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སློན་ཆེན་ཡིག་ཚང་།  
ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN  
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

Announcement  
January 17, 2022

In the last 24 hours, more than 7,800 samples were collected from the 14 districts that went under the “blackout” period yesterday. As of 1.30am, 5,836 samples were tested, of which, except for the two from the Punatsangchhu colony, all tested negative for COVID-19 so far.

Total Tested on 17/01/2022		
sl no	Districts	Total (Ag+PCR)
1	Bumthang	481
2	Chhukha (+Phuentsholing)	782
3	Dagana	273
4	Gasa	128
5	Haa	129
6	Paro	1237
7	Punakha	560
8	Samtse	269
9	Sarpang (+Gelephu)	225
10	Thimphu	1889
11	Trongsa	375
12	Tsirang	1006
13	Wangdue Phodrang	361
14	Zhemgang	120
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7835</b>

With this, except for the specific areas in Wangduephodrang, all the 14 dzongkhags under the blackout period will now be opened into the **zoning system for 72 hours** with immediate effect.



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The zoning system (megazones, zones or a practical system that is convenient for local taskforces to implement) is being considered as a cautious reopening, while being mindful of the incubation probabilities of the virus. It will be followed by further health surveillance.

**As we continue to collect samples and conduct tests alongside, should there be surprises in the outcomes, there will be immediate change in the protocol. We will notify the public immediately.**

For Wangduephodrang, the Punatsangchhu sites and peripheral areas will undergo another **72 hours blackout** for further assessment by the health ministry. The areas include Bjimithangka, Kamichhu, Taksha, Basochhu, Waglaytar and seven gewogs of Daga, Athang, Gasetsho Wom, Gasetsho Gom, Nahi, Rubesa and Thedtsho.

The PHPA colonies will be cordoned off and movements will be allowed only within the colony. Similarly, movements within respective gewogs mentioned above will be allowed.

Given the community cases in Punatsangchhu, the towns of Bajothang, Khuruthang and Lobesa will be considered as one functional unit. They will be placed under heightened surveillance. The anticipated results from the locations will determine further course of actions.

Despite detecting community cases in recent days, with all 224 samples in Gelephu testing negative and 486 community samples in Phuentsholing also testing negative, we have decided to place them under similar zoning system as the other districts for the next 72 hours.



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With this, following measures will be observed within the next 72 hours:

1. Individuals will be allowed to come out using the zone card distributed earlier. They are only allowed to walk or cycle. Those who have misplaced the zone cards or moved to new location can call 1010 to obtain new ones.
2. Similarly, individuals can move within the gewogs. However, no inter-zones or inter-gewogs movements are allowed.
3. All offices, institutions and schools will remain closed during the period. However, the management must activate “work from home” protocol.
4. Only identified shops within the zones catering to essentials like grocery and pharmaceutical can open. The identified shopkeepers must come forward for testing, which will be made available within the zones/megazones, before opening the shops.
5. The stranded individuals with private cars will be facilitated after the antigen tests at the nearest flu clinic. Please call 1010 for the movement pass.

**Note:** As we continue to collect samples and conduct tests alongside, we shall immediately update the public should there be change in protocols depending on the outcome. We are still in pursuit of the virus elimination mode, which enables us to observe highest level of surveillance through testing, tracing and treating. We are thankful for all your support.