

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

May 2 - 8, 2024

## WEEKLY EVENTS

- On May 8, 2024, the Ministry of Public Health prepared medical personnel teams to ensure readiness in providing healthcare to over 7,700 Thai Muslims traveling for the Hajj pilgrimage to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The teams were divided into three sets: the first set began their duties from May 8 to June 28, the second set from May 20 to July 10, and the third set from May 31 to July 20. Services were provided at two medical offices located in Mecca and Medina. Additionally, mobile medical teams were dispatched to provide healthcare services in Arafat and Mina, including remote accommodation areas, beyond the medical offices. After the pilgrims return to Thailand, local public health agencies will continue monitoring their health for an additional 14 days. All healthcare operations are conducted under the framework of the "HEALTH FOR HAJJ" concept.
- On May 8, 2024, the Department of Disease Control, in collaboration between the Office of International Cooperation with the Provincial Health Office of Ubon Ratchathani, jointly summarized the results of the exchange of communicable disease data deemed significant in border provinces with the network. This effort aims to strengthen disease prevention among the local population in the border province. Key achievements over the past 3 years include informal coordination both domestically and internationally, data surveillance and prevention through provincial communicable disease committees, and community involvement in border disease surveillance. From this meeting, the OIC summarized these data to establish a framework for analysis and collaborative improvement within the network, covering strategies, structures, systems, formats, shared values, skills, and personnel. Recommendations will guide future localized operational planning.

## COVID-19 SPREADS HEAVILY AS EXPECTED AFTER THE SONGKRAN FESTIVAL

As forecasted by the Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, there has been an increase in COVID-19 cases following the Songkran Festival. Currently, there is a significant increase in the number of COVID-19 patients seeking treatment in hospitals. The COVID-19 Information Center, Public Relations Division, reported that from April 28 to May 4, 2024, there were 1,792 COVID-19 patients admitted to hospitals, averaging 256 per day, and 12 deaths, averaging 2 deaths per day. Cumulatively, from January 1 to May 4, 2024, there have been 13,057 patients admitted to hospitals, with 93 deaths. Regarding the spread across provinces, the Weekly Surveillance Report for Week 18 from April 29 to May 5, 2024 indicated that there are COVID-19 outbreaks across various provinces. During that period, there were eight cluster outbreaks, marking it as the week with the highest number of outbreak occurrences since the recent Songkran Festival. Most patients were found in densely populated areas such as meditation centers, prisons, child protective shelters, and temples. Outbreaks were also observed among surgical teams and religious ceremony groups in hospitals. Currently, the observed symptoms of COVID-19 has shifted, predominantly manifesting as upper respiratory symptoms such as sore throat, low-grade fever, mild runny nose, slight nasal congestion, rare cough, and minimal fatigue. Individuals experiencing these symptoms are advised to perform self-ATK testing; a positive result with two lines indicates COVID-19 infection. Those who are physically fit, vaccinated, or previously infected with COVID-19 need not worry excessively and should manage symptoms without antiviral medications, as symptoms typically improve within a few days. However, individuals at high risk, such as the elderly or those with underlying medical conditions, should immediately consult a doctor if tested positive for COVID-19 or experiencing severe symptoms, to receive appropriate treatment and reduce the risk of complications and mortality.



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Public Health officials and relevant agencies should collectively disseminate information and raise awareness among the public about the COVID-19 situation following the Songkran Festival. With the significant increase in the number of patients, it remains essential to strictly adhere to COVID-19 prevention measures, such as wearing face masks regularly, especially in public places, maintaining physical distancing, frequent hand washing, and covering mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. Individuals with symptoms resembling common cold or flu should avoid community gatherings, and if symptoms are consistent with COVID-19, they should promptly perform self-ATK testing. If the result is positive, they should isolate themselves from others and manage symptoms. For high-risk groups like the elderly or those with underlying medical conditions, seeking immediate medical attention is advised to receive appropriate treatment and prevent complications that could lead to death. If COVID-19 cases are detected in the community, health authorities should be notified promptly to prevent further spread of the disease 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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