

Thai News Update: 13 July 2020

1. Over 130 foreign firms get green light to operate in Thailand

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

Some 134 foreign companies were allowed to conduct business in Thailand in the first half of 2020 under the Foreign Business Act BE 2542, said Wuttikrai Leeveeraphan, director-general of the Commerce Ministry's Business Development Department. "The total investment value of these companies amounted to Bt5.35 billion – a 35 per cent increase compared to the same period last year," he said. "The industries that have received the most investment are petroleum exploration, financial services, conveyor equipment, mineral processing equipment, and maintenance services for the oil and gas industry."

2. Poll shows most Thais still oppose foreign arrivals

source: The Thaiger ([Link](#))

A recent survey carried out by the National Institute of Development Administration, or Nida Poll, shows that a majority of Thais still oppose opening the country to foreigners, even if they're not infected with Covid-19, saying the global coronavirus situation is still very serious. The poll was conducted on July 6-8 on 1,251 people aged 18 and over, of various education levels and occupations throughout the country. A "medical and wellness" program would open the country to foreigners who test negative for Covid-19 to receive medical treatment. They would undergo a mandatory 14 day quarantine before being allowed to return to their home countries.

3. Human trials of locally made Covid-19 vaccine to begin in October

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

Surpassing earlier predictions that human trials of a locally manufactured Covid-19 vaccine could begin as early as the end of the year, Thailand will conduct the first human trials of its vaccine candidate in October, after trials on monkeys produced satisfactory results, with high level of immunity being detected in the animals. The minister for higher education, science, research and innovation made the announcement in a Facebook post on 12 July. He says the next step is to recruit volunteers in August and September for human trials of the mRNA vaccine, which was jointly developed by the Vaccine Research Centre of Chulalongkorn University and the Office of National Research. He wrote that that the second dose of the vaccine candidate in monkeys, at the National Primate Research Centre in the central

province of Saraburi, showed that it boosted immunity in the animals to an “efficacious level.”

4. PM gives thumbs up for rise in Thailand's ranking in e-government development

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

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha is pleased with the improvement in Thailand's ranking from 73rd in 2018 to 57th on the E-government Development Index. The purpose of the index is to evaluate the readiness of the government's development in the electronic field which reflects its direction in information technology. The evaluation of 193 countries that are members of the United Nations is based on three factors -- online services, telecommunication structures and human capital -- and it takes place every two years.

5. BGrim included in prestigious FTSE4Good indexes

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

BGrim Power Plc (BGrim), an independent power producer in Thailand, has been chosen by FTSE Russell, the UK-based global index, data and analytics provider, to join the FTSE4Good Emerging Index and FTSE4Good Asean 5 Index, the company said in a press statement. The index series is designed to measure the performance of firms by showing robust sustainability standards, and are used by investors when considering investment. “We are honoured and very proud for being selected as a member of the FTSE4Good Index Series. This reflects BGrim's commitment to sustainable business practices,” said Chief Executive Officer Preeyanart Soontornwata.

6. PTT Group looks into synergising its petrochemical business

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

PTT Group has created a “Quantum” team to study ways of synergising its downstream petrochemical business with the aim of boosting the group's efficiency and controlling cost, said Noppadol Pinsupa, president of PTT's subsidiary IRPC. The project will be led by Kris Imsang, PTT's chief operating officer for Downstream Petroleum Business Group. IRPC has collaborated with the PTT Tank Terminal, which sells natural gas to industrial customers, to jointly market total solutions. This is part of IRPC's plan to expand sales of its high density polyethylene (HDPE) pallets for making floating solar panels, which will be sold to industrial customers who have a water reservoir.

7. RRU teams up with hotels, digital businesses to produce trained workers for EEC

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

Rajabhat Rajanagarindra University (RRU) has joined hands with hotels and digital businesses to impart skills for workers in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) areas. RRU president Assoc Prof Duangporn Pupaka said a memorandum of understanding, which was signed by the university and the business sector, was part of the government's strategy to promote specified skills to serve industries in the EEC. The project has been running for three years, she added. The main purpose of the collaboration was to provide short training courses for persons in the digital and the food and beverage sectors.

8. Tech tops business priorities

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

Across Asean, Thailand had the highest proportion of respondents prioritising technology investments in 2020, as small businesses in the region count on technology to help them overcome the impact of the Covid-19, a survey by United Overseas Bank (UOB) found. Technology was ranked the top investment priority for 2020 by two in three (64%) small businesses, including those who currently have cash flow concerns. This is according to a recent survey of 1,000 Asean small businesses conducted by UOB, Accenture and Dun & Bradstreet. The research sought to understand how small firms were adapting to the business environment given the changes brought on by the pandemic.

9. MEA rated "AAA" for corporate credit

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

Mr Kirapat Jiamset, Governor of the Metropolitan Electricity Authority (MEA), disclosed on 9 July 2020, that TRIS Rating Co., Ltd. has announced a corporate credit rating for the MEA of "AAA", or Triple A, the highest rank only bestowed on organisations with the most stability. As a state enterprise under the Ministry of Interior with a crucial role, the MEA is responsible for distributing electricity to the Thai capital and two major provinces, namely, Bangkok, Nonthaburi and Samut Prakan, where electricity demand and financial status continue to grow along with financial support received from the government. Credit ratings are indicators for investors in their decision-making concerning bond risks. They are also factors that indicate an organisation's ability to repay debt and financial stability.

10. FPO makes use of satellite data

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

The Fiscal Policy Office (FPO) is using satellites and carbon dioxide density measures to study economic conditions on a more continuous basis, according to senior officials at the

Finance Ministry's think tank. The data will allow the FPO to analyse data for areas to improve efficiency in tracking the most recent economic circumstances, as traditional economic indicators are either laggards or do not provide area analysis data, said Pisit Puapan, director of the FPO's Macroeconomic Policy Bureau. Norabajra Asava-Vallobh, a senior economist at the FPO, said that even though the agency assesses economic conditions on a monthly basis, there is a one-month lag.