

## Thai News Update: 11 March 2021

### **1. Flights from India will soon be allowed to land in three more airports**

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

The Cabinet on 9 March agreed to allow flights from India to land in Surat Thani's Samui Island, Krabi Airport and Chonburi's U-Tapao Airport in addition to the current set up in Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Phuket. Traisulee Traisoranakul, deputy government spokesperson, said this is part of a collaboration between Thailand and India, adding that the transport ministries on both sides have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) related to aviation. The MoU will increase the quota of tourists from India by 6,150 a week based on an estimate of 23,609 arrivals weekly.

### **2. Phuket, Phang-nga, Krabi may reopen to foreign tourists without quarantine before October**

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

The Tourism and Sports Ministry is discussing reopening three Andaman provinces – Phuket, Phang-nga, Krabi – to foreign tourists without quarantine in a “sandbox” project before the country's full reopening scheduled for October. Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn revealed that his team had discussed the possibility with governors and tourism businesses in the three southern provinces. Thailand and other countries are negotiating the possibility of a “city-to-city” or “island-to-island” travel bubble so that vaccinated tourists visiting the kingdom can visit designated Thai cities or islands without the need for quarantine.

### **3. More than Bt8 billion injected in schemes to help farmers: Govt House**

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

The government has spent more than Bt8.3 billion on two farmer aid schemes in a bid to help rice farmers nationwide, the Thai Khu Fah Facebook page said on 11 March. The Thai Khu Fah page is run by Government House. The state allocated Bt3.83 billion to support more than 110,000 households in the rice farmers' income guarantee scheme. The government has spent Bt46.8 billion on the rice farmers' income guarantee schemes, so far. The state has also earmarked Bt4.50 billion for farmers who agree to delay selling off their paddy. Payments under this scheme are made based on two regulations:

### **4. New passport fees take effect**

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

The Royal Gazette website on 10 March published an announcement by the Foreign Affairs Ministry regarding the new fee rate for making a passport. The announcement, signed by

Foreign Affairs Minister Don Pramudwinai on February 23, stipulates the new fee rate will be effective from March 11. The Foreign Affairs Ministry will exercise its discretion on whether to wave the fee for urgent or emergency passports due to humanitarian or government-related reasons.

#### **5. State urged to establish SMEs council**

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

The government is being urged to set up a small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) council to protect, strengthen and upgrade Thailand's small-scale businesses, notably mom and pop shops which are scattered nationwide. Worawoot Ounjai, former president of the Thai Retailers Association, said although SMEs that engage in a variety of industries, such as retail, trade, manufacturing or services, are members of the Federation of Thai Industries (FTI) and the Thai Chamber of Commerce, they seldom get the chance to voice their specific concerns.

#### **6. Thailand and Indonesia to ink rice MoU**

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

The government looks set to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to sell as much as one million tonnes of rice a year in a government-to-government (G2G) deal with Indonesia late this month. According to Commerce Minister Jurin Laksanawisit, the MoU signing will be organised in the final week of March, covering no more than one million tonnes of 15% to 25% white rice a year for four years. However, the rice sales also include conditions, depending on the rice production of the two countries and the world rice price. Thailand sold a total of 925,000 tonnes of rice under G2G contracts to Indonesia under the previous agreement from 2012 to 2016.

#### **7. Ten listed banks declare dividend payments**

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

A total of 10 SET-listed commercial banks have announced dividend payments for 2020 under the Bank of Thailand's guided dividend payment policy to maintain a solid capital buffer for the commercial banking industry. Tisco Financial Group, the holding company that operates Tisco Bank, is reportedly paying a dividend of 6.30 baht per share, which is considered to be the highest among commercial banking industry peers in Thailand. Bangkok Bank and Kasikornbank have reportedly announced a dividend payment of 2.50 baht a share.

Siam Commercial Bank (SCB), the country's fourth largest commercial lender by total assets, has announced dividend payments for 2020 at 2.30 baht per share, while Kiatnakin Phatra Bank has decided to pay a dividend of 2.25 baht per share.