

Vietnam fortifies MERS surveillance

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Singapore: In a bid to curb the enormous spread of MERS, Vietnam has increased its scrutiny and has imposed a new regulation demanding health declaration forms from travelers of the Middle East.

Mr Nguyen Thanh Long, deputy health minister said that under the new rule, visitors from nine Middle Eastern countries including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Yemen, Kuwait, Lebanon, Jordan and Iran must make health declarations mandatory as a procedure for their entry.

Sources said that the surveillance would initially start with the three international airports in the country. The certification would be issued by health quarantine officials at these airports upon assessment of the travelers.

The health ministry insisted that any traveler displaying symptoms of MERS corona virus would be isolated and referred to specific hospitals for treatment.

Mr Long cautioned that though Vietnam is reportedly free of the virus so far, with a large number of Vietnamese guest workers in the Middle East, the scare of importing the virus to Vietnam is high. He added that 75 percent of MERS cases occurred through human transmission and such surveillance could help in containing the disease.

He also mentioned that Indonesia, Philippines and Malaysia were the recent Asian countries to fall into the MERS radar owing to Middle East travel.