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ASIA EDITION

H7N9 fatality count reaches 130 in China

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Singapore: With more cases of H7N9 infections and deaths being reported in China, the total number of cases of the outbreak has reached 435. So far 299 caes have been reported during the second wave of H7N9 outbreak, compared with 136 in the first wave of the disease in the spring of 2013. The official death toll is 130 as per reports.

China's Guangdong province reported another H7N9 influenza infection, along with a death in a previously reported case, according to a health department statement issues this week.

Meanwhile, Guangzhou suspended sales of live poultry at nearly a third of its wet markets as it began a four-month pilot scheme. This comes merely days after stalls in 60 percent of the city's wet markets tested positive for the deadly H7N9 bird flu virus.

Upon conclusion of the trial on September 30, the city government proposes gradually extending the ban, covering chickens, ducks, geese and pigeons, to other parts of the metropolis. The ban is expected to be implemented citywide by 2024.

News reports explained that currently, it affects 298 live poultry stalls at 82 wet markets in Yuexiu district, and in parts of Tianhe, Liwan and Panyu districts, where vendors will sell centrally slaughtered chickens that will be provided by three designated suppliers.

The Hangzhou government in Zhejiang province permanently banned all live poultry sales in the inner city in February.

A Hong Kong government spokeswoman told the media that it was time to talk with the poultry trade and residents about whether sales of live poultry were still appropriate in the city. The government would hire a consultant this year to study the matter and make recommendations, the spokeswoman said in a news report.