

Nipah virus alert: Thailand tightens entry formalities for inbound West Bengal travelers

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: Thailand's Department of Disease Control (DDC) has tightened entry formalities for travelers coming from Nipah virus-affected areas, particularly West Bengal in India, with a range of updated guidelines.

To this end, the authority issued a notification on January 28 addressed to airport station managers of Thai Airways, Thai Vietjet Airlines, IndiGo, and Bhutan Airlines.

Under the updated guidelines, travelers must complete the T.8 Health Declaration online and obtain a Health Beware Card before travel. The document must be presented to a Port Health Officer upon arrival in Thailand.

Port Health Officers will verify the validity of the Health Beware Card,

after which passengers with valid documentation will be screened using thermographic camera scanners. If the scanner raises an alert, officers will conduct a core body temperature check using an ear tympanic thermometer.

Passengers diagnosed with fever or respiratory symptoms consistent with suspected Nipah virus infection will be isolated and transferred to designated government hospitals for further evaluation.

In addition, the DDC has instructed airlines to submit passenger manifests and general declaration forms to port health authorities and to deploy ground handling staff during disembarkation to assist arriving passengers.

If a Nipah virus case is detected on board a flight, thorough disinfection must be carried out by cleaning the areas surrounding the affected passenger's seat. Airlines failing to comply with Port Health Officer instructions might be fined up to THB 20,000.

A recent outbreak of the deadly Nipah virus in India's West Bengal state has sparked concerns among Asian countries, especially across the south and southeast regions. Media reports said at least two cases have been confirmed in the Indian state since December.

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