

THAI NEWS UPDATE: 21 JUNE 2021

1. Dine-in curbs lifted; pools, libraries open

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

City Hall is lifting restrictions on dining at non-air-conditioned restaurants and increases the maximum seating limit at air conditioned venues from 21 June. As a result of the latest City Hall order signed by Bangkok governor Aswin Kwanmuang on 20 June, non-air-conditioned restaurants can once again operate at 100% capacity, while air-conditioned venues are allowed to set aside up to 50% of their space for dine-in customers. Previously, eateries and restaurants -- air-conditioned or not -- were required to limit their seats to 25% of their total capacity. The order also allows eateries and restaurants in Bangkok to open until 11pm, up from 9pm previously, though the ban on alcohol consumption on restaurant premises remains in place.

2. Government to increase budget by B90bn in 2022

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

The government plans to increase its investment budget by 90 billion baht in fiscal 2022, in compliance with a law related to state financial and fiscal discipline, says Dechapiwat Na Songkhla, director of the Budget Bureau. The House of Representatives is scrutinising the fiscal 2022 budget, which has an expenditure budget of 3.1 trillion baht, accounting for 17.9% of GDP. The bill projects revenue worth 2.4 trillion baht, which means the government would need to borrow 700 billion baht to offset the deficit.

3. Phuket 'Sandbox' to draw 600,000

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

The Phuket reopening planned for July 1 is expected to draw more than 600,000 foreign and local tourists to the resort island and generate a cash flow of about 15 billion baht in the next three months, tourist authorities say. Phuket governor Narong Woonciew said on 19 June the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) predicted about 129,000 foreign tourist arrivals and 500,000 Thais will visit Phuket between July and September. The Phuket plan will kick-start the government's hopes to reopen the country in 120 days, or in October.

4. Many businesses return to normal in non-red areas from Monday

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

The Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) has adjusted working hours according to the epidemic situation and relaxed activities and lockdown measures in some areas from June 21. Yol Phokasub, president of Thai Retailers Association, and Nopporn

Witoonchart, president of the Thai Shopping Center Association, said that both associations were aware of the pandemic situation and its impact on association members and network partners across the country. They promised to heed the government's announcement that relaxes measures according to the area level. Shopping centres and department stores, including supermarkets, hypermarkets, and restaurants operating in shopping centres located in the dark red zone (Bangkok, Nonthaburi, Pathum Thani, and Samut Prakan provinces) can still allow customers to dine in-store only at 50 per cent of capacity, and sit in until 9pm.

5. NESDC outlines key areas of focus to become the top economy in Asean

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

The National Economic Development Council (NESDC) aims to make Thailand Asean's biggest economy, suggesting four areas to increase potential. NESDC secretary-general Danucha Pichayanan said Thailand's competitiveness ranking by the Institute of International Institute for Management Development (IMD), Switzerland, was at 28 out of 64 countries, up one place from last year. Thailand aims to increase its competitiveness, with the long-term goal of becoming No. 1 in Asean, while in the short-term the goal is to surpass Malaysia to become the No. 2 in Asean. To improve competitiveness, Danucha said Thailand needed to develop in many areas.