

Thai News Update: 12 March 2020

1. Thailand restricts visitor visas to limit virus spread

Source: Reuters ([Link](#))

Thailand will temporarily suspend issuing visas on arrival to visitors from 19 countries and territories, including China, to contain the spread of the coronavirus, its interior minister said on 11 March. The suspensions were the latest measures imposed in the tourism-reliant Southeast Asian country, which has reported 59 cases of the virus and one death so far. Globally, over 113,000 people have been infected in over 100 countries. “People from any country who want to come will need to apply for a visa with our embassies,” Minister of Interior Anupong Paochinda told reporters.

2. Six more cases of COVID-19 confirmed in Thailand

Source: National News Bureau of Thailand ([Link](#))

The Ministry of Public Health has announced that Thailand has identified six more confirmed cases of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the country’s total to 59. Five of the new cases are Thai nationals. The first of the six confirmed cases is a 21-year-old male immigration officer at Suvarnabhumi Airport. The second is a 40-year-old man who also works at the same airport. Both men are working in different areas of the airport, but they have both been in close contact with tourists, who are an at-risk group.

3. Free check-ups for returnees from COVID-19 high-risk countries in Thailand

Source: Pattaya Mail ([Link](#))

The government is offering free medical check-ups for all individuals including foreigners who have just arrived Thailand or have come into close contact with those from high-risk countries or territories already dealing with the coronavirus disease. Thanom Ornketpol, Spokesperson for Government House’s recently established COVID-19 Data Center, has made known that the government is offering free medical check-ups for those who recently arrived from high-risk countries or territories and are exhibiting symptoms such as fever, a sore throat or heavy breathing, asking them to contact the Disease Control Department, via Hotline 1422.

4. 400 billion baht stimulus announced to boost Thai economy

Source: The Thaiger ([Link](#))

Thai cabinet meeting on 10 March gave the greenlight to a new stimulus package. The government expects the approved 400 billion baht to reduce the impact of the Covid-19 coronavirus outbreak. Last week's 2,000 baht cash stimulus proposal, which was largely roasted in Thai social media after being proposed by the economic ministers, isn't included in yesterday's approved package. The Kasikorn Research Centre has slashed its forecast for Thailand's GDP growth this year to 0.5%. They believe the outbreak will wipe over 400 billion baht off tourism receipts.

5. Thailand 'to be regional EV hub' in five years

Source: Bangkok Post ([Link](#))

The government has announced a policy to make Thailand a regional hub of electric vehicles in five years. Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak made the announcement at Government House on 11 March in his capacity as the chairman of the National Electric Vehicle Policy Committee. "Strategies are in place for all parties to make Thailand an electric vehicle production base within five years. The Industry Ministry, the Energy Ministry and the Transport Ministry will implement the strategies with relevant parties," he said. The strategies include electric vehicle use by governmental organisations and state enterprises and the introduction of electric buses and electric motorcycle taxis, the deputy prime minister said.

6. All arriving passengers now required to provide additional contact info

Source: The Thaiger ([Link](#))

The Department of Disease Control plans to impose compulsory measures for all inbound arrivals, including notifying personal information and contact information such as mobile phone numbers and email addresses as part of steps to control the Covid-19 coronavirus outbreak. The additional arrival formalities will start from 13 March and officials say the new personal information provided by inbound passengers will stay in the system for 14 days after their arrival at a Thai international airport. The National Science and Technology Development Agency say that a new App will be able to be downloaded from 13 March where passengers will be able to provide the additional information OR on the current TM8 form.

7. Roadmap sees Asean EV hub by 2025

Source: Bangkok Post ([Link](#))

The government has announced plans to transform the country into the electric vehicle and motorcycle hub of Asean within five years via state measures to boost demand, though some critics continue to doubt Thailand's ability to create a full-fledged EV ecosystem. The government has drawn up a roadmap to promote EVs through state agencies and has set a target to produce 250,000 EVs, 3,000 electric public buses and 53,000 electric motorcycles by 2025. Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak said the government wants to promote Thailand as the centre of a new generation of auto manufacturing.

8. Visa on Arrival suspended for a host of countries

Source: The Nation ([Link](#))

The government has decided to suspend Visa on Arrival (VoA) for visitors from 18 countries at a meeting on March 11, chaired by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, also head of the Covid-19 management centre. Countries affected are Bulgaria, Bhutan, China (include Taiwan), Cyprus, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, India, Kazakhstan, Malta, Mexico, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, and Republic of Vanuatu.