

Thai News Update: 17 July 2020

1. Govt lines up digital hub

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

The government is pinning its hopes on two major projects to achieve its goal of becoming a digital hub in Asean. A Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite business is being funded through an amendment to the Space Affairs Act and the country is expanding its submarine cable capacity to make it more efficient for Thais to access digital infrastructure at an affordable price, says Digital Economy and Society (DES) Minister Buddhipongse Punnakanta. He told the Bangkok Post's "5G: The Game Changer" forum on Thursday that LEO satellites operate between 500- 2,000 kilometres above the Earth's surface compared to the 36,000km height of so-called geostationary satellites, the traditional types of communications satellites.

2. Monetary policy should remain accommodative, says BoT

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

The central bank has advised that monetary policy should remain accommodative for some time to support Southeast Asia's worst performing economy through the coronavirus pandemic and help inflation return to target. The Monetary Policy Committee expects headline inflation - projected at minus 1.7% this year - to get back to the 1%-3% target range in the second quarter of 2021, the The Bank of Thailand said in an open letter to the finance minister dated July 8 and released late on 16 July. Over the next 12 months, average inflation was projected at minus 0.9%, the BoT said, adding supply-side pressures would remain low as a slow global economic recovery continued to weigh on world energy prices.

3. Telcos optimistic for a bright 5G future

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

Thailand's telcos are optimistic about their ongoing rollout of 5G infrastructure and its ability to ignite not just technological but also substantial social change in the country and beyond, according to representatives from the country's two largest telcos at Bangkok Post's 5G: The Game Changer conference on 16 July. Vichaow Rakphongphairoj, the executive vice-chairman of True Corporation, said 5G take-up is expected to be significantly faster than 4G in the worldwide market. By 2025, 5G subscriptions will account for around 30% of all mobile subscriptions. Moreover, China will likely have the highest number of 5G subscribers, totalling one billion. Covid-19 has had an impact on all business sectors across the globe with

market capitalisation declining sharply by around 20-30% and unemployment skyrocketing to 188 million.

4. Food shipments remain bright spot despite virus

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

Thailand's food industry remains promising, driven by rising food demand during the Covid-19 pandemic. Speaking at the "Thai Food, World Food" fair, Commerce Minister Jurin Laksanawisit said despite a weak global economy, the ongoing trade spat, a strong baht and the deadly virus outbreak, Thailand has been doing well in food exports. "Thailand is the 11th largest food exporter in the world, with food shipments generating US\$33.1 billion in 2019, up 3% from 2018. We expect Thailand to be able to improve its ranking and become a global hub for quality agricultural products and food, driven by higher demand for food, be it vegetables, fruit, frozen seafood, frozen chicken, canned tuna, frozen and processed shrimp, refined sugar, beverages, seasonings or pet food," he said.

5. MQDC unveils new normal for Bt300 billion property development

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

Real estate developer Magnolia Quality Development (MQDC) is turning the virus crisis into an opportunity by focusing on the "home-based economy/lifestyle" as the new normal for home-buying decisions. The company is also forging ahead with residential projects under the "For All Well-Being" concept, which prioritises space and green areas under the new home-based living trend. The company said this "new normal" now serves as the DNA of MQDC projects, along with eco-friendly innovations like the urban air purifier towers in use at Magnolias Ratchadamri Boulevard and Whizdom Sukhumvit projects.

6. CAAT to enforce strict new rule for transit flights

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

The Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) is planning to enforce a new rule requiring passengers on Thai-owned chartered flights or special flights transitioning through Thailand to have a valid Covid-19 clearance certificate. The requirement will apply even for flights that make a refuelling stop in Thailand without passengers leaving the aircraft, said CAAT director-general Chula Sukmanop. He said the new rule is intended to prevent Thai airlines from being blacklisted by authorities in destination countries in case a Covid-19 infection is discovered on their flights.

7. Medical tourism plan to go ahead

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

Foreign medical tourists will still be allowed to enter Thailand as planned, but stricter disease control measures will be imposed upon them, a senior official said on 16 July. Taweetilp Visanuyothin, spokesman of the Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration (CCSA), said the kingdom's medical and wellness tourism programme is expected to restart at the end of this month at the earliest. However, all agencies involved, such as the Public Health Ministry, the Department of Health Service Support and hospitals catering to the visitors must beef up disease control measures, Dr Taweetilp said. He said the move is necessary after the country's Covid-19 fight was set back by a scare triggered by a visiting Egyptian airman and a young daughter of a diplomat who tested positive for the virus. The virus scare angered locals who argued they should have observed stricter precautions.

8. Thai AirAsia's plan to also fly out of Suvarnabhumi gets initial okay

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

The Airports of Thailand (AOT)'s revenue committee has approved Thai AirAsia's plan to start flying from Suvarnabhumi airport, AOT president Nitinai Sirismatthakarn said on Thursday (July 16). The plan will be submitted to the AOT board for consideration on July 29, he added. The carrier flies from many hubs, including Don Mueang Airport.