

## THAI NEWS UPDATE: 20 MAY 2021

### **1. Bangkokians might soon be able to book their VAX date at 7-Eleven!**

**Source: Thaivisa ([Link](#))**

The latest word from the spokesman of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration is that they are working on a new "web based" plan to book vaccine queue numbers. This could mean that you'd be able to book your jab at 7-Eleven if they come onboard with the scheme, said spokesman Pol Capt Pongsakorn Kwanmuang. The idea is that this will supplement the Mor Prom app that is currently being used for the over 60s and those with underlying health conditions. The web based system details will be announced next week ahead of operation in June and July. Yesterday governor Aswin Kwanmuang visited one of 25 walk-in centers outside hospitals at Big C Bang Bon in the west of the Thai capital, reported Thai Rath. He was advising registration beforehand, echoing fears from Thai premier Prayuth Chan-ocha who had reportedly put the brakes on the walk-in rollout on Tuesday.

### **2. TAT focuses on Phuket's good safety**

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

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has come up with a city marketing plan to highlight the high level of safety in Phuket and other sandbox areas to gain tourists' confidence despite a spike in new cases. "As the timeline for the country's reopening via the so-called Phuket sandbox remains the same -- July 1 -- we have to make sure that the destination, which is currently building herd immunity, is safe for tourists," said TAT governor Yuthasak Supasorn. On Wednesday, the TAT held a virtual meeting with 50-60 hotel operators led by the Thai Hotels Association, local hoteliers and global hotel companies such as Marriott International, InterContinental Hotels Group, Centara Hotels and Resorts, Minor Hotels, Accor, Dusit Thani, Asset World Corp and Onyx Hospitality Group.

### **3. PTT steps up daily purchase of gas**

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

National oil and gas conglomerate PTT Plc is increasing its purchase of natural gas by 450 million standard cubic feet per day (MMSCFD) after four coal-fired power plants in Thailand and Laos were not able to produce electricity as planned during peak hours. The company plans to sell more gas, a key fuel for power generation, to other gas-fired power plants to ensure sufficient electricity supply as demand is high during the hot season. PTT on Wednesday did not elaborate why electricity generation from the four power producers fell short of the planned production. Two lignite-fired power plants run by the Electricity Generating Authority of

Thailand in Lampang and Hongsa Lignite Co in Laos as well as two bitumen-fired power plants operated by BLCP Co and Gheco-One Co in Rayong have since May 7 seen their power generation drop by 2,750 megawatts, or almost 8% of power consumption during peak hours, according to PTT.

#### **4. Jurin orders agencies to ramp up efforts to tackle IP violations**

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

Commerce minister Jurin Laksanawisit has ordered the Intellectual Property Department to work closely with government and private agencies to suppress intellectual property violations and upgrade existing laws as the government aims to remove Thailand from the US Trade Representative's (USTR) watch list (WL) as soon as possible. According to Mr Jurin, the department has been instructed to work with US-related agencies to build an IP Work Plan to remove Thailand from the USTR's WL and all US lists in the future as well as pursue talks with its US counterparts under the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (Tifa) to tackle IP issues.

#### **5. Thai health-food exporters urged to tap soaring demand during pandemic**

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

Thailand exported over 794 million baht in vitamins and supplements last year alone. The TPSO said consumers were focusing more and more on health products as a way of boosting their immune systems. This trend offered opportunities for Thai food companies to leverage the strengths of Thai medicinal herbs and supplements to expand to international markets where demand was high, it added. European consumers are leaning towards vegan and low-lactose products, while the trend in North America was for GMO-free food, said TPSO chief Phusit Ratanakul Sereroengrit, citing consumer data from research firm Mintel. Meanwhile, consumers in Asia favour natural products free from additives, according to the data. Twenty-seven per cent of consumers in the US, one of Thailand's largest food-export markets, would pay more for whole-foods while 35 per cent want to know the origin of the product.

#### **6. Nok Air submits business rehabilitation plan, now up for creditor approval**

**Source: Thaiger ([Link](#))**

Nok Air handed in its business rehabilitation plan after extending the deadline twice. The airline's creditors will meet to discuss the plan and decide whether to approve the plan. It would then need to be approved by Thailand's Central Bankruptcy Court. Nok Air is the second national carrier to file a rehabilitation petition with the Central Bankruptcy Court over the past year as airlines struggled due to international travel restrictions. In September, Nok Air

reported that revenue was down by 47.7% year-on-year and reported a net loss of 3.9 billion. Thai Airways, which is tackling a debt of more than 300 billion baht, recently had its restructuring plan approved by creditors and will have the plan reviewed by the court later this month.