

## **Press release from Prime Minister's Office**

"As we strive to stay ahead of the spread of coronavirus, with His Majesty's guidance, the government has introduced highest level of preventive measures all along. This includes recent closure of all border gates early this week.

Reinforced by an efficient containment system, the government is making efforts to come out of the pandemic with slightest of burden on the people of Bhutan.

Stepping up the arrangements, and acknowledging importance of minimising contacts among people as effective fight against COVID-19, the government puts forward following restraints to prevent the spread of the disease.

Relevant authorities and agencies are requested to act on the instructions with immediate effect.

### **Public gathering**

Gatherings for religious purposes are discouraged, prompted by the fact that countries have experienced outbreaks from such events.

Gathering at any social events like birthday, wedding or promotion are disallowed.

Picnics or similar outdoor functions are prohibited.

All congregations at work, official dinners, functions or gatherings at workplace eateries are discouraged.

Individuals are required to maintain physical distance from the rest at grocery outlets, vegetable markets, fuel depots or other public places.

While in queue to avail of services like banking or hospital, individuals are required to maintain physical distance.

### **Travel**

All non-essential and leisure travels within the country are restricted. Movements in groups, within the towns and communities are also discouraged.

Road Safety and Transport Authority is instructed to design and implement strategies for passengers using public transports to maintain physical distance.

Bhutanese travelling abroad must seek prior approval from Ministry of Foreign Affairs even before you start processing formalities for the travel.

### **Business and entertainment**

All movie theatres, snooker rooms and video parlours should be closed.

All business entities must adjust timing and engage employees in a way that there is no crowding.

All business entities must ensure and make it conducive for their customers maintain physical distance.

While open-air shows are disallowed, television programs must be modified for participants to observe physical distance.

### **Games and sports**

No games or sports that require physical contact like football and basketball are allowed. Traditional games, including archery and khuru are prohibited in all communities. Fitness centres like gym, yoga and meditation centres are urged to ensure minimum attendance at a given time for clients to observe adequate distance.

### **Civil service, corporate, private, and other agencies**

Agencies will have to devise and institute “work from home” system.

Agencies are encouraged to use technology for meetings and correspondence of all kind. In such emergencies, we have no doubt everyone has to shoulder immense workload. We are all expected to work beyond normal office hours. Here, we would like to state that as public servants, one should be guilt-ridden if you are not contributing or are not fully engaged in such times. Irrespective of where you are working from, you must come forward and make the most of your time.

Individual responsibilities in pursuing these actions are highly appreciated and would have lasting impact on government’s efforts to prevent the spread of coronavirus in the country as well as beyond. However, given the fact that we have no room for complacency at this time, those who don’t abide by the instructions will be dealt with strong legal action.

The government will monitor and update the instructions in keeping with evolving situations on the ground."

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