



# WEEKLY EPIDEMIOLOGICAL REPORT

A publication of the Epidemiology Unit  
Ministry of Health & Mass Media

231, de Saram Place, Colombo 01000, Sri Lanka  
Tele: + 94 11 2695112, Fax: +94 11 2696583, E mail: epidunit@sltnet.lk  
Epidemiologist: +94 11 2681548, E mail: chepid@sltnet.lk  
Web: <http://www.epid.gov.lk>

SRI LANKA 2025

NUMBER

Vol. 52 No. 51

13<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> Dec 2025

## Disease Surveillance during the Disaster: Public Health Response to Floods and Landslides following Cyclone Ditwa, November 2025, Sri Lanka

*This is the Second article of two in a series on “Disease Surveillance during the Disaster: Public Health Response to Floods and Landslides following Cyclone Ditwa, November 2025, Sri Lanka”*

### Risk Communication and Community Engagement

Risk communication and community engagement were integral components of disease prevention during the flood response. Regular public advisories were disseminated through national television, radio, newspapers, and official Ministry of Health communication channels to provide timely and accurate information to the public. Social media platforms were also utilized to deliver guidance on safe water practices, food safety, sanitation, and general disease prevention. Flood-specific awareness messages focused on avoiding contact with contaminated floodwater, adopting safe cleaning practices, and recognizing early symptoms of leptospirosis. Technical inputs were provided for media interviews and press releases to ensure accurate public messaging and minimize misinformation.

### Coordination and Information Management

Coordination and information management were strengthened through regular meetings with provincial and district Communicable Disease Control Programme teams and Regional Epidemiologists. These meetings facilitated review of disease trends and surveillance findings, mobilization of emergency health logistics and supplies, support for temporary sanitation

arrangements in welfare centres, and guidance on targeted health promotion and preventive activities. Daily situation updates were prepared to summarize district-specific risks, surveillance findings, and recommended public health actions, thereby supporting evidence-informed decision-making at national and subnational levels throughout the response period.

### Continuity of Essential Public Health Services

Despite the emergency context, continuity of essential public health services was ensured throughout the flood response. Particular attention was given to maintaining the cold chain for infant vaccines at both district and Medical Officer of Health levels, thereby safeguarding vaccine safety and potency and preventing interruptions to routine immunization services.

### Key Public Health Messages for Flood-Affected Communities

Public health guidance for flood-affected communities emphasized the importance of using boiled or properly chlorinated water for drinking and household purposes. Communities were advised to clean and chlorinate wells before reuse following flooding and to consume only freshly prepared food while maintaining strict hand hygiene. Avoidance of flood-contaminated food was strongly promoted. The use of protective footwear and gloves during cleaning and debris removal activities was encouraged, and early health-seeking behaviour was emphasized for individuals experiencing fever, diarrhoea, or other warning symptoms.

1. Disease Surveillance during the Disaster: Public Health Response to Floods and Landslides following Cyclone Ditwa, November 2025, Sri Lanka - Part II	1
2. Summary of selected notifiable diseases reported (06 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2025)	3
3. Surveillance of vaccine preventable diseases & AFP (06 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2025)	4

**Surveillance Findings from Welfare Centres**

Analysis of welfare-centre surveillance data from some districts provided a practical illustration of how enhanced surveillance supported outbreak prevention during the flood response. No sustained increase or clustering of cases suggestive of an outbreak was detected during that period. This pattern was consistent with the timely implementation of preventive interventions, including the provision of safe drinking water, improved sanitation, health education, and early referral for care, guided by daily surveillance data.

**Lessons Learned**

The coordinated response following Cyclone Ditwa demonstrated the critical role of strengthened disease surveillance during disasters. Through enhanced surveillance systems, effective risk communication, targeted water and sanitation interventions, and focused leptospirosis prevention measures, the Epidemiology Unit of the Ministry of Health mitigated the risk of communicable disease outbreaks during the flood and landslide emergency. Continued intersectoral coordination, systematic surveillance, and sustained community engagement remain essential during the recovery phase as affected populations transition back to normal living conditions.



