

Thai News Update: 11 January 2021

1. Four key factors, Biden's policies will shape Thai economy this year: state think-tank chief

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

The chief of state think-tank, National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC), expressed concerns about the impact of the new wave of Covid-19 infections, saying this outbreak may hit the economy harder if steps are not taken in time. In an exclusive interview with Krungthep Turakij newspaper, NESDC secretary-general Danucha Pichayanan said that though some countries have started mass vaccinations, it will still take a long time for inoculations to arrive in every corner of the world. And while Thailand waits for vaccines to arrive, the renewed outbreak could worsen and hit the economy hard.

2. Construction of Phuket highway will kick off by 2023: Transport Ministry

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

The construction of the Muang Mai-Koh Kaew Highway should begin by 2023, Transport Minister Saksayam Chidchob said. The 22.4-kilometre highway, which is part of the ministry's project to ease traffic in Phuket, will link Phuket airport with Krabi and Phang Nga. The design and environmental impact assessment for the highway has been completed, he said, adding that the construction is expected to cost Bt11.5 million, plus Bt11.1 billion for land reclamation.

3. Panel urges state agencies to accelerate work on 18 top mega-projects

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

The Public-Private Partnership Committee has called on state agencies to speed up the development of 18 top-priority mega-projects worth Bt472 billion as part of the government's efforts to drive the economy this year. The committee is chaired by Deputy PM Supattanapong Punmeeaow. Meanwhile, Transport Minister Saksayam Chidchob said the ministry has already asked related agencies like the National Economic and Social Development Council for their opinions on its many projects.

4. Finance Ministry working on handout scheme for those hit hard by second Covid-19 wave

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

The Ministry of Finance is planning to propose to the Cabinet a handout scheme tailored for specific groups who have been affected by the new wave of Covid-19, a source revealed. "After the nationwide lockdown last year, the ministry had provided Bt5,000 handout per

month for three months to about 10 million farmers and 14 million self-employed people,” said the source. “However, since there will be no nationwide lockdown during the new wave, the ministry estimated that the number of affected people would be smaller and limited to only specific groups.”

5. Bangchak to expand Inthanin coffee shop branches in Laos

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

Bangchak plans to take its Inthanin coffee shops to foreign countries, aiming to expand in Laos and targeting 1,200 shops in five years. Somchai Techavanich, chief marketing officer and vice president of marketing at Bangchak Corporation Plc, recently revealed that Bangchak plans more Inthanin coffee shops overseas, especially in Laos, where there is currently only one branch operating as Master Franchise. He said there is an opportunity to expand to 3-5 branches but the market and consumer behaviour needed to be assessed, including the pandemic situation.

6. Shipping council sees bright outlook for some industries like textile in 2021

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

The Thai National Shippers' Council projects a brighter outlook in the export of textiles, garment and machinery this year, the council's vice chairman Visit Limluecha said. The council classified products under three categories: V or double-digit growth; U or single-digit growth; and L or no growth or contraction. Industries in the V-growth group include textile and garment, machinery, finished oil and rice. Double-digit growth is expected for these products because they showed low contraction late last year. The garment and textile sector dropped 18 per cent last year, while machinery and machine equipment fell 9.2 per cent.