

Thai News Update: 18 March 2021

1. New marine transport route set to connect EEC with Southern Economic Corridor

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

Seahorse Ferries is interested in running transport services with the Blue Dolphins ferry on a new marine route between Chon Buri (Sattahip Commercial Port), Prachuap Khiri Khan and Songkhla provinces, Transport Minister Saksayam Chidchod said. Blue Dolphins is already exempt from VAT charges by the Board of Investment and will start ferry tests from Sattahip. Water transport on the new route will be beneficial in connecting the Eastern Economic Corridor with the Southern Economic Corridor, enhancing the potential of water transport, reducing costs and accidents from land transportation and effectively reducing the PM 2.5 dust pollution problem.

2. Ministry to test job efficiency

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

The Public Health Ministry will make a study of Covid-19 vaccine efficiency among people who received the Sinovac or AstraZeneca vaccines, to learn more about their ability to build up immunity in the body. Results of the test project are expected to be known within the next two months and will help shape the government's vaccine policy for the next 12 months. Speaking at the ministry's daily briefing on Wednesday, Dr Somsak Akksilp, chief of the Department of Medical Services (DMS), said the Covid-19 vaccines could not guarantee life-long efficiency to prevent further infections so it was important to learn more about the issue.

3. 'Deliver with Safety Campaign' launched to boost global confidence in Thai food

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

The Commerce Ministry has launched a campaign to boost confidence in Thai products overseas amid the Covid-19 crisis. The "Thailand Deliver with Safety" campaign aims to reassure buyers and importers that Thai agricultural produce, food products and halal food are Covid-safe thanks to high production standards from farm to plate. The global trade slowdown during the pandemic has impacted Thai exporters, especially in the food manufacturing sector where consumers are now prioritising food safety.

4. AstraZeneca approves Thai vaccine plant; 800,000 Sinovac doses due this week

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

AstraZeneca has approved safety standards at Thailand's vaccine factory and will send the first batch of raw materials in June, Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said on 17

March. Meanwhile, another 800,000 doses of Sinovac vaccine will arrive this week from China, Anutin told press at Government House. Thai health officials are also in talks with the Chinese firm for an additional 5 million doses, he added. The Sinovac vaccine is currently being used to inoculate frontline healthcare staff and at-risk groups.

5. Made-in-Thailand can earn B1.77tn

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

The government believes its new Made-in-Thailand campaign, which promotes the use of locally made products in state projects, can create domestic economic value of 1.77 trillion baht. The scheme is meant to help local businesses, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), through state procurement projects. Factory operators and workers should also benefit from the scheme, said the Industry Ministry. "Up to 60,000 factories have registered with the Industry Ministry and there are around 5 million workers employed in factories and SMEs," said Industry Minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit, who co-launched the campaign on Wednesday.

6. Investree sets up SME debenture funnel

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

Investree Thailand, a debenture-based crowdfunding platform in partnership with Investree Radhika Jaya (Indonesia), aims to be a matchmaking platform for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to launch short-term debentures worth a combined US\$1 million per month this year, cracking the market for retail borrowing. Natsuda Bhukkanasut, co-founder and chief executive at Investree, said the company plans to place its first debenture (issued by a local rice transport company) worth 500,000 baht at an interest rate of 15% per year on the company's crowdfunding platform by this month. "SMEs contribute to 37% of the country's GDP and 80% of employment but less than 1% of them can access bank loans," she said.