

Thai News Update: 14 May 2020

1. CP chief pushes tourism reboot

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

Billionaire Dhanin Chearavanont is urging the government to relax lockdown measures and welcome foreign travellers as soon as possible, and turn the country into a "safe haven" for wealthy visitors. Mr Dhanin, who is the senior chairman of the kingdom's largest food and agriculture conglomerate Charoen Pokphand (CP) Group, said the move would help revive the tourism sector. "Thailand's economic losses from the lockdown are estimated to be at 16 billion baht per day or almost 500 billion per month," he told the *Bangkok Post*. "A longer lockdown will cost us more and more." Thailand has been under lockdown since March 9 after the government acted to stem an increase in confirmed Covid-19 cases. The government said the coronavirus infection rate is now about 1%.

2. CCSA will announce list of businesses, activities that can recommence

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

Dr. Taweetilp Visanuyothin, spokesman for the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration, has announced that the CCSA will likely decide on 15 May on a full list of business and leisure activities which will be allowed to resume as part of the second phase of easing Emergency Decree restrictions. The national state of emergency was declared in March to halt the spread of the Covid-19 coronavirus. He says that, for the time being, the issue remains open, but he hinted at the retail, wholesale and leisure activities that are likely to be allowed to resume on Sunday.

3. US indicates FDI support

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

Michael George DeSombre, the new US ambassador to Thailand, has pledged to support the US private sector moving more manufacturing bases to Thailand, while extolling Thailand's response to the pandemic. After the new US ambassador paid a courtesy call on 13 May, Commerce Minister Jurin Laksanawisit said the US praised Thailand for its outbreak response, which has made the country more attractive for investment. Mr Jurin also quoted Mr DeSombre as saying the US is willing to offer cooperation on intellectual property to remove Thailand from the US's watch list.

4. Stipend paid to almost 12m recipients

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

Nearly 12 million of the 14 million approved recipients of the government's 5,000-baht cash relief have received their monthly stipend. Thanakorn Wangboonkongchana, secretary to the finance minister, said the monthly allowance has been paid to 11.8 million recipients and the rest are expected to get the aid money this week. Failure to complete registration has been the most frequently found problem in the appeal process. The Finance Ministry is seeking a method to help the 1.7 million applicants whose registration has not been completed, Mr Thanakorn said after visiting the complaint site.

5. THAI urged to come up with a more detailed rehab plan

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

The Transport Ministry has called on Thai Airways International (THAI)'s management and the Office of Transport and Public Policy and Planning to come up with a detailed action plan on the national carrier's rehabilitation, so the Cabinet has a more complete picture to look at when it considers the proposal. Transport Minister Saksayam Chidchob said he decided not to submit the carrier's recovery plan to the Cabinet on Tuesday (May 12) because the scheme lacked details. He explained that the plan needs to explain the airline's future plans and should also factor in the Covid-19 outbreak. He said THAI should have a final rehab plan ready as soon as possible for the Cabinet to consider.

6. New PTT boss sees positive signs for the future

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

When taking over as PTT's new president and CEO on Wednesday (May 13), Auttapol Rerkpiboon said he was confident that the oil and gas conglomerate's financial performance this year will enter positive territory. In his speech, Auttapol told the employees that PTT was facing challenges from the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak, which has severely affected most economies, including that of Thailand. PTT is also experiencing an additional impact from the drop in global oil price, though the CEO believes the situation will improve in the second half.

7. Govt training army of 'smart farmers' to tap global online market

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

A new government project to promote online exports of agricultural goods has drawn strong interest from farmers seeking a market for their products during the Covid-19 crisis. Commerce Minister Jurin Laksanawisit revealed that about 200 farmers and entrepreneurs had joined the "Smart Farmer: Online to the World Market" video workshop recently. Jurin said organising

the training seminar online was appropriate during the virus crisis, while its focus was down to the fact that 40 per cent of Thailand is agricultural land and 10 million of its people are farmers.

8. Medical hub ambitions

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

As Thailand begins to gradually ease coronavirus-related restrictions, the government is looking to cement the country's position as an advanced medical hub in Asia. From May 3, small retailers, street food vendors, restaurants outside malls, parks and outdoor sports venues have been permitted to reopen as policymakers look to kick-start economic activity that had been curtailed by lockdown measures. Alcohol sales have resumed for home consumption, while restaurants that have reopened may only serve soft drinks and must ensure that customers are seated at least 1.5 metres apart. Although some restrictions have been lifted, the state of emergency remains in effect until May 30. Incoming international flights remain suspended and bars, cinemas, department stores and indoor sports facilities are among the popular attractions that are still closed.

9. Phuket plans to re-open airport, ports, road link

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

This tourist island is seeking permission from Bangkok to reopen the airport, ports and permanent road access to the mainland after several days with no new Covid-19 infections detected. Provincial governor Phakaphong Tavipatana said on 13 May the province will ask the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) for approval to reopen the airport on Saturday. The current lockdown period ends at midnight on Friday. The CAAT has ordered the airport closed since April 3 to restrict air travel as health authorities nationwide battled to contain the spread of the coronavirus disease. Three airlines have notified the province of their plans to resume limited domestic passenger services to Phuket, at one flight a day, Mr Phakaphong said.