Arrivals to provide data via AoT app

Move to combat contagion's spread

KOMSAN TORTERMVASANA

The government has mandated all inbound foreign travellers provide personal contact information through a mobile app developed by Airports of Thailand (AoT) with their consent, starting today, as part of measures to combat the spread of the coronavirus.

The information includes phone numbers, addresses, passport number and name.

As for Thai arrivals, those who travelled from high-risk countries must also provide information via the app.

If there are errors with the app, inbound travellers will have to fill in the information on an immigration form upon arrival.

The move is in line with a cabinet resolution on joint efforts to prevent the outbreak and boost public confidence.

> **Vwatch may be used for the next phase for travel and health information.**
>
> **BUDDHIPONGSE PUNNAKANTA**
> DES minister

Digital Economy and Society (DES) Minister Buddhipongse Punnakanta yesterday hosted a meeting with related parties on implementation.

The meeting was attended by representatives from National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC), major mobile operators, the Department of Disease Control (DDC), AoT and the National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA).

Mr Buddhipongse said the meeting agreed to use AoT's existing app for the task. Arrivals can download the app, fill in their information and give consent, noting the process should take only a few minutes.

Authorities earlier planned to use another app called Vwatch, developed by NSTDA. But Vwatch was deemed too complicated and takes more time to fill in the information and give consent.

"Vwatch is a good app that may be used for the next phase for travel and health information," he said.

The AoT app has been operating since last August. It provides flight schedules, maps and navigation, transport info, car parks, shops, restaurants and flight alerts.

All foreign arrivals must comply with the measure or they cannot pass through immigration counters, said Mr Buddhipongse.

The system will keep travellers' information for 14 days after arrival and is linked with the Immigration Police and the DDC, said NBTC secretary-general Takorn Tantasith.

Although the system could be used to track travellers' locations, the government will not do so unless critical incidents happen, such as positive tests for the coronavirus in the country, he said.