

## Thai News Update: 18 January 2021

### **1. Private sector contributes to field hospitals to cope with Covid-19**

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

The Federation of Thai Industries (FTI) and its partners will build a field hospital in Samut Sakhon area to cope with the latest Covid-19 outbreak there. FTI president Suphan Mongkolsuthee said the hospital will have 200 beds. “FTI will provide all the funding, estimated at Bt6 million to Bt10 million,” he said. “We are now surveying the location and will start construction immediately if the project is approved by nearby communities.” Suphan added that FTI chose Samut Sakhon to establish a field hospital as there are several migrant workers in the province who have contracted the virus and who might have trouble accessing the same level of healthcare services as Thai nationals.

### **2. Industry Ministry preps SME soft loans**

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

The Industry Ministry is preparing to launch a new soft loan programme this week to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) better cope with the latest wave of the Covid-19 outbreak. The value of the assistance package, to be made through the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Bank of Thailand (SME D Bank), is being determined and the aid will be based on the degree of damage the pandemic is inflicting on businesses. Up to 40 billion baht in soft loans were allocated through SME D Bank for SMEs last year when the nationwide lockdown measures seriously crippled the economy.

### **3. Depa to aid small business in accessing digital platforms**

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

The Digital Economy Promotion Agency (Depa) aims to strengthen 500 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by helping them access digital platforms created by local startups this year. The move is in line with Depa's roadmap to create digital platforms that will benefit local enterprises and communities, levelling up the tech startup ecosystem in the country. Selected SMEs are eligible for Depa's subsidy, which will provide a 60% discount on the cost of joining digital solutions or platforms created by startups supported by the agency. Depa recently chose eight local startups to support via its angel fund with a combined sum of 20 million baht.

#### **4. ICONSIAM indulges shoppers with “ICONSIAM The Ultimate Shopping Experience”**

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

New online services allow shopping anytime, anywhere via four shopping channels. ICONSIAM, the iconic world-class landmark of the Chao Phraya River, has launched four new online shopping services under the concept of ICONSIAM The Ultimate Shopping Experience. The services cover a wide range of products, including: Health & Beauty, Gadget & IT, Home & Lifestyle, Women’s & Men’s Fashion, Sports & Travel. All with the objective of best-serving shoppers’ evolving needs and in line with the authorities’ attempts to lower the risk of Covid-19 infection. The new even more convenient online shopping services are available at LINE OA LINE OA: @ICONSIAM and Facebook: ICONSIAM. Simply shop from the menus and browse wide selections of items specially selected to serve your interests.

#### **5. Expert urges higher government spending to shore up economy**

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

The government should increase expenditure in the next fiscal year to deal with the economic fallout post Covid-19, while investors should beware of a major correction in the stock market, an economist has said. Anusorn Tamajai, former dean of the Faculty of Economics at Rangsit University, said that the Thai government should increase expenditure by 2 to 3 per cent for fiscal 2022. The government plans to spend Bt3.1 trillion, down Bt185.9 billion or 5.66 per cent, from the current fiscal year. The 2022 fiscal year starts in October this year.