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Health Ministry aims to prevent dengue fever spread in Assiut

The Ministry of Health is stepping up preventative measures to contain the mass spread of fever in three villages in Assiut, Minister of Health Ahmed Emad El-Din announced Thursday.

The ministry sent a medical convoy of 96 doctors after hospitals in Assiut received about 200 cases suffering the same symptoms, including a rise in body temperature, headache, and body pain.

Water and food samples were taken for examination at the ministry's main medical laboratories; the results, however, conflicted regarding whether the symptoms were caused by a harmful virus or not. However, some results indicated the dengue virus as a possible cause for the symptoms, which is a virus transferred by insects, according to the health ministry's statement.

Amr Kandil, the head of preventative medicine at the ministry, was quoted in the statement as calling on the residents in Assiut to get rid of all still water in the domestic water tanks, believing it could be helping

more infectious insects spread.

On the other hand, the ministry sent a new bill for medical insurance to the cabinet for review. The new bill includes 38 new articles, expanding the network of coverage for medical insurance to cover all citizens, to be linked with national ID numbers. The ministry said new medical insurance IDs have already been printed, and are pending the law's approval.

The new law also states that medical insurance services will differentiate between the funding of public facilities and the services they should present. The medical insurance system will cover a new set of diseases and injuries, as well.

The Medical Insurance Authority will be operated directly under the president, not through the health ministry or cabinet.

The new plan will be implemented first in the governorates of Suez, Port Said, Assiut, North and South Sinai, Alexandria, and it will then be extended nationwide.