

From The Editor

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The editor is visiting Professor Vimol Sukthomya, his respected teacher, in Chiangmai, the largest city in Northern Thailand.

The health of one nation in human web

The pandemic of COVID-19 seems to be going on with no sign of its ending.

In case of Thailand, long before this December, most of the newly infected individuals were mainly those who entered Thailand by air route. At that time, due to the lack of a policy for active searching for infected individuals within the border, together with a shortage of affordable testing kits and an effective tracking system, the asymptomatic domestic infection cannot be estimated.

In the mid of this month, there were reported Thai patients who used to work in Myanmar and illegally crossed the border to Thailand. Not so long after the aforementioned domestic outbreak, there were tremendously larger number of domestic infected cases among Myanmar workers in the central Thailand, who were also suspected to be illegal immigrants.

The recently reported number of domestic infected cases which was higher than the beginning of the outbreak was thought to be caused by the crowded living condition of foreign workers on one hand. On the other hand, the higher reported number may stem from the more active searching of asymptomatic infected individuals, which was made possible by more affordable testing kits and a more effective tracking technology.

Thailand shares her long west border with Myanmar from the most top to the upper southern part. With the much lower birth rate comparing to her neighbouring countries, Thailand requires the imported workforce, mainly from Myanmar.

In the beginning of the year due to the outbreak of COVID 19, the income of various business sectors has been greatly reduced; many were out of business, especially the service and tourism sectors. In order to cope with the situation, many employees were laid out. To save the cost of living while waiting for the better situation to get reemployed, those workers came back to their hometowns where they did not have to rent houses or pay for expensive food. However,

the situation of the COVID 19 epidemic was much worse in Myanmar who shares her west border with India. The COVID 19 epidemic in Myanmar leads to a great economic downfall in which the basic household income cannot be fulfilled by a great number of households. Thus, many were forced to seek work in Thailand as fast as they could and the only way out was illegal immigration to Thailand.

Besides, the vast area of the natural border between Thailand and Myanmar makes it extremely hard to prevent from illegal immigration; many criticized the ineffectiveness of border protection or even raised the question of the possibility of corruption among border officers who might be assisting in the illegal immigration.

At the end of the day, we have to admit that humans are social beings whose survivals are dependent upon each other which inevitably leads to an exchange of resources and continual migration. The containment of COVID-19 within a country is far from possible because we rely on interaction with one another, whether inside or across the border.

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