

## Thai News Update: 17 March 2021

### **1. FDA okays Thailand's very own cheaper, faster Covid-19 test kit**

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

Thailand's Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the "COXY-AMP" Covid-19 test kit developed by researchers from the National Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (Biotech) and Mahidol University's Faculty of Tropical Medicine. The team has been contacted by the Thai private sector which wants to produce the kit commercially.

### **2. Plans for new Dusit Thani hotel, project unveiled with Bt9bn upgrade**

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

Dusit Thani and Central Pattana are boosting investment in the Dusit Central Park mixed-use project overlooking Lumpini Park from Bt36.7 billion to Bt46 billion. The extra Bt9.3 billion will address shifts in consumer behaviour by enlarging interior and exterior spaces and bringing value to the broader community through its green space, said the property developers. Functional space would increase by around 31 per cent or 71,907 square metres, they added.

### **3. Cabinet okays Bt438m for quarantine facilities for migrant workers, people crossing border illegally**

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

The Cabinet has approved a budget of Bt438.08 million to create 14 organisational quarantine (OQ) border facilities for migrant workers, those who cross the border illegally and human smugglers who have been arrested in seven provinces – Tak's Mae Sot district, Chiang Rai, Ranong, Songkhla, Chanthaburi, Sa Kaeo and Nong Khai – including preparing field hospitals in case of a health emergency, government spokesman Anucha Burapachaisri said on 16 March.

### **4. THG keen to diversify with partnership**

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

SET-listed Thonburi Healthcare Group (THG) is forging a new partnership with a Thai oil and gas giant for a healthcare venture this year, hoping to catch a global trend as the country is deemed an "aged" society. "THG is in talks with the company to invest in healthcare and life science businesses," Tanatip Suppradit, THG vice-chairman and chief executive, said on 16 March. He declined to name the company, saying only a partnership is the right approach given the rapid changes in the business environment. Dr Tanatip said this latest move resulted from the pandemic, which caused both firms to take interest in diversification.

## **5. Budget for fiscal 2022 wins cabinet approval**

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

The cabinet on 16 March approved a fiscal 2022 budget of 3.10 trillion baht, with a deficit of 700 billion baht, which is 91 billion or 15% higher than fiscal 2021. Sommai Lakananuruk, deputy secretary-general of the Budget Bureau, said the fiscal 2022 budget, starting from Oct 1 this year, would be 186 billion baht or 5.66% lower than the 3.28 trillion baht approved in the fiscal 2021 blueprint. The regular budget is set at 2.36 trillion baht in fiscal 2022, down by 177 billion from the current fiscal year.

## **6. Arkhom banking on jabs to boost economy**

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

Finance Minister Arkhom Termpittayapaisith feels upbeat about the country's economic prospects because of the Covid-19 vaccine roll-out in Thailand, predicting the economy will start picking up in the fourth quarter. Speaking after getting a shot of the AstraZeneca vaccine, Mr Arkhom said on 16 March he believes the inoculations will shore up people's confidence, leading them to travel more in the country. "After the shot, I still feel well with no side effects and my arm is not sore. It is similar to other vaccinations," he said. "Vaccine availability and distribution will benefit the overall economy, and should increase people's confidence."