

DATE	08 / 08 / 2014	SECTION	NATION
PAGE	19	COLUMN	

Beware of Ebola, Haj pilgrims told

Avoid body contact with sick people, advises Health Minister

By **NURBAITI HAMDAN**
nurbaiti@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: In the wake of an Ebola outbreak, which claimed a life in Saudi Arabia, the Health Ministry advises Malaysians going for their Haj pilgrimage to take precautions.

For instance, they must avoid contact with Ebola-infected patients as the virus spreads through bodily fluid.

However, if contact is unavoidable, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam said pilgrims should wear protective accessories such as gloves and masks.

"Ebola prevention is about basic health maintenance and that is to avoid contact with sick people," he said at a press conference after visiting the children's cancer ward at the Kuala Lumpur Hospital here yesterday.

Saudi's Health Ministry reported that one of its citizens, who was

being treated for Ebola-like symptoms, died at a hospital in Jeddah.

The man was believed to have visited Sierra Leone recently, one of the countries affected by the outbreak.

"The authorities in Saudi Arabia should ensure these people (the infected) are managed in a way that they reduce the likelihood of contact with others," Dr Subramaniam said.

Ebola symptoms include high fever, vomiting, diarrhoea, and kidney and liver failure. It has a fatality rate of up to 90%.

In a related development, Bernama reported that Deputy Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Hilmi Yahaya advised Malaysians to avoid visiting West African countries for the time being.

He said a World Health Organisation report on Aug 4 stated that 1,603 cases, including 887 fatalities, were reported in four countries in West Africa.