

THAI NEWS UPDATE: 11 APRIL 2022

1. Nok Air restores flights to newly opened Betong Airport

Source: The Nation ([Link](#))

Nok Air will begin flying again from Bangkok to Betong Airport in Yala province on April 29, according to the Betong Tourism Association. Nok Air cited a lack of demand for cancelling the service from Bangkok's Don Mueang to the newly opened airport, adding that only three of 86 seats were booked. On Saturday, Betong Tourism Association vice president Narin Ruangwongsa said the airline will operate flights three days per week – on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. He added that the price of a round-trip ticket has been reduced from 6,300 baht to 5,300 baht thanks to a 1,000-baht subsidy from the Tourism Authority of Thailand. "After confirmation that Nok Air will operate flights from Don Mueang to Betong from April 29, tour operators are now preparing programmes to attract tourists [to Yala]," he said.

2. BoI speeds up rejig of incentives

Source: Bangkok Post ([Link](#))

The Board of Investment (BoI) is accelerating the revision of investment incentives to align them with global changes and offset the impact of the new world tax regimes proposed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). According to Duangjai Asawachintachit, BoI secretary-general, investment incentives need to be rejigged to retain Thailand's investment competitiveness after members of the OECD last October took a decisive step towards forcing the world's biggest companies to pay their fair share of tax. The plan is for a global minimum corporate tax rate of 15% to be imposed by 2023.

3. Efta free-trade talks edge closer

Source: Bangkok Post ([Link](#))

The Commerce Ministry will seek cabinet endorsement for a proposed negotiation framework for a free-trade agreement (FTA) with the European Free Trade Association (Efta) following a recent public hearing on the matter. Auramon SupthaweethumG, director-general of the Department of Trade Negotiations, said the department held the hearing on March 30, attended by state agencies, the private sector, farmers, the civil sector and academics. The move was in line with the wishes of Deputy Prime Minister and Commerce Minister Jurin Laksanawisit who wanted the department to speed up free-trade agreement talks with countries that are Thailand's key trading partners, to expand the global reach of Thai trade, she said.

4. India targeted as new arrivals market

Source: Bangkok Post ([Link](#))

Around 500,000 Indian tourists are expected to visit Thailand this year generating revenue of 24 billion baht, supported by the national carrier Thai Airways International after an air travel bubble (ATB) agreement was concluded in March. "India is an important market to offset the loss of Chinese tourists. It has a sizeable population and a large number of passport holders," said Thanet Phetsuwan, deputy governor of marketing for Asia and South Pacific at the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). The TAT's target for Indian arrivals is 500,000 this year, with an average load factor of 70% on every airline..

5. Expiry date of Sinovac, AstraZeneca, Pfizer vaccines to be extended

Source: The Nation ([Link](#))

The Public Health Ministry has instructed hospitals under its jurisdiction to amend the expiry date of Covid-19 vaccines in their stock based on the manufacturers' new registration details. hongchai Lertwilairatanapong, deputy permanent secretary for Public Health, issued a circular dated April 7 to all provincial public health chiefs to reset the expiry dates of vaccine doses and amend their stocks accordingly. Under the new amendment, the expiry date for Sinovac doses will be extended from six months to 12, while the expiry dates for AstraZeneca and Pfizer vaccines will be extended from six months to nine months. The memo explained that when the three vaccine manufacturers sought to register with the Thai Food and Drug Administration, they registered their vaccines under the FDA's Conditional Approval for Emergency Use of Medical Products directive on July 24, 2020. This directive restricted the expiry date of medical products to six months.