesia



File photo: A municipal worker fumigates a flooded alley to prevent the spread of dengue fever and other mosquito-borne diseases at a residential colony in Ahmedabad, India, July 29, 2017. Reuters/Amit Dave

JAKARTA, Indonesia: A outbreak of dengue fever claimed eight lives in the East Sumba district of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), according to local media on Wednesday.

The number of those infected who were treated at a public hospital reached 338, Indonesia's Antara news agency said, citing Chrisnawan Try Haryantana, head of the East Sumba health office.

The total number of people killed since 2019 due to the mosquito-borne disease in NTT province hit 18.

The health office, along with the regional authorities, have intensified efforts to prevent the spread of the disease in the region, it added.

More than 15,000 dengue fever cases at 145 fatalities were registered in Indonesia as of Feb. 1, according to the country's health ministry.

Earlier, the health ministry said that the highest number of dengue cases, more than 3,070, was reported in East Java province, with 52 people dead.

"The ministry recorded 53,075 cases of dengue fever in 2018, some 68,407 cases in 2017, and 204,171 cases in 2016," the news agency said.

Mosquitoes carrying malaria and dengue appear more frequently especially in the rainy season between October and April, while scientists warn high temperatures and prolonged rains cause an increase in mosquitoes breeding.

Dengue is a mosquito-borne viral infection, which is found in tropical and sub-tropical climates worldwide, mostly in urban and semi-urban areas. The infection causes flu-like illness, and occasionally develops into a potentially lethal complication called severe dengue, according to the World Health Organization.

In Indonesia, dengue fever killed 1,600 people in 2016, and nearly 500 more in 2017.

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