

Thai News Update: 19 April 2021

1. Process of reopening Thailand to foreign tourists in the pipeline, says minister

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

The government plans to reopen the country to foreign tourists in three phases, Tourism and Sports Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn said on 19 April. He added that process will be completed in cooperation with other authorities, such as the Public Health and Foreign ministries. “However, the plan to reduce quarantine period for vaccinated tourists from this month and launching the Phuket sandbox on July 1 may not happen if there is opposition,” he said. To make the Phuket sandbox happen, 900,000 doses of the Covid-19 vaccine will have to be administered to Phuket residents by June.

2. Bangkok gets fourth field hospital today with 400 beds

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

Governor Aswin Kwanmuang led officials from the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) to oversee the Erawan 2 field hospital at Bangkok Arena Sports Centre in Nong Chok district on 18 April. The Erawan 2 field hospital, which opens on Monday, is the fourth field hospital in Bangkok built to cope with the increasing number of Covid-19 cases. The field hospital can accommodate 400 patients (150 men and 250 women). The field hospital received support from the private sector, such as SCG, Lotus Mattress and other donors.

3. CP pledges Bt200m worth of assistance to Bangkok field hospitals

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

Charoen Pokphand Group (CP) has said it would provide Bt200 million worth of food and medical supplies to field hospitals in Bangkok. CP senior chairman Dhanin Chearavanont said that the contribution would start with the field hospital in King Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital, followed by those in Phramongkutklao Hospital, Siriraj Hospital, Ramathibodi Hospital and others. Dhanin added that CP Group is supporting three meals a day at the field hospital, as well as at hospitals run under the King Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital. In addition, CP’s True Corporation is providing free Wi-Fi to medical personnel and patients in the field hospital.

4. Demand for office space remains robust

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

Though the pandemic has affected many tenants, demand for office space in Bangkok in the first quarter remained strong, driven by the growth of e-commerce, tech and logistics

businesses. Phattarachai Taweewong, research and communication director at property consultant Colliers Thailand, said demand for Bangkok office space remained robust, although there was a drop in the first quarter this year compared with the fourth quarter last year. "Key drivers of demand are e-commerce, technology and logistics operators, which are generating more income and need to grow their business by expanding office space," he said. Mr Phattarachai said demand for new office space in the first quarter also came from financial institutions, online travel agents, retailers and wholesalers of electronics products.

5. CAAT wants late-night flights scrapped to curb Covid spread

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

The Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) is calling for the suspension of all domestic flights between 10pm and 4am, after the Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) urged all people in high-risk "red zones" to stay at home from 11pm to 4am to curb the number of new infections. As the number of new infections continues to increase, residents in 18 provinces labelled as highest-risk areas are being advised to stay at home at night, except in extraordinary cases. To bring all domestic flights in line with the government directive, the CAAT wants airports and airlines to limit, if not, suspend, flights between 10pm and 4am until further notice, said its director-general Suttipong Kongpool.

6. Billionaire Sarath offers B169bn buyout for Intouch

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

Gulf Energy Development Plc, Thailand's biggest power producer by market value, has made a buyout bid for Intouch Holdings Plc, which controls the nation's largest mobile phone operator, offering as much as 169 billion baht. The Bangkok-based company, controlled by billionaire Sarath Ratanavadi, offered to buy 2.6 billion shares, or about 81% of Intouch, that it does not currently own at 65 baht each, it said in an exchange filing. The offer price is 11% higher than Intouch's close on Friday. Gulf will also tender for 100% of Advanced Info Service Plc, Thailand's biggest mobile phone company controlled by Intouch, at 122.86 baht each. AIS's offering will be subject to Gulf securing at least 50% stake in Intouch, it said. Intouch's biggest earnings come from AIS and Thaicom Plc, the nation's biggest satellite operator. It also invests in technology startups. Gulf will request the regulator to waive a mandatory requirement to make tender offer for Thaicom, it said.