

Virus Outbreak: Taiwan marks 30 days of no local cases

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Minister of Health and Welfare Chen Shih-chung, who heads the Central Epidemic Command Center, expresses his appreciation to local medical workers on International Nurses' Day yesterday at a news conference in Taipei.

Photo courtesy of the Central Epidemic Command Center

Yesterday marked the 30th day with no new local cases of COVID-19 infection in Taiwan, while 372 people have been removed from isolation after recovering, the Central Epidemic Command Center (CECC) said.

"Our local communities are generally safe, as no domestic cases have been reported in 30 days," Minister of Health and Welfare Chen Shih-chung (陳時中), who heads the center, said at a daily news conference in Taipei.

However, people should continue to follow personal protective measures, including wearing a mask, practicing social distancing, observing cough etiquette, washing their hands frequently and staying at home if they feel ill, Chen said.

Clear dividers were for the first time placed on the desk where CECC officials sit during the daily news conference, allowing them to take off their masks, prompting Chen to joke that he has not shown his face in public for a long time.

The dividers were placed to demonstrate to the public how effective disease prevention measures can be implemented indoors when social distancing is difficult to maintain, he said.

As yesterday was International Nurses' Day, Chen, speaking on behalf of the CECC, thanked all nurses who have worked hard and long hours to keep Taiwan safe.

The ministry has launched a Web site to gather letters of support for nurses and had received

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more than 17,000 letters from more than 50 countries as of yesterday, Ministry of Health and Welfare Department of Nursing and Healthcare Director-General Tsai Shu-feng (蔡淑芬) said.

More than 559,000 people have donated their share of masks for a total of more than 4.39 million masks to help medical practitioners in other countries who are fighting COVID-19, showing that “Taiwan can help,” Tsai said.

Asked about a hypochlorous acid solution produced by the Want Want Group (旺旺), which was fined for false advertising, Chen said that products that do not have a medical license from the Food and Drug Administration cannot be promoted as anti-bacterial.

Asked by a Hong Kong media outlet when Taiwan would relax border controls and allow travelers from Hong Kong or Macau to visit the country, Chen said he is optimistic about the disease situation being brought under control in the two territories.

However, the center is considering reopening only economic activities and trade with Hong Kong first, while other exchanges would have to wait a little longer, he said.

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