

## **Press Statement on the Management of the Covid-19 Outbreak Situation**

### **Current situation on the outbreak of Covid-19**

At present, although Thailand has yet to reach phase 3 of the outbreak there is a tendency that the virus will be widespread. Hence, in order to mitigate the spread from Bangkok to other provinces, it is necessary to be well prepared and equipped with countermeasures. All sectors in society must establish a common understanding and combine efforts to overcome this challenging situation. In the meantime, thank you to all government agencies for their joint cooperation towards the tangible outcomes.

Following from yesterday's meeting of the Committee on the Management of the Covid-19 Outbreak Situation, various measures have been tabled for the Cabinet's perusal and approval under 6 areas, comprising 1) public health 2) preventive medical supplies 3) information, clarification, and complaint registration, 4) foreign affairs, 5) prevention, and 6) assistance and compensation, as follows:

#### **1. Public Health**

“No city or country lockdown (Travel ban)”

#### **1.1 Preventing and intercepting possible infections from entering into Thailand**

(1) For foreign nationals arriving from the Disease Infected Zones for dangerous communicable diseases (4 countries + 2 special administrative regions) and other ongoing transmission areas (not defined as Disease Infected Zones for dangerous communicable disease) outside the Kingdom of Thailand under the Communicable Diseases Act B.E. 2558, you must:

- present a health certificate upon arrival (issued within three days before arrival)
- obtain valid health insurance
- install a tracking application to your mobile phone upon arrival (this measure applies at all ports of entry including land, sea, and air)
- immigration officers must inspect all passports to verify if any of the embarkation points are located within Disease Infected Zones or ongoing local transmission areas, and inform the Ministry of Interior
- adhere to the 14-day state quarantine measure

(2) All government officials as well as officials of state enterprises will not be granted permission to travel abroad if not necessary. All citizens are also advised to avoid travelling to Disease Infected Zones for dangerous communicable diseases and other ongoing local transmission areas.

1.2 develop systems and quarantine mechanisms for suspected Covid-19 patients when at their residences, in accordance with the Communicable Diseases Act B.E. 2558 (2015)

1.3 enforce mandatory installation and usage of the monitoring application for incoming Thai and foreign nationals

1.4 ensure that the number of medical personnel is adequate to the total of 29,449 doctors and 126,666 nurses from public hospitals and 7,711 doctors and 24,905 nurses from private hospitals. All hospitals have been instructed to allocate special zones for infected patients, while temporary and field hospitals have also been prepared in case the situation is escalated to phase 3.

1.5 Adequately procure necessary supplies to prepare for a possible phase 3 outbreak including medicine, medical supplies, medical kits, and personal protective equipment (PPE), all of which have been and are in process of manufacturing and procuring.

1.6 Advise Thai nationals residing overseas to delay their travel to Thailand until the situation has improved.

## **2) Preventive medical supplies**

“Expedite domestic production and procurement from overseas to adequately meet demand”

- Expedite increased production of face masks including cloth-based masks and sanitizing gel. All Thais are encouraged to use cloth-based masks as an alternative to surgical masks when in crowded and unventilated places. The increased production of cloth-based masks will also be expedited.
- Confiscated face masks from illegal trading, which are now in the possession of the relevant Thai authorities, will be sent to the Centre for Management of the Covid-19 Outbreak Situation for distribution.
- Inventory checks of medical supplies such as PPE, N95 masks, and other necessary equipment. All supplies will also be procured from overseas to meet domestic demand.
- Monitoring of online trading, stockpiling, and distribution of merchandise.

## **3) Information**

Government information on the Covid19 situation will be provided through 2 channels only: Ministry of Public Health (medical and public health issues), and the Covid Information Centre at Government House (all other issues)

## **4) Foreign Affairs**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will use the Team Thailand model, with the Thai Ambassador as head, to handle Covid19 matters for all Thai nationals abroad.

## 5) Preventive Measures

### 5.1 To reduce the risks of further spreading of Covid19 in high risk areas

- a. Daily public venues that pose as high risk contagion areas such as universities, international schools, tutoring schools, shall be temporarily closed for 2 weeks, starting from 18 March 2020, while all education institutions will need to strictly observe preventive measures according to standards set by the MOPH (Ministry of Public Health)
- b. Other occasional public venues that will be temporarily closed include boxing stadiums, sports stadiums, and horse tracks within Bangkok and its surrounding areas. Public houses (pubs), entertainment venues, recreation establishments, massage venues, and theatres, including movie theatres, in Bangkok and surrounding areas will be closed for 14 days
- c. Events that involve large public gatherings such as concerts, exhibitions, and other religious, cultural and sports events are to be curtailed, with the Governor of each province responsible for considering the appropriateness of each situation.

Enhanced preventive measures for venues that remain open include:

2. Department stores, all markets, government agencies, and state enterprises will need to follow the preventive measures set by the MOPH
3. Retail stores and restaurants will need to increase venue cleansing measures and have temperature checking measures for all clients, use masks for staff, and increase ventilation and spacing between customers.
4. Cancellation of the Songkran Public Holidays of 13 - 15 April until further notice
5. Reduce the risks of contagion through public transport by providing more vehicles to reduce congestion
6. Curtailing of activities that involve the cross-province transport of peoples: such as by military camps, prisons, schools, and migrant workers. Should such activities be necessary, they must strictly follow the preventive measures set by the MOPH.
7. All government agencies are to reconsider work hours and work-from-home arrangements, including on-line meetings and other work programmes suitable for the efficient continuation of work.
8. All provincial governors and provincial disease control committees (including Bangkok Metropolitan), will use the Communicable Disease Control Act of 2558, Article 35, to control and manage any transportation that may risk spreading of the virus, or set any appropriate measures that are deemed necessary to control potential risk areas, and shall inform the Covid19 Centre of such measures for approval, which will subsequently involve daily reports.

9. To quickly establish Covid19 control centres in every district, village, and community, with public cooperation for monitoring and disease control.

#### 6) Assistance and compensation

6.1 For affected factories, shops, hotels, and businesses in the tourism industry –relevant agencies including the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Labour, and Ministry of Industry, will introduce measures to assist affecting businesses and prolong any laying-off process, such as by reducing accommodation rates.

6.2 Citizens affected by economic impacts – designated relevant agencies, including the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Interior, will introduce measures to assist citizens who have been economically impacted, such as those with obligations to repay their debts, by seeking cooperation from financial institutions to allow a grace period for debt payment installments. This scheme will also be extended to other impacted informal professions (merchants, daily employees etc.) as well as farmers (fruits, flowers, orchids etc.). Moreover, the designated agencies have also been assigned to introduce additional measures to alleviate further economic impacts.

6.3 Designate relevant agencies including the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of Commerce to steadfastly and strictly monitor any other impacts arising from Covid-19 such as informal debts, extortion, and consignment selling.

6.4 Extend moral support to medical personnel.

All measures which have already been approved by the Cabinet will be publicized through Covid-19 Information Centre and other relevant channels.

#### **Conclusion**

Thailand is currently maintaining the situation at phase 2 as long as we can through every possible measure to control and manage the situation. The successful handling of the Covid19 situation is the top priority for us now, as it directly affects the lives of our people. When infections decrease, the Government will introduce measures to revive our economy and society. Meanwhile, the Government will constantly monitor the Covid19 situation in the country and globally, along with its economic impacts. Accordingly, the Government will adapt its measures to suit ongoing developments.