



MEDIA STATEMENT ON THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THE COVID-19 IN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

18 March 2020

1. The Ministry of Health would like to update the public on the COVID-19 situation in the country.
2. As of today, 18 March 2020, 12 new cases have been confirmed **bringing the total number of cases in Brunei Darussalam to 68 people.**
 - Case 57, aged 53 is a Bangladeshi citizen working in the private sector in Brunei Darussalam. He attended a tabligh gathering in the country on 5 March 2020. He started developing symptoms (fever) on 12 March 2020.
 - Case 58, aged 42 is the wife of Case 57. She does not have a travel history and began experiencing body aches on 16 March 2020.
 - Case 59, aged 13 is the daughter of Case 57. She has no travel history, and started developing symptoms (fever) on 13 March 2020.
 - Case 60, aged 13 is the daughter of Case 57 and the twin sister of Case 59. She does not have any travel history and started developing symptoms (fever) on 13 March 2020.
 - Case 61, aged 12 is the son of Case 57. He does not have any travel history and started developing symptoms (fever) on 14 March 2020.

- Case 62, aged 3 is the daughter of Case 53, a British citizen who has been in the country since January 2020. She started developing symptoms (flu) since 13 March 2020.
 - Case 63, aged 62 is a colleague of Case 43. He has no travel history and met with Case 49 on 9 March 2020. He started developing symptoms (fever and flu) on 14 March 2020.
 - Case 64, aged 49 is a colleague of Case 42. She has no travel history and began developing symptoms (cough and flu) on 11 March 2020.
 - Case 65, aged 29 is the daughter of Case 47. She has no travel history and met with her father on 10 March 2020.
 - Case 66, aged 7 is a contact of Case 42. He has no travel history and has not shown any symptoms of the virus.
 - Case 67, aged 20 is a close friend of Case 48. They do not have a travel history and has not shown any symptoms of the virus.
 - Case 68, aged 12 is a contact of Case 52. Investigation of this contact revealed that this is the first case in the third generation tabligh cluster. This means that there is limited transmission of COVID-19 infection in Brunei Darussalam but there is no evidence that it is widespread.
3. The Ministry of Health would like to inform the public that all the confirmed cases are currently being treated at the National Isolation Centre of which two are in critical condition, requiring respiratory assistance, and are undergoing treatment at the Intensive Care Unit at the National Isolation Centre. Meanwhile, two more cases are being monitored closely and the remaining are well and in a stable condition.

4. The Ministry of Health is actively performing contact tracing for each confirmed case, of which 1,373 individuals are currently being quarantined, in accordance to the Infectious Diseases Act (Chapter 204). To date, 48 individuals have completed their quarantine at the Games Village Complex at Hassanal Bolkiah National Stadium or at their respective homes and are all well. Since early January 2020, a total of 1,926 laboratory tests for COVID-19 have been conducted.
5. With a number of administrative directives issued since the first COVID-19 case was detected in the country, the Ministry of Health would like to request the cooperation from the public, especially employers in the private sector to facilitate COVID-19 regulatory measures, specifically on the issue of Self-isolation Notice or the Quarantine Order given to each of their employees. Employers' consideration is important, especially not to deduct the period of undergoing self-isolation or Quarantine Order from the amount of annual leave eligible for the employee or to force their employees to obtain a medical leave from the doctor. The Self-isolation Notice or the Quarantine Order issued by the Ministry of Health is an official confirmation on the orders given. The Ministry seeks the support of the employers especially in the Government and the nation's effort to curb this outbreak.
6. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health would like to inform the public of the reviewed COVID-19 regulatory measures in which Ministries and Departments will be implementing their respective *Business Continuity Plan*, as outlined in the Prime Minister's Department circular REF 06/2020 dated 16 March 2020.
7. Starting today, 18 March 2020, the Ministry of Health with the collaboration from the Prime Minister's Office and the E-Government National Centre (EGNC) and the Ministry of Transport and Infocommunications will officially launch the use of the messaging

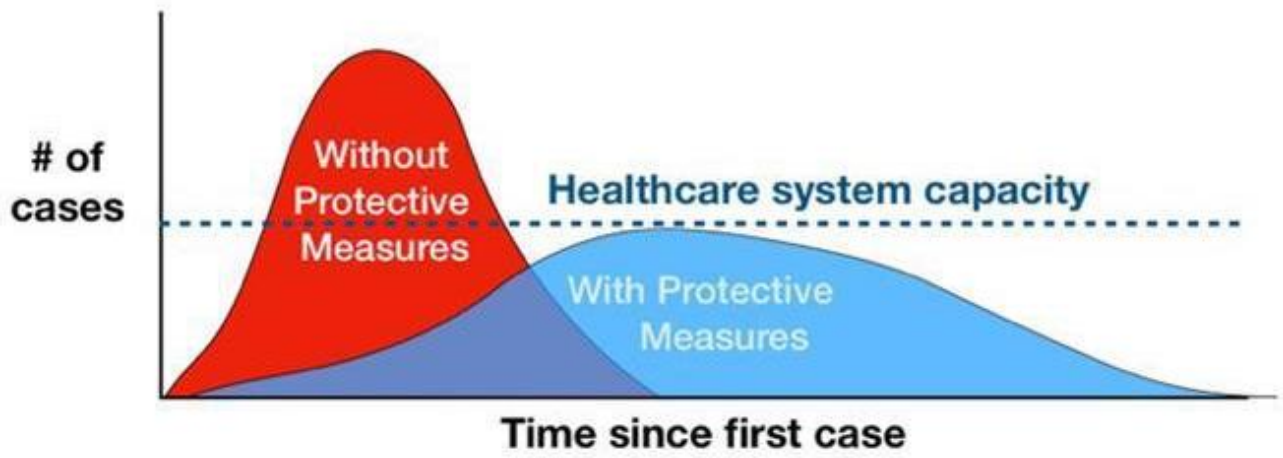
application, **Telegram** to disseminate information and advice regarding COVID-19. This messaging application will be available from the Government's official, GOV.BN Telegram Broadcast Channel via the link below:

<https://t.me/govbnoofficial>

8. The Ministry of Transport and Infocommunications has also collaborated with all the telecommunications service providers to send short messages (i.e. Push SMS) to all mobile phone users on messages related to COVID-19 advice which will also start today, 18 March 2020.
9. The Ministry of Health would like to remind those who are undergoing self-isolation and Quarantine Order to comply to the instructions given. They are not allowed to leave their homes or place of quarantine or their isolation area for the whole period that has been given to them. Under the Infectious Diseases Act (Cap. 204), failure to comply with this requirement is an offence and will be punishable with a fine of up to \$10,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or both.
10. For further information and latest updates, members of the public can visit the official website of the Ministry of Health at **www.moh.gov.bn** or by contacting the **Health Advice Line 148 (HAL 148)** (operating 24-hours).

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Reference : KK/PR/2
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Adapted from CDC / The Economist