

THAI NEWS UPDATE: 11 JANUARY 2022

1. Jurin hopes to add fruit to Thai-Laos high-speed railway cargo

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

Commerce Minister Jurin Laksanawisit said on Monday that he will hold talks with Beijing to allow Thailand to export fruit to China via the China-Laos high-speed railway. Jurin, who is also deputy prime minister, spoke to reporters while leading a delegation of senior ministry officials to the customs checkpoint at the Thai-Laos Friendship Bridge in Nong Khai on Monday afternoon. Accompanying Jurin were Commerce permanent secretary Boonyarit Kalayanamitr, deputy permanent secretary Poonpong Naiyanaphakorn, director-general of the Foreign Trade Department Phithak Udomwichaiwat and director-general of the Trade Negotiations Department Oramon Supthaweetham. Jurin said the delegation had spoken to the private sector about how the high-speed railway can be used to boost Thai exports to Laos and China.

2. New sandboxes open to overseas arrivals amid Covid spikes

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

Three popular beach destinations have been added to a visa programme that allows foreign visitors to bypass a mandatory isolation, throwing a lifeline to the country's Covid-hit tourism industry seen as key to a nascent economic recovery. Starting Tuesday, vaccinated foreign tourists can enter Krabi, Phang Nga, and Koh Samui in addition to Phuket under the so-called sandbox programme that won't require them to go through quarantine, provided they spend at least a week in these destinations. The relaxed visa rule is yet another attempt by the government to restart the travel industry as the emergence of the Omicron variant triggers a new wave of Covid infections. The tourism-reliant nation indefinitely suspended the wider quarantine-free "Test & Go" programme last week to quell a flareup in new cases, though it helped attract some 350,000 travellers in just two months.

3. Sugarcane prospects look positive

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

Sugarcane output is expected to reach 85-90 million tonnes in the 2021-22 crop year amid better business prospects in the sugar industry, says the Federation of Thai Industries (FTI). The output, which could be used to produce 9-10 million tonnes of sugar, is lower than an estimate of 100 million tonnes made by the Thai Sugar Millers Corporation (TSMC) last year. TSMC said earlier that sugarcane output in the 2021-22 crop year was likely to fall due to drought and a shift to other crops. However, the FTI is optimistic about the current

situation. "The output for the 2021-22 crop year is not bad. We also expect Thailand to produce more sugar for the export market," said Chalush Chinthammit, chairman of the FTI's Sugar Industry Club.

4. Thai exports seen up 5%-8% this year - shippers

Source: Reuters ([Link](#))

Thailand's exports this year are expected to rise between 5% to 8%, boosted by strong global demand and a weaker baht currency, the national shippers' council said on Tuesday. The group expects exports in 2021 to have risen 15-16%, it told a briefing.

5. Ministry monitoring ATK price rises

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

The Commerce Ministry is monitoring antigen test kit (ATK) prices to ensure they remain affordable amid the surge in Covid-19 infections. Mallika Boonmeetrakul, an adviser to the commerce minister, said consumers can report overpriced ATKs to the 1569 hotline or provincial commerce offices. Officers can then conduct investigations and charge sellers if they are found to have overpriced ATKs. Prices of some brands have increased due to high demand and stock shortages in both e-markets and drug stores.