

logo not found or type unknown

49 People Test Positive for the Coronavirus in Trinidad

Coronavirus / **Published On March 21, 2020 08:35 PM /**

Staff Consortium **March 21, 2020**

Image not found or type unknown



Port of Spain, Trinidad By. PINTEREST

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC – The number of people who have tested positive for the coronavirus (COVID) jumped to 49 on Saturday after Health Minister Terrence Deyalsingh confirmed that 40 of the 68 persons who had been placed in quarantine after undertaking a cruise ship had tested positive for the virus.

In, addition, National Security Minister, Stuart Young, said that the island’s entire border will be closed on Sunday ‘until further notice’.

Deyalsingh told a news conference that despite government had earlier issued a warning to persons to consider travelling overseas, the 68 people had embarked on a cruise ship tour on March 5, a month after the Keith Rowley administration had first made the announcement.

“They subsequently became stranded and as citizens of Trinidad and Tobago they returned on the 17th of March ...and were taken to a quarantine facility as per protocol.”

Deyalsingh said that a day before their arrival here, the 68 persons on the cruise ship had retained the services of former attorney general, Senior Counsel Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj who had written at least two letters to the Minister of National Security and himself on the matter. He said he would not divulge the contents of the letter.

“Be that as it may, the health system continued to respond in a most responsible manner, in a most effective manner and in a most humane manner by providing that facility that was outfitted for them to have a comfortable a stay as possible.

“On Thursday, the 19th of March all 68 people were swabbed as per protocol because they fit the definition of who to swab because they were on board a ship with confirmed COVID-19 patients. We got the results between 9.00 and 10.00 pm (local time) on Friday night.

“I could tell you that of the 68 people tested, 40 of the 68 have tested positive for COVID-19. These are the returning citizens who were stranded on that cruise ship,” Deyalsingh said.

He said the persons have since been removed from the quarantine area to the Cuara Hospital, along the east west corridor and appealed to citizens to continue to follow the practices being recommended by the health professionals..

Meanwhile, Young said that as of Sunday night “we will be closing off our borders completely.

“So as of midnight, tomorrow night, Sunday 22nd March we will no longer be allowing international flights into Trinidad and Tobago. We will be closing our borders, we will of course continue to allow under the restrictions that we have currently, the cargo vessels to come to Trinidad and Tobago, we have put protocols in place,” he said, adding that the pharmaceuticals, food supplies will continue to come here.

“We are not allowing the crew to disembark,” he said, adding that he has also been in discussions with the major energy companies “and we are facilitating them continuing in a safe manner the continuation of their operations”.

But Young was critical of opposition legislators and others who by their statements and actions continue to put the population at risk for the virus that has killed more than 10,000 people worldwide.

“We will enforce the law. So anybody who has misled the government and say we will not enforce the law and in particular the regulations that were passed between yesterday and today to close down bars, in house dining at restaurants, clubs and cinemas, we will enforce the law”.

Former House speaker and Opposition Senator Wade Mark said the government’s closure of bars during the COVID-19 pandemic could amount to a breach of the owners’ constitutional rights to enjoyment of their private property.

He told legislators that “every citizen has the right to enjoyment of property” and that the Trinidad and Tobago Constitution also gives citizens the right to assembly and freedom of assembly.

He did not think the Health Minister had any legal right to curtail business activities and advised that owners might challenge any curtailment in a law court.

But while Young did not name Mark by name, he told the news conference that the statement by the opposition legislator “is nonsensical.

‘That is why I started off by saying that in countries all around the world , anyone who has been to the United Kingdom understanding their culture of the bar system would understand for them to go to the extent that they have shutting down all bars, Trinidad and Tobago taking a decision before that, we are more than on the right track.

“So to try and mislead the population and to say that persons want to come to bars to buy food or to buy a drink, you can go to the grocery and buy a drink and have it in the safety of your home. The only way we will stop the spread of this virus is by lack of contact and soial personal responsibility and the government took the decisive action to say we will shut bars....”

Young also dismissed a call by Opposition Leader Kamla Persad Bissessar during a news conference on Friday for the government to send an aircraft to pick up Trinidad and Tobago nationals stranded overseas, saying “there is a notion that Trinidad and Tobago can...persuade countries that close their borders to open it up”.