Cambodia shuts all schools to fight virus spread

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(AP) — Cambodia is closing all kindergarten and primary schools two weeks before a regular vacation to try to stop the spread of a virus that has killed hundreds of young children around Asia.

Deputy Education Minister Mak Van said more than 2,700 kindergartens and 7,000 primary schools closed Wednesday to try to cope with the menacing form of hand, foot and mouth disease known as enterovirus 71 strain, or EV-71.

The victims sometimes suffer high fever, brain swelling, paralysis and respiratory shutdown, though they may have been infected by people with few or no symptoms. The recent deaths of almost 60 Cambodian children raised the alarm over the disease.

Vietnam and China have also had outbreaks. And in neighboring Thailand, three schools in Bangkok closed Wednesday over new cases in students.

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