(Flood Safety Measures during and after Floods, WHO, 2025)

**Compiled by:**

**Dr. Aruni Hathamuna**  
 Associate Specialist Community Physician  
 Epidemiology Unit  
 Ministry of Health

**References:**

1. Epidemiology Unit, Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka. *Health & Emergency Response – Floods & Landslides 2025*. Colombo: Epidemiology Unit; 2025.
2. World Health Organization. Early warning alert and response (EWAR) in emergencies: an operational guide. Geneva: WHO; 27 January 2023.
3. Epidemiology Unit, Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka. *Public health measures to be adopted in the event of floods*. Colombo: Epidemiology Unit; 2017.
4. Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka. Manual for the Sri Lanka Public Health Inspector: Contents (ii–xi). Colombo: Ministry of Health; 2010

**Table 1 : Water Quality Surveillance  
 Number of microbiological water samples November 2025**

District	MOH areas	No: Expected *	No: Received
Colombo	18	108	23
Gampaha	15	90	27
Kalutara	13	78	NR
Kalutara NIHS	2	12	83
Kandy	23	138	0
Matale	13	78	10
Nuwara Eliya	13	78	NR
Galle	20	120	150
Matara	17	102	59
Hambantota	12	72	76
Jaffna	14	84	NR
Kilinochchi	4	24	12
Mannar	5	30	0
Vavuniya	4	24	NR
Mullatvu	6	36	19
Batticaloa	14	84	0
Ampara	7	42	17
Trincomalee	12	72	0
Kurunegala	29	174	66
Puttalam	13	78	41
Anuradhapura	23	138	12
Polonnaruwa	9	54	33
Badulla	16	96	115
Moneragala	11	66	89
Rathnapura	20	120	66
Kegalle	11	66	NR
Kalmunai	13	78	0

\* No of samples expected (6 / MOH area / Month)  
 NR = Return not received

Table 1: Selected notifiable diseases reported by Medical Officers of Health 06<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Dec 2025 (50<sup>th</sup> Week)

RDHS	Dengue Fever		Dysentery		Encephalitis		En. Fever		F. Poisoning		Leptospirosis		Typhus F.		Viral Hep.		H. Rabies		Chickenpox		Meningitis		Leishmania-		Tuberculosis		WRCD	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B		T*
Colombo	318	11334	0	36	1	21	0	15	4	75	15	448	0	6	0	33	0	0	22	597	3	78	0	6	37	1979	100	100
Gampaha	202	7266	1	51	1	36	0	6	5	161	23	818	0	11	1	20	0	0	14	840	7	195	0	44	36	1121	100	100
Kalutara	53	2397	2	48	0	7	0	20	1	105	22	620	0	3	0	8	0	0	29	878	1	52	0	3	13	571	94	95
Kandy	82	4227	1	49	0	4	0	8	13	72	12	302	1	52	0	12	0	0	26	645	1	27	0	75	13	623	61	100
Matale	25	1239	2	28	0	3	0	2	2	94	21	292	0	7	0	9	0	0	6	147	0	9	15	387	5	146	92	100
Nuwara Eliya	3	339	10	94	0	7	0	7	1	77	4	196	0	61	0	10	0	0	14	337	0	38	0	0	8	275	85	100
Galle	81	2188	1	62	2	12	1	11	0	103	23	900	2	84	0	15	1	3	25	809	6	173	0	4	6	513	85	100
Hambantota	28	912	1	45	0	8	0	2	1	46	15	366	1	32	0	17	0	0	10	384	2	36	12	345	5	139	100	100
Matara	67	1605	0	17	0	4	0	1	0	26	5	473	1	19	0	24	0	1	29	510	0	55	5	133	3	172	100	100
Jaffna	78	1465	2	98	0	4	0	21	3	52	22	197	11	536	1	5	0	2	8	340	1	42	0	2	7	208	93	93
Kilinochchi	10	118	2	17	0	1	0	4	0	7	8	80	0	14	0	3	0	0	1	13	0	1	0	2	1	46	100	100
Mannar	5	188	0	6	0	0	0	1	0	3	7	42	2	20	0	2	0	0	0	19	0	15	0	9	0	46	100	100
Vavuniya	2	86	0	11	0	1	0	1	0	56	16	116	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	51	0	26	0	21	2	63	75	100
Mullaitivu	2	65	0	10	0	0	0	1	1	27	3	62	0	10	0	1	0	0	0	33	0	8	0	6	3	37	100	100
Batticaloa	14	1764	2	138	0	19	0	4	1	206	7	128	0	3	0	30	0	0	3	207	1	38	0	1	1	135	100	100
Ampara	12	268	5	68	1	12	0	3	2	45	14	262	0	3	0	14	0	1	11	257	2	61	0	25	0	67	86	100
Trincomalee	26	1043	0	45	0	4	0	2	0	79	6	148	0	9	1	7	0	1	4	149	0	14	0	10	2	133	100	100
Kurunegala	24	1552	0	47	0	19	0	2	1	74	25	814	3	33	1	10	0	2	15	903	4	177	14	608	11	381	77	100
Puttalam	30	682	3	40	0	5	0	0	0	15	16	330	1	37	0	4	0	1	3	161	4	114	1	35	0	186	100	100
Anuradhapura	12	545	2	36	1	8	0	3	0	45	28	408	1	27	0	12	0	2	7	324	3	68	8	755	4	296	83	100
Polonnaruwa	6	368	1	18	0	9	0	2	1	149	30	311	0	1	0	25	0	0	15	246	5	35	4	488	0	96	88	90
Badulla	18	808	1	42	0	15	0	4	0	11	9	307	1	43	3	90	0	1	10	419	2	87	0	77	2	271	94	100
Monaragala	14	831	3	38	1	6	0	1	0	19	38	578	1	40	1	63	0	0	9	259	2	63	5	245	3	147	100	100
Ratnapura	43	4609	2	111	0	10	0	4	1	73	26	1546	0	34	1	23	0	2	7	453	2	107	1	256	7	388	90	100
Kegalle	36	1462	1	59	1	14	0	10	1	45	32	817	0	15	3	25	0	0	18	910	1	128	1	36	17	292	82	100
Kalmunai	10	421	2	56	0	8	0	0	0	53	4	118	0	2	0	6	0	1	32	330	3	63	0	1	3	155	83	92
<b>SRI LANKA</b>	<b>1201</b>	<b>47782</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>1270</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>1718</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>10679</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1112</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>10221</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>1710</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>3574</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>8486</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>99</b>

