

Press release

Unlocking begins for Thimphu and Paro

We would like to inform the nation that the first phase of unlocking for Thimphu will start from tomorrow, 28 days after the capital went into a lockdown.

The North megazone, comprising Dechencholing, Taba, Pamtsho, Jungshina, Lanjopakha, Hejo, Samtenling, Begana, Changtagang and Kabesa turns to the colour classification of “yellow”.

Which means people residing in these zones will see more relaxations within the demarcated area (see map). However, this will be complemented with heightened surveillance to pick up cases that could have remained undetected in the community.

The National COVID-19 Taskforce reviewed the outcome of the mass testing, which involved more than 5,400 samples. With all results showing negative, decisions were made for subsequent relaxations in the zones.

Following activities will be permitted during the yellow phase in the North megazone.

1. Individuals can move within the megazone from 5am to 5pm, starting tomorrow. No movement cards required.
2. While driving is not allowed, jogging, walking and cycling within the megazone will be permitted.
3. Only those outlets dealing with groceries, vegetable, livestock, dairy products and pharmacy in those zones are allowed to operate.

The rest of the activities are not permitted until further notice. Royal Bhutan Police and De-Suups will monitor the movement of the people at the respective gates to ensure those from the North megazone do not mix with others who are undergoing mass testing as of now.

Paro

Following intensive surveillance and testing over the last few days, Paro will also initiate the easing of lockdown from tomorrow.

It is decided that Naja, Dogar, Doteng and Tsento gewogs will enter the green phase and witness similar relaxations as the 18 Dzongkhags. The remaining six gewogs and Paro throm will turn to yellow zones.

Meanwhile, Shaba-Bara under Shaba Gewog, Wochu below Luni Gewog Office and Khangkhu school premises under Wangchang Gewog will continue to be under strict surveillance for the next seven days.

The Dzongkhag COVID-19 Taskforce will announce the details of the permissible activities in those zones.

Conclusion

The National Taskforce, however, reminds every individual that the yellow phase continues to be a risky period, and encourages people to remain home.

The taskforce cautions every individual to be mindful of the fact that the pandemic persists with situations in many countries deteriorating by the day. As informed earlier, countries have recorded spike of positive cases during the unlocking phase if stringent strategies are not adopted.

While the “red” colour code indicates strict lockdown imposed to contain the outbreak, the transition to yellow is made following adequate indications of absence of active disease in the community.

It is only after no cases are detected during the yellow phase, that progress to green for more relaxations will be considered.

The health ministry will continue with intensive surveillance, but it is the responsibility of every person to ensure safety from the disease. Those in the areas where movements are allowed are reminded to adhere to COVID-19 safety protocols at all times.

PMO, Bhutan

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