

THAI NEWS UPDATE: 18 JANUARY 2022

1. Booster mix effective against Omicron, study shows

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

The Department of Medical Sciences has found that administering an mRNA-based vaccine such as Pfizer or Moderna as a booster after initial doses of old-technology vaccines like Sinovac and/or AstraZeneca produces a high level of immunity against both the Delta and Omicron coronavirus variants. Department chief Dr Supakit Sirilak said data from a test involving 80 people showed that all Covid-19 vaccines produced low levels of immunity against Omicron when compared to Delta.

2. Mitr Phol invests in food tech startup Meat Avatar

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

Mitr Phol Group, Asia's largest sugar producer, has made a new investment in Meat Avatar Co, a food technology startup, as it diversifies into the plant-based meat business to catch the trend in future food in Thailand and overseas. Both companies expect to see revenue reach 100 million baht by the end of this year, said Voradate Chantasatkoso, manager for energy and new business development of Mitr Phol Group.

3. Ministry sets up war rooms to monitor prices

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

The Commerce Ministry on 17 January set up war rooms to closely monitor and supervise essential consumer goods and services sectors to curb price gouging nationwide while denying requests from the private sector to raise carbonated drink prices. Chicken raisers and producers who met with the Internal Trade Department also yesterday agreed to freeze chicken prices until the situation improves, but asked for the government to help subsidise production costs. According to Boonyarit Kalayanamit, commerce permanent-secretary, the war rooms chaired by himself will be tasked with following up and tackling high prices, especially of products and taking legal action against merchants who take advantage of consumers by raising prices unfairly.

4. Revenue Department to cut high earners' tax benefits

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

The Revenue Department is further adjusting its income tax exemption structure to reduce benefits for high-income earners and increase them for low- and middle-income earners, the department chief said on Monday. Ekniti Nitithanprapas said that under the current structure, the top 20 per cent of income earners enjoyed 80 to 90 per cent of tax exemption packages

offered by the department, while middle/low-income earners saw few benefits. The change follows the earlier cancellation of tax exemption on LTF (long-term equity funds). Earlier, 15 per cent of LTF investments up to Bt500,000 could be deducted from taxable annual income. The department is instead offering income earners a 30-per-cent deduction on Super Saving Fund investments up to Bt200,000.

5. CCSA to consider reopening Thailand as Covid wave stabilises

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

Moves to ease restrictions and reopen the country will be considered on 20 January at a meeting of the Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) chaired by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha. Government spokesman Thanakorn Wangboonkongchana said the CCSA will meet to re-evaluate Thailand's Omicron outbreak and consider adjusting measures accordingly. The Public Health Ministry will also ask the CCSA to change Covid control zones in line with the current situation so that restrictions on activities are eased. The meeting will also discuss measures regarding the closure of the country to foreign tourists, said the spokesman, without elaborating. Hoteliers and tourism business operators are calling on the government to resume the quarantine-free Test & Go scheme, in which fully vaccinated foreign tourists must stay just one night in a hotel pending test results.