

THE NATION THAILAND

GPO ready for industrial vaccine production

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By The Nation

The Government Pharmaceutical Organisation (GPO) has announced progress in the development of three Thai Covid-19 vaccines, with results expected by the end of 2020 and a plant in Saraburi standing ready to begin manufacturing the successful candidate.

GPO director general Dr Witoon Danwiboon on Monday (June 1) revealed that his organisation was funding development of two types of vaccines against Covid-19 – a virus-like particle vaccine developed by the Siriraj Hospital's Faculty of Medicine, Mahidol University; and a sub-unit vaccine developed by the Faculty of Pharmacy, Chulalongkorn University.

Both vaccines use cell-culture technology and research methods. If the prototype vaccines prove effective during trials on laboratory animals, the GPO will begin mass producing the drugs at its Saraburi factory for clinical trials on humans.

The GPO is also collaborating with the National Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (BIOTEC) to research and develop a third vaccine by splicing SARS-CoV2 RNA into genes of an inactivated influenza virus. If successful, the prototype will be injected into eggs and incubated to allow for replication. Preliminary results for all three types of vaccine are expected by the end of 2020.

"Pharmacists are standing ready to produce the vaccine for Covid-19, and we have a factory that is currently capable of producing influenza vaccine, which can be adapted to make coronavirus vaccine," said Dr Witoon.

"We also have experts working on research and development who have experience in producing many types of vaccines. They are supported by modern machinery and equipment both at the laboratory level and at the industrial level, and all are ready to cooperate with both domestic and international agencies. We are still waiting for results of research that will show which type of vaccine is best suited to industrial production," he added.

