

Thai News Update: 21 December 2020

1. Egat in talks with PTTEP subsidiary for joint venture on drones

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

The Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (Egat) is in talks with AI and Robotics Ventures Co Ltd (ARV), a subsidiary of PTT Exploration and Production Pcl (PTTEP), to jointly explore a business opportunity in the future, Egat governor Boonyanit Wongrukmit said. He added that one possible collaboration could be in the use of drones to inspect the conditions of Egat's vast power transmission lines, which will help it reduce the cost of inspection. He said that while Egat has demand to use such drone technology, ARV has the knowledge and technology, which will enhance Egat's efficiency in the transmission line inspection.

2. Thai, Indonesian central banks expand rupiah-baht settlement framework

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

The Bank of Thailand and Bank Indonesia on Monday announced the expansion of the rupiah-baht settlement framework. The framework was first launched on December 11, 2017 under a memorandum of understanding signed by the two central banks on December 23. The expansion is a part of continuous efforts to promote wider use of local currencies to facilitate and enhance trade and direct investment between Indonesia and Thailand, the banks said. The framework was expanded to include direct investment as an eligible underlying transaction in addition to trade, and to further relax relevant foreign exchange rules and regulations, for example, through more flexible documentation requirements, they said.

3. Bangkok announces 10 measures to control Covid-19 transmission

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

The government is easing travel restrictions for citizens from 56 countries to boost the country's pandemic-hit tourism industry, though visitors will be required to undergo a mandatory two-week hotel quarantine. Tourists from countries including Australia, France and the United States can travel without visas, but would need a certificate to show they are free of Covid-19 72 hours before travel and a booking at a quarantine hotel, Taweasilp Visanuyothin, spokesman for the Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration (CCSA), said. Visitors would then be subject to a two-week quarantine period after arriving, he said, adding the normal 30-day visa would be extended to 45 days.

4. Banpu keen on natural gas after \$100m injection

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

Banpu Plc, a non-oil energy conglomerate, aims to become a leader in technology-driven natural gas exploration and production after Oaktree Capital Management LP, a leading investment management firm, injected US\$100 million in capital into Banpu's gas business unit in the US. The American company has invested in the preferred stocks of BKV Corporation, which is 96.3% owned by Banpu. BKV operates in the Marcellus shale basin in Pennsylvania and Barnett shale basin in Texas, with combined production capacity of 700 million cubic feet per day.

5. FPO forecasts RCEP deal to fuel export bonanza

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

Thai exports are expected to receive a windfall thanks to the signing by 15 Asia-Pacific economies of a huge trade pact during the Asean Summit in Hanoi in mid-November, says the Fiscal Policy Office (FPO). The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) was signed at the end of a four-day Asean summit on Nov 15 and must now be ratified before coming into effect, a process that will take months to start and years to complete, Reuters reported. The 15 signatories were China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and the 10 Asean member states (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam).

6. ASQ hotels appreciate relaxation of travel rules

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

Alternative state quarantine (ASQ) facilities in Thailand are upbeat about the latest relaxation of travel restrictions, which allow citizens of 56 countries to visit Thailand without a visa requirement, as it might increase demand for the 122 quarantine facilities nationwide. Prin Pathanatham, president of ASQ Club Thailand, said easing of rules, such as visa exemptions, will facilitate tourism and shorten the process for visiting the country. It could help attract a flow of international arrivals to Thailand, said Mr Prin. The Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration approved lifting visa requirements for tourists from 56 countries, such as the US, France and Australia. The body also plans to reduce the quarantine period to 10 days in mid-January.