

Thai News Update: 12 April 2021

1. Govt mulls visa rule overhaul for expats, tourists, investors

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

The government could revamp immigration rules this year to make it easier for expats and long-term tourists to stay in the country, part of a strategy to boost investment and tourism revenue once the pandemic eases. The proposed changes could mean foreigners would no longer have to file 90-day reports of their whereabouts -- a deeply unpopular requirement, particularly now that the online filing system has been down for more than a month. Expats trying to file online have been greeted with a flashy animation painting the immigration service in a glamorous light, followed by a simple text message that the system is "temporarily closed for maintenance". No further information is given, including when the system might be repaired. Hotel staff have also been frustrated because the TM-30 reporting system has also been down.

2. EV sector optimistic on prospects

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

Despite a drop in car sales in February because of the new Covid-19 outbreak, the electric vehicle (EV) industry is upbeat, hoping 2021 is another year of significant progress for the development of its infrastructure. Higher numbers of EVs, electric ferries and EV charging outlets are expected this year, which gradually moves Thailand towards achieving the government's goal of EVs making up at least 50% of new car production, or 1.25 million units, by 2030. This target was changed from 30% of new car production following the global trend of carbon neutrality to cope with global warming, which is directly linked to climate change.

3. Business registrations rise amid improving sentiment

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

Improving economic sentiment drove new business registrations in February to 7,265, up 13% from the same period last year, with rice farming among the top three for the first time. Thosapone Dansuputra, director-general of the Business Development Department, attributed the increase to Covid-19 vaccinations, state assistance for small and medium-sized enterprises and a plan to reopen the country, allowing vaccinated foreign tourists to visit Phuket from July.

The value of registered capital for the new businesses reached 19.7 billion baht in February, down 35% year-on-year and down 36% from the 30.9 billion recorded in January.

4. Demand for weed goods 'very high'

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

The Commerce Ministry's Intellectual Property Department said on Sunday it had approved two patents on cannabis and hemp inventions after their extracts were delisted as Category 5 narcotics. The department's director-general Vuttikrai Leewiraphan said staff had received a total of 31 requests for the cannabis and hemp exemption. Eleven of the 13 requests were for machines and methods to extract cannabis chemicals, six for food and beverages and four for herbal medicine products with the ingredients. The two patent requests approved by the department were for fabric plant pots and a cannabis oil extraction machine, the director-general said.

5. Thailand still a perfect stage for international films

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

As many as 26 foreign films have been made in Thailand in the first three months of 2021 and have generated Bt1.18 billion in revenue, Foreign Ministry's spokesperson Thani Saengrat said on Sunday. He added that the film board is considering another four or five applications from film producers. There are several reasons why Thailand is attractive to foreign filmmakers:

- Permission is granted very fast. If all documents are ready, approval is given within five days as the film board meets three times a week.
- Thai filming crew are skilled and have experience working with world-class filmmakers, especially from Hollywood.

Thailand also has good quality studios and props, so shots of the New York subway, Japan's Ginza district, a sci-fi set among others can all be shot easily.