Source: Weekly Returns of Communicable Diseases (esurveillance.epid.gov.lk). T=Timeliness refers to returns received on or before 12<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2025 Total number of reporting units 360 Number of reporting units data provided for the current week: 358. C\*\*=Completeness. A = Cases reported during the current week. B = Cumulative cases for the year.

**Table 2: Vaccine-Preventable Diseases & AFP**

**06<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Dec 2025 (50<sup>th</sup> Week)**

Disease	No. of Cases by Province									Number of cases during current week in 2025	Number of cases during same week in 2024	Total number of cases to date in 2025	Total number of cases to date in 2024	Difference between the number of cases to date in 2025 & 2024
	W	C	S	N	E	NW	NC	U	Sab					
AFP*	02	01	01	00	00	00	00	00	00	04	04	63	76	-17.1%
Diphtheria	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	0 %
Mumps	01	00	01	01	01	02	00	00	01	07	08	253	290	-12.7 %
Measles	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	01	297	-99.6%
Rubella	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	04	02	-100%
CRS**	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	00	0 %
Tetanus	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	00	01	00	13	05	160 %
Neonatal Tetanus	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	0 %
Japanese Encephalitis	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	04	14	-71.4 %
Whooping Cough	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	02	28	71	-60.5 %

**Key to Table 1 & 2**

**Provinces:** W: Western, C: Central, S: Southern, N: North, E: East, NC: North Central, NW: North Western, U: Uva, Sab: Sabaragamuwa.  
**RDHS Divisions:** CB: Colombo, GM: Gampaha, KL: Kalutara, KD: Kandy, ML: Matale, NE: Nuwara Eliya, GL: Galle, HB: Hambantota, MT: Matara, JF: Jaffna, KN: Killinochchi, MN: Mannar, VA: Vavuniya, MU: Mullaitivu, BT: Batticaloa, AM: Ampara, TR: Trincomalee, KM: Kalmunai, KR: Kurunegala, PU: Puttalam, AP: Anuradhapura, PO: Polonnaruwa, BD: Badulla, MO: Moneragala, RP: Ratnapura, KG: Kegalle.

**Data Sources:**  
**Weekly Return of Communicable Diseases:** Diphtheria, Measles, Tetanus, Neonatal Tetanus, Whooping Cough, Chickenpox, Meningitis, Mumps., Rubella, CRS,  
**Special Surveillance:** AFP\* (Acute Flaccid Paralysis), Japanese Encephalitis  
**CRS\*\*** =Congenital Rubella Syndrome  
**NA** = Not Available

**Take prophylaxis medications for leptospirosis during the paddy cultivation and harvesting seasons.**  
**It is provided free by the MOH office / Public Health Inspectors.**

Comments and contributions for publication in the WER Sri Lanka are welcome. However, the editor reserves the right to accept or reject items for publication. All correspondence should be mailed to The Editor, WER Sri Lanka, Epidemiological Unit, P.O. Box 1567, Colombo or sent by E-mail to [chepid@sltnet.lk](mailto:chepid@sltnet.lk). **Prior approval should be obtained from the Epidemiology Unit before publishing data in this publication**

**ON STATE SERVICE**

**Dr. Palitha Karunapema**  
 CHIEF EPIDEMIOLOGIST  
 EPIDEMIOLOGY UNIT  
 231, DE SARAM PLACE  
 COLOMBO 10