

Thai News Update: 13 March 2020

1. Thailand restricts visitor visas to limit virus spread

Source: Reuters ([Link](#))

Thailand will temporarily suspend issuing visas on arrival to visitors from 19 countries and territories, including China, to contain the spread of the coronavirus, its interior minister said on 11 March. The suspensions were the latest measures imposed in the tourism-reliant Southeast Asian country, which has reported 59 cases of the virus and one death so far. Globally, over 113,000 people have been infected in over 100 countries. “People from any country who want to come will need to apply for a visa with our embassies,” Minister of Interior Anupong Paochinda told reporters.

2. Tourism Council of Thailand dreams big for local travellers

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

The Tourism Council of Thailand (TCT) has set a lofty goal for local tourists to take 200 million domestic trips this year, while the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is mulling the prospect of postponing Songkran to July. The greater challenge for Thai tourism is to boost the number of domestic trips to maintain jobs for workers in the industry until the coronavirus crisis passes, said TCT president Chairat Trirattanakarn. The TAT has set a target of 172 million domestic trips this year, generating 1.13 trillion baht in revenue.

3. SCB becomes third bank to stop exchanging foreign cash

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

Siam Commercial Bank (SCB) 12 March became the third Thai bank to cease exchanging foreign cash, shut down its exchange booths and quarantine booth staff for fourteen days as a result of the Covid-19 coronavirus outbreak. The bank said in a statement the decision was undertaken to protect their customers and staff, but that the use of Thai currency is still fine. One of Thailand’s biggest banks has announced it is closing all its foreign exchange booths and will cease exchanging foreign cash in its branches, effective immediately.

4. Thai Cabinet approves measures to help SMEs, hotels, transports survive COVID-19 crisis

Source: Pattaya Mail ([Link](#))

The Royal Thai Government has approved Phase One of a broad range of financial and fiscal relief measures to help Thai companies, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, alleviate the business downturn impact of the COVID-19 virus crisis. Travel and tourism companies are a primary focus of attention for the relief measures. Finance Minister Uttama Savanayana said that tourism, which accounts for 12% of the GDP, has been one of the worst affected sectors due to a 44% decline in visitors in February 2020. Chinese visitors alone were down 85%.

5. Ministry unveils new quarantine app

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

The Digital Economy and Society (DES) Ministry has rolled out a new mobile app to track and monitor people coming from countries heavily hit by the coronavirus that are required to self-quarantine. The "SydeKick for ThaiFightCOVID" app was developed by digital startup Artculus. People arriving from China, Iran, Italy and South Korea are mandated to give their locations during 14-day self-quarantines. The move came as the government scrapped its quarantine facilities and allowed people travelling from high-risk countries to quarantine at home.

6. Pantavanij wins "Thailand Top Company Awards 2020" for the Best eService Provider category for the second year in a row

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

“Pantavanij” one of the largest eProcurement platform providers in Asia Pacific, serving various industries in 12 countries, represented by Apisit Kuparatana, Managing Director, picked up the coveted Best eService Provider Award for the second year running at Thailand Top Company Awards 2020. The awards honour businesses proven to be highly and consistently effective in terms of development and responding to customers’ ‘Outside In’ needs. Pantavanij is recognised as the leader in eProcurement solutions. The company aims to support organisations across the Asia-Pacific region using high quality and value digital platforms and become a leading player in the world market.

7. Egat plans more LNG import to maintain electricity generation capacity

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

The Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (Egat) is planning to procure and import more liquefied natural gas (LNG) during 2020-22 to stabilise the country's electricity generating capability and control the cost of its power plants. Egat deputy governor Tawatchai Jakpaisal said this week that there were two options for LNG import: "The first approach is long-term procurement via PTT Plc under the global DCQ scheme," he said. "The second approach is short-term procurement from individual exporters