

THAI NEWS UPDATE: 11 MAY 2021

1. Half a million Bangkok residents registered for COVID-19 inoculation

Source: Thai PBS ([Link](#))

More than half a million people in Bangkok are among 1.5 million Thais across the country who have registered to be vaccinated against COVID-19, according to the Ministry of Public Health. The top ten provinces for registration are: 1. Bangkok, 516,282 2. Lampang, 223,976 3. Nonthaburi, 51,113 4. Samut Prakan, 44,9625. Chiang Mai, 43,869...The people who have registered are those over 60 and those suffering from any of seven underlying diseases such as diabetes, obesity, stroke and chronic kidney disease.

2. Industrial estates authority offers to help with vaccine rollout

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

EAT has resolved to use areas under its jurisdiction nationwide as vaccination centres and plans to have the areas ready in line with the Public Health Ministry's criteria. "Industrial estates are an important economic area and a top source of income for the country. If the spread of Covid-19 widens, it will have a serious impact on the economy and supply chains across the world, especially in the automotive and electronics industries," Suriya said. Veeris Ammarapala, IEAT governor, said vaccines were key in pulling the industrial sector out of the Covid-19 crisis. About a million people living in industrial estates nationwide need to be vaccinated against Covid-19, and half of them have said they are willing to pay up to THB1,000 for a shot.

3. Industrial estates to serve as job hubs

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

The Industrial Estate Authority of Thailand (IEAT) will use industrial estates countrywide as vaccination venues as it plans to join hands with the private sector to speed up distributing vaccines to factory workers. IEAT, which oversees a total of 62 industrial estates housing 5,080 factories, expects the cooperation will increase vaccine rollout efficiency and facilitate IEAT staff and workers in industrial estates. There are at least over one million workers who want vaccine shots, according to the Federation of Thai Industries. "Around 500,000 people will pay for vaccines themselves, which should cost 1,000 baht a dose," said IEAT governor Veeris Ammarapala.

4. Value of BoI tax perk submissions jumps 80%

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

The value of investment projects submitted under the Board of Investment (BoI) tax incentive programmes skyrocketed by 80% year-on-year to 123.36 billion baht in the first quarter, driven mainly by the pandemic and subsequent measures to curb the spread of the virus, including a work-from-home guideline. From January to March, the BoI saw the number of applications for new investment projects increase 14% year-on-year to 401. Medical devices, home appliances and electronic equipment were the most attractive categories to investors. "Medical devices were ranked first in terms of investment value which increased over 100 times from the same period last year to 18.43 billion baht," said BoI secretary-general Duangjai Asawachintachit.

5. TCC, central bank discuss SMEs' woes

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

The Thai Chamber of Commerce (TCC) on Monday talked with the Bank of Thailand on the possibility to allow small and medium-sized enterprises to place purchase orders or invoices as loan collateral, a move that will enable SMEs to gain easier access to funds that will help alleviate their tight liquidity. TCC chairman Sanan Angubolkul said a great number of entrepreneurs especially small-scale ones now seriously suffer tight liquidity, with certain operators having to rely on unorganised loans to lubricate their business operations for failure to access state soft loan programmes.

6. Startups join fight against coronavirus

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

Local startups have joined hands to help in the fight against Covid-19 by using digital technology to help streamline work processes at field hospitals and support a queue management system for vaccinations. "Local tech startups can play a role in overcoming this health crisis if they are granted the opportunity to test systems," Rungsun Promprasith, chief executive of QueQ, a queue management mobile application, told the Bangkok Post. QueQ plans to test its new feature called "Vaccine Queuing Management" at Banglamung Hospital in Chon Buri's Bang Lamung district next week. Currently, it is in the process of seeking permission from authorities to test its feature with the Mor Prom system designed for Covid-19 vaccination registrations and bookings.

7. Covid jab maker BioNTech to build SE Asia manufacturing site in Singapore

Source: Thai PBS ([Link](#))

Covid jab maker BioNTech said on 10 May it would build a Southeast Asia headquarters and manufacturing site in Singapore to produce hundreds of millions of mRNA-based vaccines per year. Construction of the site will start this year, and it could become operational by 2023, the German company said in a statement. “With this planned mRNA production facility, we will increase our overall network capacity and expand our ability to manufacture and deliver our mRNA vaccines and therapies to people around the world,” said BioNTech chief executive Ugur Sahin. The vaccine produced by BioNTech jointly with Pfizer of the United States became the first Covid-19 jab to be approved for use in the West late last year. It is now supplying more than 90 countries worldwide and is expecting to ramp up its production to up to three billion doses by the end of the year from 2.5 billion doses expected previously. The pace will further accelerate to more than three billion doses in 2022.

8. National Research Council comes up with newer, better protective gear for medics

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

The National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT) delivered 3,000 sets of protective suits equipped with PAPR (powered air-purifying respirator) to the Public Health Ministry on 10 May. The suits will be distributed among state hospitals nationwide in a bid to offer better protection to medical personnel. “As an agency under the Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation Ministry, we have researched and upgraded our PAPR-enabled suits three times, each of which is significantly better than its predecessor,” NRCT said. “The latest version has larger helmets and a reinforced air hose that allows more mobility. Plus, the battery can last for at least four hours and beeps when it runs low. It can also be charged conveniently with a USB cable.”