

COVID-19 Flash Update: Government Guidance Affecting Migrant Workers and their Employers in Thailand and Neighbouring Countries

The COVID-19 situation is evolving rapidly. In this update, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) provides information for migrant workers and their employers on government decisions relevant to migrant workers in Thailand, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar.

Important Note: Please note that this is only a summary of the information provided by the above governments. Every effort is made to ensure information is up to date, however, as the situation is changing quickly you are encouraged to seek further information by contacting the Ministry of Labour or respective embassies directly.

Updates and Information from IOM Thailand

IOM's newly developed **Toolkit for Development Partners: Integrating Migration into COVID-19 Socio-economic Response** is now available for download [HERE](#)

IOM Thailand is monitoring border movements and providing assistance to migrants and the Royal Thai Government. For updates and to access IOM tools and guidelines related to COVID-19, please check here: <https://thailand.iom.int/iom-thailand-covid-19-response>

Thailand

Arrangements in place for return of Myanmar migrants from Thailand

The Embassy of Myanmar in Thailand, in coordination with the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has announced arrangements are in place to initiate the return of Myanmar migrants via land borders in Thailand. This is expected to be a staggered process, with a maximum of 210 returnees per day, commencing from 22 May. Please see 'Safe return arrangements for Myanmar migrant workers' on page 2 for more information.

Further easing of restrictions for businesses in Thailand

On 15 May, Thailand's Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) announced further measures to ease restrictions, allowing certain businesses to re-open from 17 May onwards, including:

- Shops that sell IT products and electronic appliances, construction materials, furniture, office supplies, kitchenware, flowers, clothes, cosmetics, sporting equipment, and jewelry, as well as food courts and restaurants;
- Businesses that offer services including telecommunications, internet, laundry, copy machine repair, and insurance; as well as clinics, dentists, car washes, garages, beauty salons and hotels.

The permitted opening hours for the above mentioned businesses are between 4:01 AM to 8:00 PM. Detailed hygiene instructions for different businesses are listed [here](#).

Incoming flight ban extended to 30 June

On 16 May, the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) announced an extension of the ban on all international flights to Thailand until 5:00 PM UTC on 30 June (Bangkok time 00:00 AM on 1 July). Exemptions are summarized on

page 2 in [IOM's Flash Update #7](#). Overseas Thai nationals can contact their respective Royal Thai Embassy to seek assistance including for information on repatriation flights, and to obtain fit-to-fly certificates.

enhance COVID-19 contact tracing. So far, more than 44,000 businesses have registered via the application.

Myanmar

Safe return arrangements for Myanmar migrant workers

Reference: The Embassy of Myanmar in Thailand, 19 May 2020

The Embassy of Myanmar in Thailand announced official arrangements to repatriate Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand via land borders, in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in Thailand. Key information is summarized below:

- Starting from 22 May, buses will transport Myanmar migrants from Mo Chit (Bangkok) to Mae Sot on a daily basis, accompanied by Thai police. Five buses are scheduled to depart daily from Mo Chit at 10 PM, and another five buses will depart at 11 PM. A maximum of 21 passengers are allowed per bus, and each passenger is permitted to carry a maximum of two bags weighing no more than 20 kg in total.
- Under these arrangements, the maximum number of Myanmar migrants able to return per day is 210 passengers in total.
- The total bus fare from Mo Chit to Mae Sot, using this service, is THB 1,048, to be paid by passengers.
- In order to utilize the service, migrants need to first apply [online](#). The Myanmar Labour Attaché Office will then contact the migrant and provide the Office's bank account information for migrants to deposit the bus fare. The final list of passengers for each day will be posted on the Myanmar Labour Attaché Office – Thailand [official Facebook page](#) in advance of departure.
- All confirmed passengers should check-in with the Myanmar Labour Attaché Office via private

EXTENSION OF TEMPORARY BAN ON ALL INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS TO THAILAND TO 30 June 2020 AT 17.00 UTC
as of 16 May 2020

1. The ban on international passenger flights to Thailand will be extended to 30 June 2020 at 17.00 UTC.
2. All flight permits granted for such period will be canceled.
3. The ban does not apply to state or military aircraft, emergency landing, technical landing without disembarkation, humanitarian aid, medical and relief flights, repatriation flights and cargo flights.
4. The persons on board the aircraft in 3. will be subjected to the measures under communicable disease law, such as 14 days state quarantine, and the regulation under the Emergency Decree on State of Emergency.

This shall come into force on the date of its announcement until amendment.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand | Department of Disease Control | Department of Consular Affairs
02-568-8800 | www.caat.or.th/corona | 1422 | 02-572-8442

Tracing application *Thai Chana* launched

Reference: [Thai PBS World news](#), 18 May 2020

On 17 May, the Royal Thai Government launched a Thai language mobile application called “Thai Chana” (*Thai's Victory*), for businesses and their customers. Businesses across the country, from mega malls to small local shops, are required to download it and register via the app. Customers are required to scan QR codes posted at entrances and exits of all malls for check-in and check-out using their mobile phones. The application aims to

message between 5 PM to 8 PM on the day of their departure.

NOTE: The initial announcement issued by the Embassy of Myanmar in Thailand on 19 May mentioned a connecting service for Myanmar returnees to travel from Mahachai to Mo Chit, before connecting to buses travelling from Mo Chit to Mae Sot. The connecting service was THB 150 per route. However, on 22 May, the Myanmar Labour Attaché Office – Thailand official Facebook page [announced](#) that confirmed passengers can depart from Mo Chit (Bangkok) only. Those who already paid THB 150 for the Mahachai – Mo Chit route will receive refunds.

