

Asia virus latest: Thai state of emergency, Tokyo urged to stay home

March 26 2020



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Here are the latest developments from Asia related to the novel coronavirus pandemic:

Thai state of emergency begins

A state of emergency came into force in Thailand aimed at halting the

spread of the virus.

Entry into the kingdom has been barred except for diplomats and returning Thais, a hammer blow for the lucrative tourism industry, while all gatherings have been outlawed.

Traffic was light in the capital Bangkok Thursday, a city usually notorious for its congestion, with virtually all shops closed and restaurants offering only takeaway.

Tokyo told to stay home

Tokyo's governor urged residents to stay home this weekend, warning of a possible "explosion" of the [coronavirus](#) after a record 41 new cases were discovered on Wednesday.

Yuriko Koike said the Japanese capital, so far spared the draconian measures seen in other major global cities, was at a "critical stage" in containing the virus that has confined more than three billion people to their homes worldwide.

Philippine doctors die

Nine doctors have died in the Philippines from the coronavirus, a medical association said, as hospitals become overwhelmed and medics complain about a lack of protective equipment.

Three large Manila hospitals announced they had reached full capacity and would no longer accept new coronavirus cases. Hundreds of [medical staff](#) are undergoing 14-day self-quarantines after suspected exposure.

Singapore GDP contracts

Singapore's economy in the first quarter suffered its biggest contraction since the [financial crisis](#) as the coronavirus pandemic escalated, data showed, an ominous sign of the devastation being inflicted on the [global economy](#).

The export-reliant financial hub—one of the world's most open economies and viewed as a barometer for the health of global trade—is now heading for a deep recession this year after the economy shrank 2.2 percent on-year in the quarter.

Fears for Rohingya in Bangladesh

Health experts voiced fears for the roughly one million Rohingya refugees housed in sewage-soaked alleys and bamboo shacks in Bangladesh, areas which they say are fertile ground for the spread of the coronavirus.

Most of the stateless Muslims arrived in the camps in 2017 to escape a Myanmar military clampdown across the border.

Asian markets claw back losses

Asian markets mostly rose or clawed back early losses as investors breathed a sigh of relief that US senators finally passed a gargantuan stimulus package for the world's biggest economy which had been delayed by wrangling over details.

China imported infections surge

The number of imported virus cases in China climbed to 541, according to official data, indicating the country is facing a second wave of infections just as it seems to be bringing its domestic outbreak under control.

Aussies worried about bats

Animal welfare activists in Australia appealed for calm after reports emerged that emergency services were being flooded with calls from people fearful that the country's large populations of bats were spreading the coronavirus.

Australia is home to about 90 species of bat, including endangered "flying fox" megabats endemic to populous areas in the east. The local branch of Humane Society International said misinformation about the flying mammals being the origin of COVID-19 posed a further threat to the animals.

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