

Thai News Update: 26 March 2020

1. COVID-19 in Asean: update for March 26 — 122 dead regionally as global deaths top 20,000

Source: AEC News Today ([Link](#))

As of 01:19 GMT March 26 there was 4,502 active cases of COVID-19 throughout the 10 Asean member countries, an increase of 497 on the day prior. Malaysia continued to report the most number of new cases with 172 on 25 March, seeing the number of active cases there rise to 1,577, with four deaths increasing the total to 20. Sixty-four Malaysian COVID-19 patients are classified as serious or critical. In Thailand 107 fresh cases yesterday and three deaths saw its active caseload increase to 860, while there has now been four deaths there. Eleven people in Thailand remain classified as serious or critical. In Indonesia 104 new cases and three deaths over the past 24-hours, saw the total number of active cases there rise to 701 and deaths to 58.

2. Thailand bars entry as state of emergency bites

Source: CNA ([Link](#))

Thailand barred entry into the kingdom late on Mar 25, enacting sweeping emergency powers in a bid to stem the local spread of the coronavirus outbreak. The measures, which stopped short of a full lockdown after days of vacillation by the government, are a hammer blow to the country's vital tourism sector. Tens of thousands of travellers remain in the kingdom, facing uncertainty with airlines in chaos and restrictions on return to their countries. Bangkok, a city of 10 million, was hushed on 25 March as shops and restaurants shuttered, and Buddhist monks seated a metre apart led an anti-virus prayer session televised nationwide.

3. Bus ticket sales suspended until April 30

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

Ticket sales for all public transport buses will be suspended from March 26 to April 30 in compliance with the government's declaration of a state of emergency which takes effect on Thursday (March 26), the president of Transport Co Ltd, Jirasak Yaovatsakul, said. He added that the company will also enforce social distancing by leaving empty alternate seats on the buses and keep a distance of at least one metre between persons at all bus terminals.

4. State of emergency tightens rules for foreigners travelling to Thailand

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

Thailand has effectively closed its doors for non-resident foreigners wanting to enter the country under the state of emergency that comes into force on March 26, Only some groups of

people will be allowed to enter and exit the country and only the prime minister and responsible authorities will be authorised to open the borders in special cases. Those who transport goods will be allowed to enter the country provided they leave quickly. Operators of land, sea and air transport like drivers, pilots and ship crew must follow their time table. Diplomatic staff, members of international organisations and government representatives who have missions in Thailand are allowed to come in. Their family members also will be allowed if authorised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

5. CPF enforces virus-prevention measures, reassures safety of meat products

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

Charoen Pokphand Foods (CPF) has implemented measures to prevent pork and chicken meat from being infected with the Covid-19 virus, said Dr Damnoen Chaturavittawong (DVM), Senior Vice President of Swine Veterinary Service Department on March 25. Under the measures announced, all staffers will be screened for body temperature, submerge their feet in disinfectants, spray hands with alcohol, and wear face mask. CPF has been cooperating with the Department of Livestock Development to prevent and monitor contagious diseases in pigs and poultry, consumers can be confident of the safety of our meat products,” he said.

6. Inter-provincial border checkpoints to be deployed from midnight of March 25

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

Governors of all provinces have been ordered to strictly comply with the government’s declaration of a state of emergency throughout the Kingdom with effect from 26 March due to the escalating new coronavirus (Covid-19) situation. Permanent secretary at the Interior Ministry, Chatchai Phromlert, issued the order on March 25 asking all provincial governors to coordinate with local administration offices, police and military personnel in deploying checkpoints at borders between provinces from midnight of March 25 throughout April.

7. 5.3 per cent contraction seen for Thai economy 2020

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

The Thai economy is expected to sharply contract by 5.3 per cent this year as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to weigh on global financial markets, economy and people, says the Bank of Thailand. The BOT’s Monetary Policy Committee forecast the Thai economy to contract 5.3 per cent this year before rebounding to a growth of 3 per cent next year, said Don Nakornthab, senior director at Bank of Thailand’s economic & policy department, on March 25.

8. Buses to Laos, Cambodia suspended

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

The Transport Co on 25 March suspended all 15 inter-country bus services to Laos and Cambodia, while imposing stricter measures including thermal scans on passengers taking existing routes to control the transmission of Covid-19. The services will reopen once the situation improves. The bus services were suspended after Laos and Cambodia shut their borders as part of their Covid-19 containment measures, the company said. For local routes, the company has imposed new restrictions effective from 25 March. Among them is ensuring that all staff on buses operated by either Transport Co or its concessionaires wear masks. The same rule applies to passengers, who are required to wear a face mask from when they enter the terminal to when they disembark at their destination.