

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

March 2 - 8, 2023

## WEEKLY EVENTS

- On March 8-9, 2023, the Office of International Cooperation, Department of Disease Control held a meeting and field visit in Mae Hong Son to exchange information on disease surveillance, prevention, and control, as well as population movement data across the international border. Participants from various sectors, including public health, labor, livestock, and security agencies, attended the meeting at the Imperial Mae Hong Son Resort. A field study was also conducted at the Pang Ma Pha Hospital to learn about healthcare services for foreign populations in the area and to address obstacles in the implementation of work plans.
- On March 7th, 2023, The Laotian Times newspaper reported that the Lao People's Democratic Republic had implemented a digital system for managing data related to births, deaths, marriages, and divorces. The system is being used to collect and store this data at the national level. The Ministry of Interior has introduced an electronic registration and vital statistics system to gather information from district offices and other relevant agencies for the issuance of official documents. The government aims to have 70% of the population, including newborns registered and issued with official documents by 2024.

## PM 2.5: THE TINY PARTICULATE MATTER THAT CAN HAVE A SIGNIFICANT NEGATIVE IMPACT ON YOUR HEALTH

The Ministry of Public Health has reported that PM 2.5 levels have exceeded  $51 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  for more than 3 consecutive days in 15 provinces throughout the country, mostly in the northern region and in 50 districts of Bangkok. According to the health report since the beginning of the year, 1.32 million people have been affected by air pollution-related illnesses, with an additional 196,000 patients this week alone. As we enter the hot season, the situation is expected to gradually improve, but the problem is likely to persist for another 1-2 weeks. It is advisable to monitor health, especially in populations at risk of exposure to high PM 2.5 levels. It is recommended to avoid outdoor activities, wear N95 masks, and follow PM 2.5 news continuously. It is known that PM 2.5 can be dangerous to health, causing symptoms such as coughing, sore throat, red eyes, itchy skin, and even more serious illnesses such as respiratory, heart, and vascular diseases, especially in vulnerable groups such as children, asthmatics, and the elderly. In addition to protecting oneself from PM 2.5, the Ministry of Public Health has suggested that the basic way to boost immunity and prevent respiratory complications is to get vaccinated against COVID-19, especially for the 7 groups at risk.



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Health officials and local organizations should raise awareness among residents about the dangers of PM 2.5. They should observe symptoms and monitor the air quality levels. Officials should make announcements in the village during periods of abnormally high levels of PM 2.5. The community members should follow the guidelines provided by the Department of Health, Ministry of Public Health in the "Community Handbook: How to Monitor PM 2.5 Safely" to protect themselves from the health impacts of PM 2.5. This will be extremely beneficial for daily life, especially during periods when PM 2.5 levels exceed the standard.

## 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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