

Travel Advisory

March 6, 2020

6th March 2020:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs would like to notify that the first positive case of COVID-19 in Bhutan has been confirmed on 5th March 2020. In accordance with the National Preparedness and Response Plan, Royal Government has announced the closure of schools and institutes in Thimphu, Paro and Punakha (the three places visited by the patient between 2nd and 5th March 2020) for two weeks with effect from March 6, 2020. The Royal Government has also imposed two weeks restriction on all incoming visitors and all international/regional conferences and seminars to be held in Bhutan are also postponed. These are being done to enable rigorous monitoring, source assessment of infection and mitigate the situation. The government will assess the situation after two weeks and accordingly decide on restrictions.

The outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID -19) has now spread to around 80 countries. The list of affected countries and territories keep increasing and therefore, travelers are advised to check travel advisory put in place by respective countries before commencing travel.

Bhutanese travelling to Thailand, Nepal and India are advised to take note of the following advisories issued by the respective governments:

Thailand

Visitors to Thailand from South Korea, Germany, China, Taiwan, Japan, France, Singapore, Italy, Iran, Macau and Hong Kong as “high risk areas” for COVID-19.

Given this designation, visitors from the aforementioned countries and territories will now be subject to 14-days home quarantine regardless of whether or not they are infected with the virus. They are also required to file a daily health report with the designated health officials during this period.

The travelers exhibiting flu-like symptoms are to be sent to State Hospitals for further testing and quarantine, expenses for which are to be borne by the individuals themselves. For further details kindly log onto the following weblink: <https://www.thaipbsworld.com/new-anti-virus-measures-for-foreign-visitors-and-thais-returning-from-high-risk-areas/>

Nepal

Travelers transiting via China, South Korea, Iran, Japan and Italy will have to submit their health certificates stating that they are not infected by COVID-19, at immigration points in Nepal.

India

Passengers of all international flights entering into India from any port are required to furnish duly filled self-declaration form (including personal particulars i.e. phone number and address in India) and travel history, to health officials and immigration officials at all ports.

Passengers (foreign and Indian other than those restricted, arriving directly or indirectly from China, South Korea, Japan, Iran, Italy, Hong Kong, Macau, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand, Singapore and Taiwan must undergo medical screening at port of entry. For further details kindly log onto the following weblink: <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/coronavirus-outbreak-govt-cancels-visas-for-italy-iran-japan-and-south-korea-issues-new-travel-advisory-1651955-2020-03-03>

In reiteration of earlier advisories, Bhutanese travelers are discouraged from traveling to all countries and territories that have reported cases of coronavirus infection. In case of unavoidable travels, please ensure that all basic preventive measures are taken and extreme caution is exercised. Please also refer to information on the website of the Ministry of Health www.health.gov.bt



NOTIFICATION

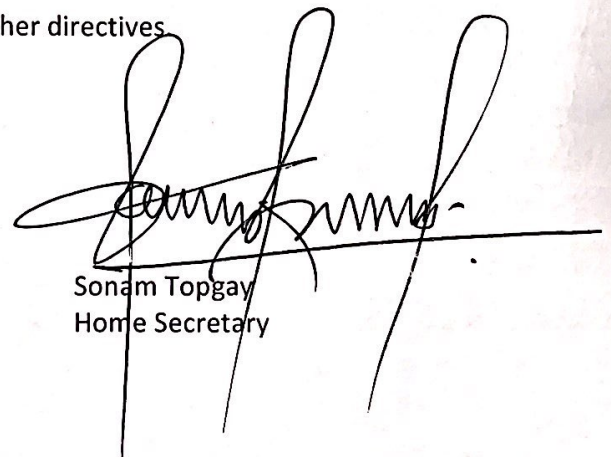
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The first confirmed case of COVID-19 in the country was detected on 5 March 2020. Consequently, given the rapidly evolving situation and significant risks posed by COVID-19 to the people and residents of Bhutan and with a view to mitigate risks and prevent the spread of the virus, the following Notification is issued for immediate and strict implementation by all relevant agencies.

- (i) Issuance of e-visa/e-permit to nationals from countries affected by COVID-19 or those persons that have visited or transited through COVID-19 affected countries stands suspended till further notice.
- (ii) Visa on arrival for eligible foreign nationals stands suspended till further notice.
- (iii) Issuance of new work permits to nationals from countries affected by COVID-19 or if such persons have visited or transited through COVID-19 affected countries stands suspended till further notice.
- (iv) Renewal of work permit for foreign workers who are already in the country shall be facilitated.
- (v) Re-entry of all foreigners holding valid visas, work permits and other immigration permits traveling to Bhutan from any of the COVID-19 affected countries or if they have visited or transited through COVID-19 affected countries stands suspended till further notice.
- (vi) Government clearance to host events such as car rallies, seminars, trade fairs and workshops in the country stands suspended till further notice.
- (vii) All mass gatherings must be deferred till further directives.

Issued for strict and immediate implementation.



Sonam Topgay
Home Secretary