

Thai News Update: 21 February 2019

1. Bangkok Airways Launches Street Food Menu

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

Amornrat Konsawat, product development boss at Bangkok Airways, said the airline would soon offer a new in-flight street-food menu. It would include pad Thai with shrimp, stir-fried chicken with basil leaves served with jasmine rice, roasted duck noodles, Thai vermicelli with fish curry, steamed spicy rice with chicken, southern-style spicy minced chicken served with jasmine rice, Thai spicy and sour soup with shrimp and fried rice, baked shrimp with glass noodles, sweet egg-serpentine, coconut jelly, egg custard in pumpkin and banana in coconut milk.”

2. Legislature Delays Passage Of Rice Bill As Review Mulled

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

The National Legislative Assembly (NLA) has temporarily backtracked from its plan to urgently push through the controversial Rice Bill on 20 February. “NLA president Pornpetch Wichitcholchai recommended that it be reviewed,” General Marut Patchotasingh said in his capacity as chair of the NLA ad-hoc committee vetting the bill. The bill was scheduled to undergo its second and third readings yesterday as it had been labelled the second-most urgent item on the agenda. However, NLA vice president Surachai Liengboonlertchai abruptly ended the session at 2pm yesterday, right after the top-most issue, the Town Planning Bill, was addressed. It is now believed that the NLA avoided deliberating the Rice Bill yesterday because of the huge controversy generated by the draft.

3. Vibhavadi Looks For Investment Opportunities In ASEAN Hospitals

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

VIBHAVADI Medical Centre Plc will expand its investments overseas by focusing on Asean countries, including Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos, by holding at least a 25-per-cent stake in local hospitals, the company’s chairman of the executive board and managing director, Chaisith Viriyamettakul, said recently. He added that the company is negotiating with local hospitals in Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia to hold at least a 25-per-cent stake in local hospitals in the three

countries. It sees that as a way to expand its foreign customers and widen its network in the region. “Our business strategy will reduce investments to build new hospitals as that takes time to generate income. But we will expand by investing in existing hospitals at home and overseas,” he said.

4. Toyota Recommits To Thai Production Base

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

Toyota Motor Thailand remains committed to using Thailand as a production base both for domestic and export markets, vowing to invest about 10 billion baht annually. Ninnart Chaithirapinyo, board chairman at Toyota Motor Thailand, confirmed the investment while meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak. Mr Ninnart also informed Mr Somkid the company has submitted an investment plan worth about 10 billion baht for the government's electric vehicle (EV) scheme to localise manufacturing of new eco-friendlier vehicles in Thailand.

5. Thailand Tops The Beauty Stage, Welcomes Miss World Pageant

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

Thailand is now the hottest destination for top international beauty pageants. After being the host country for Miss Universe 2018 at the end of last year, the country will soon welcome another set of international beauty queens that will be competing in the 69th Miss World 2019, which is set for this December. Thai organiser Tanawat Wansom from TW Pageants said he was honoured to be the hosting partner of Miss World 2019. The project is a result of an ongoing effort for the past three years. The organiser plans to showcase Thai culture in every dimension of the contest's activities, which will take place in all four regions of Thailand. The exact final date and venue will be revealed later in the year.

6. Baht Surges To 5-Year High Near 31

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

The baht soared to its highest level against the dollar in more than five years on 20 February, on hopes that the US and China would be able to secure a trade deal and avert retaliatory tariffs. Analysts expect the local currency to continue marching past the 31-baht mark. The baht's rapid gain could be due to dollar weakness as investors place bets that the US-China trade talks will

reach a deal and that the US Federal Reserve will pause rate hikes for the rest of the year, said Roong Sanguanruang, head of global market research and analysis at Bank of Ayudhya.

7. CP Brings In Harbour Buffet With Taiwanese Partner

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

Agribusiness conglomerate Charoen Pokphand Group (CP Group) and Taiwanese partner Hi-Lai debuted the first Harbour international buffet restaurant in Bangkok on 20 February, as part of plans to enlarge the group's eatery empire. The buffet takes up 2,000 square metres on the sixth floor of the Iconsiam complex. It is operated by the new joint venture company CP-Hilai Harbour Co, established with registered capital of 160 million baht. SET-listed Charoen Pokphand Foods Plc (CPF), CP's flagship subsidiary, holds 49%, while the Taiwanese firm owns 51%. CP-Hilai Harbour plans to allocate about 650 million baht to open five Harbour buffet restaurants in Thailand over the next five years, including 130 million baht for the first branch at Iconsiam.