

## Special Announcement of COVID-19

On 22 March 2020

### 1. The situation on 22 March 2020 at 8.00 a.m.

1. There are currently 553 confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) being actively treated in hospitals, 45 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 599.

2. From 3 January to 22 March 2020 at 11.00 A.M., the total number of patients under investigation (PUI) was 10,343 people. Of those, 343 PUI were detected from screening at ports of entry, and 10,000 people sought medical services on their own at hospitals. 6,271 cases have recovered and returned home. Most of the PUI were infected with seasonal influenza, and 4,072 PUI are still admitted to hospitals.

3. As of 7:00 a.m. on 22 March 2020, since 5 January 2020, the international situation involves 183 countries, two special administrative regions of China, and cruise ships. There were 306,677 confirmed cases and 13,017 deaths. 81,008 of these confirmed cases and 3,255 of these deaths are from the People's Republic of China.

### 2. MOPH reported 188 new cases of COVID-19, one case has recovered and returned home.

The Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) reported 188 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19, one case has recovered, been discharged and returned home. Recently, The National Communicable Disease Committee sent an urgent letter to the provincial governors, the Chairmen of Suvarnabhumi and Don Muang airports, the Director General of the Department of Land Transport and the Director of the State Railway of Thailand to screen all passengers.

Dr. Taweessin Visanuyothin, Senior Medical Officer and Spokesman of the Ministry of Public Health, Dr. Sapon Iamsirithaworn, Director of the Division of Communicable Diseases, Department of Disease Control and their team stated about COVID-19 that today, one patient, a 36 year-old Singaporean man was discharged from Bamrasnaradura Infectious Diseases Institute and returned home. There were 188 additional confirmed cases and they are divided into three groups as follows:

The first group consists of 65 patients who had close contact history with confirmed cases or were involved with places that had confirmed cases. There are 21 confirmed cases with history of going to the boxing stadium, five confirmed cases had history of going to entertainment spots, 37 confirmed cases had history of close contact with previous cases and two cases had history of joining a religious gathering in Malaysia.

The second group consists of 15 additional confirmed cases. Eight confirmed cases came back from abroad. Of these there are many cases who have travel history to pubs in Poipet, Cambodia among previous confirmed cases. Seven confirmed cases had a history of working or living in crowded places or had close contact with foreigners.

The third group consists of 108 cases that are pending investigation results.

There are seven severe cases at Bamrasnaradura Infectious Diseases Institute, Phetchabun Hospital, Chulalongkorn Hospital, Siriraj Hospital and private hospitals who require the use of ventilators and they are being closely monitored. In summary, 45 cases have fully recovered and were discharged, 553 cases are being treated at hospitals, and there has been one death, which brings the country's total number of confirmed cases to 599.

Those who are not included in the 'at-risk' groups and have no respiratory symptoms are requested to implement self-monitoring at their homes/residence and strictly comply with the Ministry of Public Health recommendations including social distancing in order to allow health officers to conduct laboratory tests in high-risk patients who will be given priority for testing. Importantly, asymptomatic people have a lower chance of confirming infection with SARS-CoV-2 (virus causing COVID-19). This may cause people who have been prematurely diagnosed to misunderstand their infection status and go out for social activities which can lead to further spread and can disrupt the prevention and control surveillance system.

Most new confirmed cases were reported in Bangkok and were among young people with few signs of symptoms. Many of those people continued to have social activities with others and they could potentially have caused a rapid increase in the number of high-risk close contacts such as seen in entertainment venues and boxing stadiums. Currently, the Governor of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration and provincial governors in surrounding zones ordered to temporarily close places at risk. Workers at places that were ordered to be closed, were asked not to return to their home provinces as they could spread the virus to their family members at home.

In this regard, the National Communicable Disease Committee has sent an urgent letter dated March 21, 2020 to every provincial governor as the provincial communicable disease chairmen to request cooperation in the preparation of the action plan for active surveillance and disease prevention at the district and village levels. Due to the temporary closure of businesses and services in Bangkok and surrounding provinces, there has been a rapid increase in the number of cases resulting from a group of people traveling to return to their hometowns. To respond to the situation, all provinces should proceed as follows:

1. Set volunteer teams to respond to COVID-19 at the district and village levels to implement active surveillance in those areas.
2. Create a database of travelers returning from Bangkok and its suburbs to their hometowns, with the beginning of the data collection starting on 2 March 2020 onwards
3. Provide knowledge and make returning travelers from Bangkok and its suburbs understand self-quarantine and observe fever and respiratory symptoms every day. Those travelers should avoid being close to other people in their residence until the completion of 14 days from the date of arrival in their residence.

Passengers arriving from the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration shall strictly comply with the recommendations including not sharing food or personal belongings (e.g. towels, pillows, blankets, glasses, spoons and forks) with other people, frequently washing hands with soap or alcohol gel, and avoiding contact with other people especially the elderly and patients with chronic diseases. If anyone

develops a fever and respiratory symptoms, it is recommended to wear a mask and inform the public health officers in the area immediately.

In addition, the Director of Suvarnabhumi Airport, Donmuang Airport, the Governors of the State Railway of Thailand, and the Director General of the Department of Land Transport requested collaboration to screen the passengers departing from the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, keep the stations and vehicles clean, especially the areas frequently touched by passengers (i.e. handrails, doors and toilets), record the travel history of passengers, manage the areas to reduce the congestion of passengers, keep space between seats, and provide information about the prevention of respiratory disease such as washing hands and wearing a mask. When passengers arrive at the destination station and develop respiratory symptoms including a fever and coughing, please inform the staff at the station so that they can inform the public health officer in the area further.

### 3. Advice for the general public

Please follow the news from the Ministry of Public Health. If there are any questions, you can ask at the Department of Disease Control Hotline 1422, 24 hours per day or website: <https://ddc.moph.go.th/viralpneumonia/eng/index.php>, Twitter, Facebook, Line official, Tik Tok “ไทยรู้สู้โควิด” 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](http://www.antifakenewscenter.com).