

Thai News Update: 17 March 2020

1. Songkran officially postponed

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

In a shock move, an urgent meeting of the Covid-19 Administration Centre, chaired by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, on 17 March approved a motion to postpone the Songkran holidays from April 13-15 to later, undisclosed dates. Deputy government spokeswoman Rachada Thanadirek made the announcement on her Twitter account this afternoon. Songkran is the traditional Thai New Year festival. Ratchada says the meeting cited “increasing social distance” and “minimising public movement both domestically and internationally” to help stem the spread of the Covid-19 coronavirus.

2. Thai government planning more economic stimulus packages

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

The government has stepped up measures to contain the coronavirus or Covid-19 if the country. Economists have urged the government to expand the fiscal deficit to up to 600 billion baht, while more stimulus packages are hopefully on course to counter the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak in Thailand. Secretary to the Council of Economic Ministers, Kobsak Pootrakool, says that the economic ministers would consider extra packages as relief for certain sectors, that were hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic.

3. Thailand reports 30 new coronavirus cases

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

Thailand reported 30 new coronavirus cases on 17 March, raising the total to 177, Sukhum Kanchanaphimai, permanent secretary of the Ministry of Public Health told a news conference. The first group comprised 14 people who were in close contact with previous patients or were associated with the places where previous patients visited: 11 cases from a boxing stadium, one from an entertainment venue and two people who were in close contact with previous patients. The second group involved 16 new patients, including nine who recently from other countries

and one who worked closely with foreigners. The cases of six other patients in this group were under investigation.

4. Thailand Post offers online shopping promotion

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

Thailand Post will charge people sending a parcel weighing up to one kilogramme 19 baht each, starting on 17 March, as part of a measure to accommodate online shopping in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. “The move is to make it more convenient for people buying necessities, particularly consumer goods, via online shops, preventing them from shopping out of home during the outbreak,” said Thailand Post president Korkij Danchaivichit. The campaign starts on 17 March and runs until April 30 at post offices across the country. It is also meant to help move the economy forward, he said. Parcels under the campaign will be delivered to destinations within 2-5 days, can be tracked and are entitled to a maximum payment of 1,000 baht per item in indemnity.

5. Chao Phraya commuters to enjoy comfort of AC boats from May

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

Chao Phraya Express Boat Co on March 16 announced the launch of four new air-conditioned Riva Express boats. They will be the first air-conditioned boats plying the river. The new service will help commuter to link with major trainline BTS, the company said. BTS commuters can use its Rabbit Card to pay and access Chao Phraya Riva Express at stopover piers. The boat company is one of the subsidiaries of Supatra Group, operator of passenger boats on the Chao Phraya in Bangkok for a 100 years.

6. THAI grounds 12 more planes to cut costs amid slump in demand

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

Thai Airways International Plc (THAI) is grounding 12 planes to reduce operational cost amid the Covid-19 situation. The airline’s flight demand has fallen by some 30 per cent, Cherdphan Chotikhun, executive vice president of THAI’s Technical Department, said. The 12 planes to be grounded under this plan are: three Airbus A380s -- to be grounded for seven months; six Boeing 777-200s -- to be grounded from March 16 onwards and will not be recommissioned; an Airbus 330-300 HS-TEU, which has been grounded since March 10; an Airbus 330-300 HS-TES and a Boeing 777-300 HS-TKE -- both will be grounded from Friday (March 20) onwards.