

# REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

April 18 - 24, 2024

## WEEKLY EVENTS

- The Surveillance Report from the Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, for Week 16 (15-21 April 2024) reported a fatal case of melioidosis in Bangkok. The patient was a 20-year-old Filipino male with a pre-existing brain condition, residing long-term in Min Buri district. There was no history of recent travel. He was admitted to the hospital with symptoms of fever, sputum, convulsions, vomiting, and diarrhea. Laboratory tests confirmed the presence of *Burkholderia pseudomallei*. The case is currently under disease investigation.
- Due to the unrest situation in Myanmar, there has been an influx of displaced persons entering Thailand, particularly in Mae Sot District, Tak Province. The Ministry of Public Health and the Provincial Health Office of Tak Province have planned to deploy medical personnel from nearby hospitals. Additionally, they have prepared medicines, medical supplies, and equipment to respond to potential emergency situations. They have assured the public that this incident will not affect the provision of healthcare services to the local population.
- On April 26, 2024, the Office of Disease Control, Region 8, Udon Thani reported an incident of ammonia leakage at an ice factory in Sarai Ya Sohm District, Udon Thani Province. Upon receiving reports from the public of an ammonia-like smell, officials were dispatched to contain the incident, which took approximately 15 minutes. There were reports of 23 affected individuals experiencing symptoms such as headache, dizziness, chest tightness, difficulty breathing, skin irritation, eye irritation, sore throat, and dry throat. Immediate measures included shutting down the factory and repairing the leakage points of ammonia. A risk assessment within the factory premises was conducted, and public communication was undertaken to inform and monitor the health status of residents in nearby areas.

## MONITORING COVID-19 AFTER THE SONGKRAN FESTIVAL

The Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, reported an increase in COVID-19 infections after the Songkran festival. Currently, COVID-19 is a notifiable disease under the Communicable Diseases Act, although there have been no reports of severe outbreaks. To ensure public confidence, the Ministry of Public Health has instructed all provincial health services to be prepared to provide comprehensive care to the public.

Data from the past week (April 14-20, 2024) shows that 1,004 COVID-19 patients required hospitalization, averaging 143 patients per day, with the trend increasing as predicted. There has been a rise in cases in Bangkok, its vicinity, and several tourist provinces. There were 292 severe cases with pneumonia, 101 requiring ventilators, and 3 deaths, all among the elderly or those with chronic illnesses (Group 608).

The increase in COVID-19 cases is due to the disease's symptoms being similar to the common cold, leading many people to become complacent and not take precautions, thereby allowing the virus to spread easily within communities. Initially, patients exhibit cold-like symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, and runny nose.

According to the Department of Medical Sciences, the outbreak remains of the same strain as last year, with no increase in severity. The general public should focus on proper personal hygiene, frequent hand washing, and the continued necessity of wearing masks, especially in crowded places like public transport, hospitals, and elderly care facilities. If individuals or their close contacts exhibit cold-like symptoms, they should perform an ATK test at home and avoid close contact with the vulnerable 608 group. If the test is positive (two lines), they should wear a mask to prevent spreading the virus to others. If experiencing difficulty breathing, they should see a doctor promptly to reduce the risk of death, especially among the elderly and those with chronic conditions.



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Officials should coordinate with village health volunteers and public health officials to jointly educate and inform residents about the COVID-19 situation following the Songkran festival, where there has been a significant increase in cases. Special attention is needed in border areas adjacent to neighboring countries experiencing unrest, leading to some refugees staying with relatives, friends, or acquaintances, increasing community congestion and the risk of disease spread.

Relevant agencies should educate residents and incoming refugees on how to protect themselves from COVID-19. There should be screening of displaced persons moving into the villages, distribution of masks, and education for residents and newcomers on recognizing early symptoms of COVID-19. They should be advised to wear masks regularly in public places, wash hands frequently, and seek medical attention and inform public health officials if they exhibit suspected COVID-19 symptoms, to prevent the disease from spreading within the community.

## INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY

Multisectoral Capacity Development Program for Public Health Emergency Detection and Response in Border Areas

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## Sources

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