

Thai News Update: 15 May 2020

1. Thais urged to adapt to ‘New Normal’ in Smart Cities

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

Deputy Prime Minister Gen Prawit has urged Smart City projects to support New Normal lifestyles after the COVID-19 pandemic, promoting equality, inclusivity, health, safety, and sustainability. Deputy Prime Minister Gen Prawit Wongsuwan has chaired the first National Smart City Steering Committee this year at Government House, where he acknowledged the appointment of committee members, and development progress in 2018-2019. The committee has acknowledged candidates for three model Smart City development projects, and one Smart Urban City development project, namely Phaholyothin Transportation Center in Bangkok, the Eastern Economic Corridor in Chonburi, Amata Nakorn Industrial Estate in Chonburi, and Phuket City.

2. Vietnam to import 20,000 pigs from Thailand

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

Vietnam will import 20,000 breeding pigs from Thailand this year, state media said on Thursday, as the country is seeking to rebuild its hog herd battered by an African swine-fever outbreak. First detected in February 2019, the outbreak has forced the culling of around six million pigs, or 20% of Vietnam's pig herd, resulting in higher pork prices and putting upward pressure on inflation. While not harmful to humans, the African swine fever is deadly to pigs, with no available vaccine. The first batch of 250 pigs has been imported from Thailand, and they are expected to start producing piglets by the end of this year, Vietnam News Agency reported, citing deputy agriculture minister Phung Duc Tien.

3. Siam Paragon, Siam Center, Siam Discovery and ICONSIAM strengthen maximum safety

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

Siam Paragon, Siam Center, Siam Discovery and ICONSIAM strengthen maximum safety measures to ensure safe reopening and to best serve the ‘New Normal Innovative Lifestyle’ Global Retail destinations Siam Paragon, Siam Center, Siam Discovery and ICONSIAM are in full readiness to reopen fortified by innovative new benchmarks of retail health and safety measures. To ensure maximum 360° safety for all involved business alliances, tenants, customers and employees carefully designed ‘Safety Journey’ is introduced to best serve the ‘New Normal Innovative Lifestyle,’ that will bring back happiness and Thai smiles to Thai people.

4. Cash transfers to 10m farmers start

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

The Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC) will on 15 May begin transferring 5,000 baht to the accounts of farmers who qualified for the government's handout initiative to help those financially affected by Covid-19. Ten million qualified farmers will start receiving the handout today as the fund is distributed gradually this month, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. Ministry adviser, Alongkorn Ponlaboot, yesterday said it has verified information provided by farmers when they applied for the welfare benefit, noting the data on 8.33 million qualified farmers has been forwarded to the bank. The cabinet on April 28 approved a 150-billion-baht fund to help 10 million farmers affected by Covid-19's economic repercussions.

5. Night curfew to start an hour later from May 17

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

The Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration on Friday (May 15) resolved to reduce the curfew hours from 11pm to 4am from the current 10pm to 4am, PM's Office Minister Tewan Liptapanlop said. The centre's spokesman, Dr Taweessin Visanuyothin, said that the new curfew timings take effect from May 17. He added that Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha called for greater cooperation from the people to strictly comply with the hygiene rules and social distancing as he was worried the planned second phase of lockdown easing could lead to a fresh outbreak.

6. SSO opens centre to process Covid-19-related claims

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

The Social Security Office (SSO) opened its Covid-19 centre on Friday (May 15), to follow up on jobless claims from members affected by Covid-19, as well as receive appeals from those denied social security benefits as a force majeure case. A total of 1.09 million people applied to the office between March 24 and May 13 for benefits. The SSO said that 776,441 people had been paid, totalling Bt4.465 billion, but many more people were expected to seek benefits in the future.

7. Trat port eyed as new tourism, logistics hub

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

Deputy Transport Minister Athirat Rattanaset has urged the Port Authority of Thailand (PAT) to consider developing the logistics and tourism capabilities of Khlong Yai Port in Trat province. He made his remarks after meeting with the PAT on Thursday (May 14), adding that

the Marine Department completed construction of this multipurpose Bt1.3-billion port in 2015. “The Transport Ministry’s logistics development committee resolved on August 17, 2018 that the PAT would manage the port and open its services within 2021,” he said.

8. Phuket International Airport to re-open from 16th of May-but limited domestic flights only

Source: The Pattaya News ([Link](#))

The Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) has officially approved the reopening of Phuket International Airport for domestic flights from 12:01 AM on the 16th of May, 2020. The CAAT cited the request by the Phuket Governor backed by the approval from the local communicable disease control committee as well as Phuket’s effectiveness on surveillance, prevention and control of the spread of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) as reasons for approving the reopening of Phuket International Airport. The CAAT noted that the Airport must follow the operating hours already stipulated for other airports that resumed domestic flights from 1 May. Meanwhile, passengers entering Phuket are required to complete a form and download an application to allow officials to keep track of them for medical checks.

9. Thailand's CP Foods expects record year for profits on the back of soaring pork prices

Source: Reuters ([Link](#))

Thailand’s largest agribusiness Charoen Pokphand Foods Plc (CPF) expects to have its best year ever due to soaring pork prices and plans to expand in North America, its chief executive said on 14 May. Pork prices have surged as the spread of African swine fever in Asia created a supply shortage. “This could be our best year ... because pork prices are very good and chicken prices are recovering and an easing of lockdown measures will allow restaurants to open,” Prasit Boonduangprasert told a news briefing. Pork prices in Vietnam have nearly doubled since the outbreak of African swine fever in the past couple of years, he said.