

Special Announcement of COVID-19 On 18 March 2020

1. The situation on 18 March 2020 at 8.00 a.m.

1. There are currently 169 confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) being actively treated in hospitals, 42 cases have recovered and have been sent home, and there has been one death, which brings the total number of COVID-19 cases detected in Thailand thus far to 212.

2. From 3 January to 18 March 2020 at 11.00 A.M., the total number of patients under investigation (PUI) was 7,546 people. Of those, 295 PUI were detected from screening at ports of entry, and 7,251 people sought medical services on their own at hospitals. 4,789 cases have recovered and returned home, but a few of these cases have been sent home and are being continually monitored. Most of the PUI were infected with seasonal influenza, and 2,757 PUI are still admitted to hospitals for further testing.

3. As of 7:00 a.m. on 18 March 2020, since 5 January 2020 the international situation involves 161 countries, two special administrative regions of China, and cruise ships. There were 194,584 confirmed cases and 7,894 deaths. 80,881 of these confirmed cases and 3,226 of these deaths are from the People's Republic of China.

2. MOPH reported 35 new cases of COVID-19, one case has recovered and returned home.

The Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) reported 35 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19, one case has recovered, been discharged and returned home. The MOPH requires people to strictly follow government instructions to prevent a widespread outbreak.

Dr. Suwannachai Wattanayingcharoenchai, Director General of the Department of Disease Control together with Dr. Thares Karasnairavivong, Director General of the Department of Health Service Support, Dr. Pornpimol Wipulakorn, Director General of the Department of Health, Dr. Marut Jirasetthasiri, Director General of the Department of Traditional and Alternative Medicine, jointly stated that today (18 March 2020), a confirmed case (31 year-old Thai woman) has recovered and was discharged from Rajavithi Hospital and returned home. The 35 additional cases can be divided into the following 2 groups:

The first group consists of 29 patients who had close contact history with confirmed cases or were involved with places that had confirmed cases i.e. 13 confirmed cases had history of going to the boxing stadium, four confirmed case had history of going to an entertainment spot, and 12 confirmed cases had history of close contact with previous cases.

The second group consists of 6 additional confirmed cases. One confirmed case came back from Cambodia, four confirmed cases had a history of close contact with foreigners and one case is pending additional investigation.

Of the confirmed cases, there have been 42 patients who recovered and were discharged from the hospital, while 169 confirmed cases still remain in the hospital, the total number of confirmed cases in critical condition is 3 and there has been one death. Now, the total number of confirmed cases is 212.

Two new severe cases were reported. The first new severe case is a 49-year-old Thai man who started feeling ill on March 8, 2020 with a fever, body aches, pneumonia, and renal function disorders. He was admitted at the intensive care unit at a hospital in Surat Thani. He required endotracheal intubation and today he will receive dialysis. He has received antiviral drugs.

The second severe case is a 67-year-old Belgian man who traveled from Belgium. He has pneumonia and acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS). The patient required endotracheal intubation and received antiviral drugs, and was being treated at a hospital in Phetchabun. The one severe case who was being treated in BIDI, is still being closely monitored.

Among the group of 83 people who departed from Italy and are residing at Sattahip Naval Base, there are 6 people admitted at the hospital. None of them had any fever and they were all negative for SARS-CoV-2 according to the laboratory results. However, they need to be under disease surveillance until the termination of the 14-day quarantine period.

During the past week, the number of confirmed cases increased rapidly because the disease screening was expanded among the groups of people and places where there were clusters of cases. The expanded screening implementation was related to the investigation report revealing that the new confirmed cases had a risk history of not complying with the MoPH recommendations. In other words, individuals still traveled to risk areas, visited crowded places, attended social activities, did not keep distance between other people, and did not strictly implement self-quarantine while developing symptoms. These kinds of actions can bring the virus to close contacts including family members and close friends. Above all, COVID-19 can be dangerous, especially for the elderly, infants and people with underlying diseases. If the situation still goes on like this in the future, there might be local transmission so widespread within the country, that it cannot be controlled.

Thailand urges everyone to work together in strict compliance with the recommendations of the Ministry of Public Health including separating personal items, eating freshly cooked food, serving individual food decks (if serving individual food cannot be practiced, please use individual serving spoons), allowing at least 1 meter of space between people in society, avoiding unnecessary travel, wearing a mask when going to the crowded places, and bringing alcohol gel along with you to wash your hands. If you have fever, cough, sore throat or runny nose, wear a mask and get medical attention immediately, and report your history of risk.

In this regard, please ask those who entered Lumpini Boxing Stadium and Ratchadamnoen Boxing Stadium from 6 - 8 March 2020, and other boxing stadiums in Bangkok between 9-10 March 2020. These people need to observe their symptoms for 14 days. For people with fever and at least one of the following symptoms: cough, sore throat, nasal secretions, and difficulty breathing, you need to go to a nearby health care provider, where the visit will be free of charge if you fit the criteria for a patient under investigation.

3. Advice for the general public

Please follow the news from the Ministry of Public Health. If there are any questions, ask at the Department of Disease Control Hotline 1422 for 24 hours per day or website:

<https://ddc.moph.go.th/viralpneumonia/eng/index.php>, Twitter, Facebook, Line official, Tik Tok “ไทยรัฐสู้โควิด” and Line official ChatBot 1422 “Kor-Ror-OK”, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health. People can check for scams at the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society at www.antifakenewscenter.com