

THAI NEWS UPDATE: 18 MAY 2021

1. Jurin in trade talks with New Zealand ahead of APEC summit

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

New Zealand will host the 2021 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit on June 4-5 via videoconference. “New Zealand’s minister asked Thailand to support three statements to be announced at the summit next month,” said Jurin, who doubles as deputy prime minister. “The first statement is to announce multilateral trading as a key factor in solving the Covid-19 crisis and supporting the BCG [Bio-Circular-Green] economy. The second is to urge APEC members to remove the limit on exporting Covid-19 vaccine, except in case of shortages in their own countries. The third statement focuses on promoting logistics cooperation among member countries to boost imports and exports of necessary products including medical equipment, vaccines, food and agricultural produce.” Established in 1989 and featuring 21 countries, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation is responsible for over 70 per cent of Thailand’s international trade at around THB10 trillion per year.

2. Thailand leads in wholesale central bank digital currency development: PwC

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

The “PwC Global CBDC Index 2021” analyses central banks’ maturity in deploying their own digital currency, including tracking progress and stance on developing CBDC development. The other central bank named in the report was that of Hong Kong SAR. Vilaiporn Taweelappontong, consulting lead partner and financial services leader for PwC Thailand, said the index ranks the world’s most advanced CBDC projects in terms of retail CBDCs held directly by corporations and citizens, and interbank/wholesale CBDCs restricted to financial institutions for interbank payments and financial settlement processes. The BOT and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) won a score of 80 thanks to the Project Inthanon-LionRock initiated by them.

3. PTT, IEAT join hands to study plan to digitalise factories

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

The Industrial Estate Authority of Thailand (IEAT) and PTT Energy Solution Co, a subsidiary of PTT Group, are conducting a study on plans to set up a joint venture to help digitalise factories in industrial estates. The new company will provide digital solutions to upgrade factories and increase their production efficiency mainly through robotics and automation. The study is scheduled to be completed by this year. IEAT governor, Veeris Ammarapala, said his agency and PTT want to develop an Industrial Transformation Platform, or ITP Platform, to

link together databases of IEAT, PTT, trading partners and some state agencies to facilitate operations in the industrial sector.

4. Thailand backs APEC statements

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

Thailand has voiced support for Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)'s three key statements on the facilitation of the Covid-19 vaccine and movement of essential goods as well as expressing readiness to host the APEC meeting next year. Commerce minister Jurin Laksanawisit said after a video conference with New Zealand's Minister of Trade and Export Growth, Damien O'Connor, that Thailand has agreed to support New Zealand's proposal to issue three important documents at the APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade (MRT) meeting to be held on June 5.

5. Thai banks strong, can weather uncertainty - BoT

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

Thailand's banking system remained resilient with high capital buffers and liquidity to cushion economic uncertainty, the Bank of Thailand (BoT) said on 17 May, as the country deals with a third wave of coronavirus infections. The outbreak, the country's biggest so far, has hit consumption and tourism, prompting a growth outlook downgrade by the National Economic Development Council on 17 May. In the first quarter, overall loans expanded 3.8% from a year earlier, slowing from a 5.1% rise in the previous quarter, as large corporate loan growth moderated following an acceleration in loan usage last year, Suwannee Jatsadasake, a senior director at the BoT, told a briefing.

6. No lockdown necessary for Bangkok: Public Health Minister

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

There is no need to impose a lockdown in Bangkok as most of the Covid-19 cases discovered in the city have mild symptoms, Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said. He was speaking after attending a meeting on the Covid-19 situation and allocation of vaccines with Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha on 17 May. Anutin said the spread of the virus in prisons and construction sites can be contained by closing the areas and setting up field hospitals inside to treat patients based on their symptoms. He said 70 per cent of Covid-19 patients in the country had mild symptoms, 20 per cent were at risk due to chronic conditions, while 10 per cent had developed severe symptoms. "The government will also allocate vaccines for patients inside prisons," he said. He added that 1.7 million doses of Sinovac and AstraZeneca will be delivered to Thailand towards the end of May, which should help kick off the mass rollout.

7. Covid jab registration for all Thai adults from May 31; foreigners must wait till Aug
Source: The Nation ([Link](#))

People can register for the jab at the MorPrompt app or Line account, or through public hospitals, health volunteers and other channels. Walk-in registration will also be available as per announcements in each province. Universal registration has been brought forward from July amid record daily numbers of new cases. Registration for the over-60 age group and people with chronic conditions has already opened. Meanwhile, the Public Health Ministry is also in the process of setting up a vaccination registration system for expats and foreigners working in Thailand. The system is expected to be up and running by August. Ratchada assured the public that all Covid-19 vaccines registered in Thailand stimulate an effective immune response against the virus.