

Bangkok, 9 provinces restrict movements to curb rising cases

27 June 2021



A construction site sits empty in Bangkok, Thailand, Friday, June 25, 2021. As Thailand has struggled unsuccessfully to lower the number of new COVID-19 cases and related deaths during its third and worst wave of coronavirus infections, the government on Friday ordered the camps where construction workers are housed in Bangkok and other hard-hit areas to be shut for a month and the workers kept inside to help stop the spread of the disease. Credit: AP Photo/Sakchai Lalit

Faced with a sharp rise in coronavirus cases, the Thai capital on Sunday announced a ban on indoor dining and gatherings of more than 20 people, in addition to the closure of construction sites and the sealing off of workers' quarters in Bangkok and nine other provinces.

The measures will remain for 30 days.

Thailand reported 3,995 confirmed cases and 42 dead in the last 24 hours. The numbers have doubled recently, and [health officials](#) blame a lack of cooperation from [migrant workers](#) employed in construction and in factories.

"Camps were closed but workers sneaked out to markets and communities, and spread the

disease," Apisamai Srirangson, spokesperson for the Center for COVID-19 Situation Administration, said Friday. She said that "bubble and seal" disease control measures had proved successful within 28 days in handling clusters in Samut Sakhon [province](#), south of Bangkok, but not in the capital.

The situation has become critical as the number of hospital beds in Bangkok for seriously ill COVID-19 patients is running short despite the creation of several field hospitals. Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha said Friday that a proposal for a seven-day curfew for all of Bangkok has been rejected for the time being.

Under the new restrictions, [construction workers](#) will be isolated in camps in Bangkok and five neighboring provinces, and in the country's four southernmost provinces, all virus hotspots.



A health worker administers a dose of the Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine to a disabled person in Bangkok, Thailand, Friday, June 25, 2021. Credit: AP Photo/Sakchai Lalit

Department stores and malls in Bangkok can stay

open until 9 p.m., but food and drinks in restaurants are allowed only for takeaway. Seminars, meetings and parties are canceled. If more clusters are discovered, the governor can seal off those communities.

Travelers from the 10 provinces, including Bangkok, will be isolated and quarantined.

Authorities, meanwhile, are planning to go ahead with a plan to allow fully vaccinated foreign tourists to visit the southern resort island of Phuket without undergoing a 14-day quarantine that is otherwise mandatory. Thailand is anxious to begin the recovery of its lucrative tourism industry, which has been devastated by the pandemic and consequent travel restrictions.

Thailand has administered around 8.66 million vaccine doses, with around 9% of its 69 million people receiving at least one shot. Critics charge that Prayuth's government failed to secure timely and adequate vaccine supplies. He says Thailand now has agreements that will ensure enough vaccine for about 70% of its population by the end of the year.

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