The contact details of the Myanmar Labour Attaché Offices across Thailand are listed below:

- Bangkok: U Myo Myint Naing, (+66) 09 4884 5484
- Bangkok: U Ye Yan Aung, (+66) 06 5220 6952
- Mae Sot: U Wai Lin Maung, (+66) 06 5220 6953
- Ranong: U Kyaw Soe Wai, (+66) 06 5220 6951
- Chiang Mai: U Zaw Min Htwe, (+66) 09 9059 2352

Migrants who wish to arrange their own return must obtain approval by submitting the following information to the Myanmar Labour Attaché Office – Thailand [official Facebook page](#) via private message:

- Name
- Passport Number
- Non-Thai ID Number
- Type of Visa
- Name of Employer
- Address of Employer
- Type of Work
- Phone Number in Thailand
- Address in Myanmar
- Whether the individual plans to re-migrate to Thailand
- Current address in Thailand
- Border Gate for return (Mae-Sai-Tachileik, Mae Sot-Myawaddy, Ranong-Kawthaung)
- Plate Number of vehicle that will arrive at the Border Gate.

NOTE: at the time of writing, travel restrictions between provinces in Thailand remain in effect. Only the Mae Sot – Myawaddy border is currently able to process Myanmar returnees. The Myanmar Labour Attaché Office is in discussions with the Thai MOFA regarding potential prior approval for Myanmar migrants to travel between provinces for the purposes of repatriation. IOM is monitoring the situation for further updates.

Emerging reports of unethical recruitment in Myanmar

According to the Embassy of Myanmar in Thailand, [20 Myanmar migrants were trafficked](#) and stranded at the Thailand – Malaysia border for two months. These migrants were discovered by the Thai military and Thai immigration police and have been transferred to Myanmar authorities for repatriation. The broker had charged each person MMK 1 million (THB 23,000) and transported them through irregular border crossings.

Extension of precautionary restrictions until 31 May

Reference: National Level Central Committee for Prevention, Control, and Treatment Against COVID-19 letter no. 633/264/COVID-19 Committee (2020)

The National Level Central Committee for Prevention, Control, and Treatment of COVID-19 issued an announcement extending related Orders, Announcements, and Requests to the Public. These measures were introduced on 15 May and have been extended to 31 May 2020, specifically:

- Extension of the nationwide curfew from 00:00 AM to 04:00 AM daily.
- Extension of the ban on international commercial flights in and out of Myanmar.
- Extension of the Stay at Home Order in six Townships in Yangon (South Okkalapa, Pabedan, Bahan, Mayangone, Insein and Tamwe). From

4:00 PM on 14 May, the Order no longer applies in four townships (Mingaladon, Hlaing Tharyar, Shwe Pyi Thar and Botahtaung).

4. Extension of the temporary suspension of Visas on Arrival and E-Visas.
5. Extension of temporary suspension of overseas employment processes and all Pre-Departure Orientation and skills training.



IOM Myanmar providing humanitarian assistance to returning migrants at the MOU Quarantine Centre in Myawaddy on 20 May 2020

330 factories in Cambodia apply to suspend business operations, 56,000 workers to receive compensation

Reference: [Radio France International \(RFI\) news](#), 20 May 2020

H.E. Heng Sour, the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT), announced that as of 20 May, 330 factories in Cambodia had submitted requests to the MoLVT to suspend business operations. The duration of requested suspensions range between one month and three months. At the time of the announcement, 237 of these businesses' operations remain suspended, implying that 93 businesses who had suspended operations have now resumed work.

More than 110,000 Cambodian workers have been stood down/furloughed as a result of the suspension of business operations. The Cambodian Government is planning a USD 70/month compensation scheme for these affected workers, with USD 40 from the Government and USD 30 from employers to be paid to the workers. To date, approximately 56,000 workers have been put on the compensation list, and will receive the funds by 24 May. MoLVT is working to further verify eligibility and to disburse payments. Migrants returning from employment in Thailand and other countries of destination are not eligible for this scheme.

Cambodia

Official plans to reopen land borders with Thailand not yet in place

Reference: the Royal Embassy of Cambodia in Thailand [official Facebook page](#), 19 May 2020

On 19 May 2020, the Labor Attaché from the Royal Embassy of Cambodia in Thailand stated that “[t]here has not been any official information yet regarding the reopening of land borders between Cambodia and Thailand.”

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Domestic travel restrictions eased from 18 May to 1 June

Reference: N.580/PMO, 15 May 2020

The Prime Minister officially announced further easing of restrictions during the period from 18 May to 1 June. Details are listed on the National COVID-19 Taskforce [official website](#). Key measures are listed below, with all

measures subject to compliance with physical distancing and COVID-19 prevention measures:

- Domestic travel via public transportation (road, water, and air) between provinces is permitted;
- Final years of primary and secondary schools are required to re-open on 18 May; other school years, as well as kindergartens, colleges, and universities, have been ordered to plan to re-open on 2 June;
- Trainings and meetings are permitted to be held within the country;
- Local, traditional, and international Points of Entry (POEs) remain closed.

NOTE: at least three POEs: Muang Paklay, Muang Ngeun and Muang Kenthao in Sayabouly province (bordering with Thailand) remain open, according to a [Bangkok Post report](#) on 18 May.



IOM Lao People's Democratic Republic providing information sheets, masks and hand sanitizer to the I-Job recruitment agency at the request of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. The packs will be provided to returning migrants at border quarantine centres in Vientiane Capital, Savannakhet and Sayabouly Provinces, 13 May 2020

This COVID-19 Flash Update: Government Guidance Affecting Migrant Workers and their Employers in Thailand and Neighbouring Countries, has been produced by IOM Thailand. For more information, please contact ThailandLHD@iom.int

Important disclaimer: The information presented in this document does not necessarily reflect the views of IOM. The inclusion or presentation of material does not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM or of any of its members or partners.