

State of Emergency

- The emergency decree came into effect on March 26, 2020 and will remain in force until April 30, 2020.
- The decree bans all foreigners from entry at all entry points - the exceptions being shippers, diplomats, drivers, pilots and others permitted by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha.
- Thais stranded in other countries will be allowed to return.
- People under the age of 5 years and over 70 are encouraged to stay home, and public gatherings are banned.
- The period of the emergency decree was announced on March 25, 2020 in a nationwide broadcast by Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-o-cha.
- It has nationwide effect.
- Only necessary measures will be issued, to prevent the spread of the virus.
- General Prayut said all shops selling food and essential consumer goods can remain open.
- The emergency decree gives General Prayut wide-ranging powers to enforce the stay at home directive, including the power to impose curfews and put restrictions on travel.
- General Prayut said drastic action needs to be taken to deal with the worsening pandemic as the number of new infection cases continue to rise.
- Despite the government's plea for people to stay home and limit their non-essential travel, thousands of people continue to leave the city while crowds of people are still seen hanging out, ignoring the social distancing guideline.
- General Prayut suggested a lockdown might be inevitable if people do not cooperate. But for the time being, the government is asking for cooperation from the public.
- He said people who still travel will be subjected to strict inspection and screening which he described as a barrier to minimize movement of people.
- Prime Minister did not spell out which of the drastic measures permitted under the decree will be adopted. He said that the situation will be evaluated on a daily basis.
- General Prayut also warned against hoarding and profiteering which he said will be drastically dealt with under the decree

The Cabinet approved the relief package

- The Cabinet approved a relief package for employees who have lost their jobs, and businesses that have been affected by the outbreak of Covid-19.
- This includes a measure to hand out 5,000 baht per month for a period of 3 months for workers and part-time employees who are not registered with the social security system. The government estimates that there are about 3 million people who are eligible for the handout.
- For workers and employees who are part of the social security system, they will receive 50 % of their wages for 180 days if their employer has gone out of business, or for 90 days if their employer is ordered to temporarily close down by the government.
- The government has also set aside a soft retail loan policy with a budget of 40 billion baht at an interest rate of 0.1 % per month and without any guarantee needed. The loan limit is 10,000 baht per person, which will be provided by state-owned banks and specialized financial institutions.
- Another 20-billion-baht budget has been set aside for people who want a loan with a 50,000-baht limit, but with an interest rate of 0.35 per month.
- For businesses that have been affected by the partial shutdown and the impending state of emergency, the Cabinet approved 8 measures to support them, including a supportive loan measure with a budget of 10 billion baht.
- The loan will be offered by the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Bank of Thailand with a limit of 3 million baht per loan with a 3 % interest rate in the first 2 years. The loan period can be no longer than 5 years. The deadline to apply for the loan is December 30, 2020.
- Businesses that are eligible for the soft loan include tour and travel agencies, spas, transport businesses, hotels, and restaurants, among others.
- The deadline for corporate income tax payment is extended from May until the end of August 2020 for the annual audit filing, and from August until the end of September 2020 for the half-year report.
- Other measures include extensions for all tax payments that are being collected by the Customs Department for businesses that must close down because of government orders. The payment of excise taxes on oil will also be extended from 10 to 15 days for 3 months.
- The duty on the import of materials and supplies needed for the research, treatment, and prevention against Covid-19 will also be exempted until September 30, 2020. The list of materials and supplies will be determined by the Ministry of Public Health.

- The exemption from taxes and fees to support debt restructuring of non-financial creditors is being implemented. The exemption period will start from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2021.
- Mortgage registration, transfer, and transaction fees for real estate under the Land Code are now reduced to 0.01 %.
- Submission of tax returns for individual taxpayers will be extended from March to August and health insurance deductions will be increased from 15,000 baht to 29,000 baht.
- Risk allowances, for medical professionals involved in the fight against the virus, will be exempted from taxation. A special credit line, amounting to 10 billion baht, will be set aside for small and medium-sized enterprises.
- Excise tax payments for entertainment venues will be extended for three months and all products related to the fight against the virus will be exempted from customs taxes.

The Social Security Office's financial help

- The Social Security Board (SSB) decided to reduce the 5% monthly contribution to the Social Security Fund to 4%
- The SSB decided to defer contributions for the months of March, April and May by 3 months, meaning the deadline for the March contribution would be July 15, 2020.

The Covid-19 Management Center approves the postponement of deadline for annual general meeting of shareholders

- On March 23, 2020, the meeting of the Covid-19 Management Center, chaired by the Minister Attached to the Prime Minister's Office Tewan Liptapallop approved for company limited and publicly listed companies, registered with the Department of Business Development, Ministry of Commerce, to notify the Department if they wish to postpone their annual general meetings of shareholders without being fined. The deadline is on April 30 each year, as stipulated by the law. Companies may opt for e-meetings. However, if a meeting is to be held, they must strictly comply with the measures stipulated by the Ministry of Public Health, i.e., limitation of participants, temperature screening, provision of alcohol hand gels, and practice of alternate seating.
- The Office of the Council of State Secretary General Pakorn Nilprapunt said that it is within the scope of law for an e-meeting to be conducted, on two criteria, 1) at least one third of the meeting participants must be present, and 2) participants must all reside in the country.

COVID-19 supplies arrive from China

- Medical supplies, including surgical masks, N-95 respirators, test kits and protective suits arrived at Suvarnabhumi airport on March 23, 2020.
- The supplies were donated by the Chinese government to fight the spread of Covid-19 in Thailand.

100 people denied entry into Thailand

- Airport authorities have blocked almost 100 travelers from entering Thailand, with 73 of them being deported for not having enough documents to meet special immigration measures to combat the Covid-19 disease.
- They were among 4,533 passengers, both Thais and foreigners, who entered Thailand on March 22 via Suvarnabhumi, Don Mueang, Phuket and Chiang Mai airports, according to the Department of Disease Control.
- Apart from those deported, 6 more are in the process of leaving the country while the remaining 15 have been detained.
- To enter Thailand, travelers, both Thais and foreigners, need to show health certificates and related health insurance coverage or documents to guarantee their whereabouts to ensure they are "fit-to-fly".
- Foreigners must show medical certificates with lab results stating they have tested negative for Covid-19 while Thais must have received approval from doctors to be healthy to travel. The documents must be issued within 72 hours before flights depart.
- For Thai nationals, other documents include certification from Thai embassies and details of where they will stay under the 14-day self-isolation requirement upon their return to Thailand.
- All border checkpoints have also been temporarily closed though some were briefly reopened on Monday and Tuesday to allow throngs of migrant workers to return to their countries.

Thailand's latest Covid-19 cases

- As of March 27, 2020, the Public Health Ministry reported 111 new infections, raising the total to 1,045 cases, with 4 fatalities.
- 953 are at hospitals, 88 people have recovered.
- The rise in the local outbreak is due to transmission from those who have been to boxing stadiums and entertainment venues.
- So far, 9 medical officials have contracted the disease because patients concealed their infection-risk histories.