

# Thailand prepares tough measures to control spread of virus

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Thai women wearing face masks to protect themselves from a new virus exercise at Lumpini Park in in Bangkok, Thailand, Friday, Feb. 7, 2020. The coronavirus outbreak in China has thrown Thailand's and other Asian countries' travel industry into chaos, threatening billions in losses as millions of would-be travelers are staying home. (AP Photo/Sakchai Lalit)

Thai authorities say they are taking steps to wield emergency legal

powers to control the spread of the new virus and limit its economic and social impact.

Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said Monday the National Committee on Communicable Disease has endorsed adding COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus, to a list of 13 other dangerous communicable diseases.

The endorsement is expected to be quickly implemented. Thailand has 35 confirmed cases of the virus, about half of whom have recovered.

The measure would authorize disease control officials to issue orders to quarantine and detain infected people or those suspected of carrying the virus.

In emergencies, it would authorize governors, with consent from the committee, to temporarily shut down markets, entertainment facilities, business places, factories, community areas and [educational institutions](#) and order a halt to activities judged dangerous.

Doctors, landlords and others with responsibility for people potentially harboring the virus would be required to report suspected case within three hours of learning about them.

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