

# Thailand decrees state of emergency to control coronavirus

March 24 2020



A hand sanitizer container is mounted in store-shelf as staff with face masks place supplies in a supermarket in Bangkok, Thailand, Tuesday, March 24, 2020. Most popular shopping malls remained shut in Bangkok, except supermarkets and pharmacies to combat the spread of new coronavirus. For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms. For some, especially older adults it can cause more severe illness. (AP Photo/Gemunu Amarasinghe)

Thailand's government agreed Tuesday to declare an emergency to take stricter measures to control the coronavirus outbreak that has infected hundreds of people in the Southeast Asian country.

Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha said his Cabinet agreed to put a one-month state of emergency into effect on Thursday.

The move will give the government enforcement powers not normally available to it. They include implementing curfews, censoring the media, dispersing gatherings and allowing deployment of military forces for enforcement.

Prayuth in a brief televised address urged the public to remain calm and warned people against the improper use of social [media](#) and hoarding, saying there would now be stricter enforcement against violators.

Thailand also Tuesday confirmed 106 new cases of infection with the virus that causes COVID-19, bringing the total to 827. Four of the new cases were [medical staff](#). Three deaths were reported, bringing the country's total to four.

Prayuth's [government](#) had been criticized for failing to take strong action to fight the coronavirus even as the daily increases in cases jumped from single digits in February into the hundreds in the past week.

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