

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

July 27 - August 2, 2023

WEEKLY EVENTS

- On July 29, 2023, Nakhon Phanom Province joined forces with its community network to organize the event "Cycling for Health on Both Sides of the Mekong (Nakhon Phanom Province, Kingdom of Thailand - Khemmarat District, Savannakhet Province, Lao PDR)." The event took place at the Friendship Bridge No. 3 (Nakhon Phanom - Khemmarat) in Mueang District, Nakhon Phanom Province, Thailand, and at Wat Phra That Sri Khok Rot Bong in Muang Tha Khaek, Khemmarat District, Savannakhet Province, Lao PDR. The event was attended by officials from Khemmarat District, Savannakhet Province, Lao PDR, as well as the head of the Thai Motherhood Association, Nakhon Phanom Province, and the head of the local government agency, along with members of the Thai Motherhood Association. Participants included cyclists from all sectors, including government, private sector, investors, business owners, academics, media, and citizens from both countries, totaling more than 500 participants. The purpose of this event was to promote a positive image of Thailand, reinforce the strong relationship between the two countries, and establish a foundation for robust health while stimulating the economy of Nakhon Phanom Province and neighboring provinces. These efforts contribute to achieving the sustainable Thailand goals as envisioned by the Ministry of Interior.
- On July 31, 2023, the Irrawaddy News Agency reported on the conflict situation in the state of Kachin, Myanmar, which is located along the border of Mae Hong Son Province, Thailand. The impact of this situation resulted in the displacement of Myanmar citizens who crossed over to the Thai side of the border. A total of 8,975 individuals made their way to the border area of Mae Hong Son Province. To ensure the safety of these displaced individuals, Mae Hong Son Province established secure areas distributed across various districts. These areas included 3 points in Mae Sariang District, 1 point in Khun Yuam District, and 1 point in Muang District. In response to this situation, the Thai Border Command Center and the neighboring country's relevant agencies, along with the involvement of public health agencies, collaborated to provide assistance to the displaced individuals in accordance with humanitarian principles.

DIPHTHERIA CAN BE PREVENTED BY VACCINATION

Diphtheria is an acute infectious disease affecting the respiratory system, causing inflammation and tissue formation in the throat. In severe cases, complications can arise, including respiratory tract spasms, heart muscle inflammation, and even death. This disease can be prevented through vaccination. Data from the Epidemiology Division of the Department of Disease Control revealed that in Thailand, there were 2 confirmed cases in 2020, and no confirmed cases since then. However, the disease still has the potential to spread, particularly in neighboring countries, especially in border areas adjacent to Thailand. Data from the Immunization Promotion Group and Vaccination Plan of the General Communicable Disease Division indicated that the coverage rate for receiving all three doses of diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus vaccine (DPT3) in Thailand was 88% in 2020, decreasing to 85% in 2021 and 2022. The vaccine coverage data for this year, from January 1st to June 4th, stands at 86%, which is still below the 90% target. The data indicates a continued risk of diphtheria outbreaks in certain areas. The decline in vaccine coverage may be attributed to concerns arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, which discouraged parents from bringing their children for vaccination. In regions where diphtheria remains prevalent in neighboring countries and along the Thai border, population movement across the border has resulted in some people entering Thailand, some of whom may not have been vaccinated or have not completed their vaccinations. This situation contributes to the potential increase in diphtheria cases.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Officials have notified the relevant authorities and public health agencies to disseminate information to the residents about the diphtheria outbreak situation in neighboring countries. Individuals traveling along border areas or residing in regions where cases have been reported should take precautions and practice proper hygiene measures. They should avoid densely populated areas, wash hands frequently, cover their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, and wear a face mask if suffering from a respiratory illness to prevent the spread of infection. The most effective prevention measure is to ensure that children from the age of 2 months and above receive diphtheria vaccination as per the guidelines set by the Ministry of Public Health. For areas bordering neighboring countries, relevant officials should verify the vaccination history of residents and ensure comprehensive coverage of all target groups, aiming for at least 90% coverage. Additionally, vigilance units should be established to monitor individuals with suspected diphtheria symptoms who have traveled from neighboring countries.

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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