

Thai News Update: 20 March 2020

1. Health certificates required of all visitors

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

The government will extend the requirement of medical certificates and health insurance from 15 March to cover all visitors to the country regardless of nationalities to curb the spread of the coronavirus. Thailand reported 60 new coronavirus cases, the biggest daily jump in the number of cases so far to take its total infections to 272, the Public Health Ministry said on 20 March. Travellers to Thailand have to now show authorities a health certificate, issued no more than 72 hours before travelling, confirming that they have been tested and are free from the virus. They must also present an insurance policy showing minimum coverage for coronavirus of not less than US\$100,000.

2. Travellers from 15 countries must have Covid-free certificates

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

The Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand now requires foreign air passengers travelling from 15 countries to show Covid-19-free health certificates and Covid-19 insurance before boarding their flights to Thailand. The 11 ongoing local transmission areas are Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan (specific cities), Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States. The Japanese cities are Aichi, Chiba, Hokkaido, Karagawa, Kyoto, Okinawa, Osaka, Tokyo and Wakayama.

3. Hotels in Thailand pay 3% less on water, electricity bills to ease COVID-19 impacts on tourism

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

The COVID-19 pandemic has already had various impacts on society and the economy. Now, the Cabinet has approved a measure to reduce water and electricity bills by 3 percent for three months, extending electricity and water bill payment deadlines for hotels, and returning guarantee deposits to residential clients. According to the Government Spokesperson Narumon

Pinyosinwat, the Cabinet has approved a 3 percent discount for electricity bills, applicable to all types of electricity users valid for three months from the April to June 2020 billing cycles.

4. B39bn Don Mueang 3rd phase gets nod

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

The Airports of Thailand Plc (AoT) board has approved a master plan for the third-phase development of Don Mueang airport costing an estimated 39 billion baht, a source at the AoT said on 18 March. The expansion scheme, which will increase the airport's capacity to 40 million passengers a year -- up from 30 million at present, includes a 3.4-kilometre automated people mover system (APM), 12 parking bays, a junction terminal offering retail space and car park buildings. The APM system will boost the airport's capacity to handle increasing passenger numbers and should also ease congestion at the airport, which has caused spill-over traffic jams on the adjacent Vibhavadi Rangsit Road.

5. Thai Chamber of Commerce reassures public that there is no shortage in food goods and no need to panic shop

Source: The Pattaya News ([Link](#))

Demand for consumable products will likely increase if the spread of COVID-19 expands further. The Thai Chamber of Commerce has reassured the public that the current production capacity of manufacturers is sufficient to meet domestic demand, with some manufacturers having already ramped up their capacity to ensure there are products on shelves. Thai Chamber of Commerce and Board of Trade of Thailand's President, Kalin Sarasin has presented his vision of a COVID-19 pandemic, affecting the economy and the general public.

6. Tourism Ministry to return B1.4bn in deposits

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

The Tourism Ministry is poised to return 1.4 billion baht in deposits to tour companies that registered with the Tourism Department, while acknowledging that a year-long pandemic could slash the number of international visitors in 2020 to 10 million. "If the pandemic is still uncontrollable on a global scale until the end of this year, even if Thailand can successfully restrict the contagion, it'll be useless because international tourists will not come anyway," said Tourism and Sports Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn. "Based on that scenario, to achieve 10 million international visitors is already good enough."

7. Prime Minister of Thailand stresses all citizens will be taken care of financially during COVID19 crisis

Source: The Pattaya News ([Link](#))

The Prime Minister has stated that he understands the ordeal that people are going through during these difficult times and stressed that the government will take care of its citizens during the COVID-19 crisis. Government Spokesperson Narumon Pinyosinwat said the Prime Minister expressed concern over the well-being of all Thais, as the administration issued an order shutting down various public gathering places, in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These places include educational institutes, boxing stadiums, sports clubs, horse race tracks, massage shops, entertainment venues, theaters and cinemas.

8. 50 new cases reported, total now 322

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

The government reported 50 new coronavirus infections on 20 March, taking the tally to 322, with the majority in Bangkok. One group of 41 new cases is linked to earlier infections, while another, of nine, centres on overseas arrivals and contact with foreigners, Suwannachai Wattanayingcharoenchai, director-general of the disease control department, told a news conference. Thailand has reported one death from Covid-19, with 43 patients having recovered and gone home, while 278 are still in hospital.

9. Thailand among recipients of medical kits from Jack Ma, Alibaba foundations

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

The Jack Ma Foundation and Alibaba Foundation are jointly donating 2 million face masks, 150,000 test kits, 20,000 sets of protective gear and 20,000 face shields for Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand. The foundation pledged additional support to other countries in Asia in the fight against Covid-19 "We join hands with our Asian neighbours to fight Covid-19," said the Jack Ma Foundation while announcing the donation to the four countries. In the previous week, 500,000 test kits and 1 million masks were delivered to the US., 100,000 test kits and 1 million masks to Italy, 300,000 medical masks to Belgium, and 500,000 masks for Spain

10. Thailand joins WHO's project for antiviral drugs

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

Thailand has agreed to join 'Solidarity Trail', a project organised and sponsored by The World Health Organisation (WHO) in search for antiviral drugs against the Covid-19 pandemic. The WHO said on March 18 that it would launch a multi-arm, multi-country clinical trial for potential coronavirus therapies, part of an aggressive effort to jumpstart the global search for drugs to treat Covid-19, said government spokeswoman Narumon Pinyosinwat on March 19. Ten countries have already indicated their willingness to take part in the trial - Argentina, Bahrain, Canada, France, Iran, Norway, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, and Thailand.

11. US embassy slams door on visa appointments

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

The United States embassy and consulate in Thailand are cancelling routine non-immigrant visa appointments starting on March 19. Embassy officials said in a statement that routine visa services will resume “as soon as possible”. “If you have an urgent matter and need to travel immediately, please follow the guidance provided at <https://www.ustraveldocs.com/.../th-niv...> to request an appointment.” It also said people are barred from the US if they have been in the following countries anytime in the previous 14 days: Britain, Ireland, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Iran and China (but not Hong Kong or Macau).