

Thai News Update: 23 July 2020

1. Thailand to be star player in Covid success story doco

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

The World Health Organization (WHO) has chosen Thailand and New Zealand for a film documentary on successful models for handling and curbing Covid-19. The National Institute of Health's Department of Medical Science director Ballang Uppapong shared the news on Facebook. A WHO official in Thailand confirmed to the Bangkok Post on Wednesday the documentary is in production. No more details of the project have been revealed. Dr Ballang shared part of the conversation while the documentary was being shot at his office.

2. Thousands of foreigners to be allowed entry

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

The Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration has approved the entry of foreign business reps, specialists, diplomats, migrant workers, exhibitors, film crews, medical tourists and Thailand Elite card members. CCSA spokesman Taweetilp Visanuyothin said on 22 July the centre approved their arrival in principle and relevant ministries would work out details before their visits would begin. He said approvals include businesspeople and specialists under special arrangement, and diplomats. They would be taken to state quarantine facilities. The Foreign Ministry would finalise details for their visits. The Labour Ministry would handle details for bringing in unskilled workers from Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar to meet the demand for labour.

3. Thailand could fall to world's third largest rice exporter this year

Source: Thai PBS World ([Link](#))

Thailand could drop to the world's third largest rice exporter, after Vietnam and India, due to a prolonged drought, which has affected rice output, and the strength of the baht currency. Pol Lt Charoen Laothammatas, president of the Thai Rice Exporters Association, disclosed today (Wednesday) that, for the first half of this year, Thailand exported 3.14 million tonnes of rice, worth about US\$2.2 billion, or 66 billion baht. This represents a 30% drop in export volume and a 13% drop in export value, compared to the same period last year. He attributed the decline to two factors. First, there has been a prolonged drought, which has caused first crop output to fall by about one million tonnes and second crop output to fall short by about four million tonnes. Secondly, the strong baht currency, which is about ten percent higher

than last year, is causing the international prices of Thai rice to be an average of US\$50 higher than those of its two main competitors.

4. Phuket set to launch B3bn medical plan

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

Phuket is proposing a medical tourism plan with a budget of 3 billion baht. The project will be stationed on a 141-rai area on Hat Mai Khao Beach, one of the most picturesque beaches in the resort province. Director of Vachira Phuket Hospital Chalermpong Sukontapol said on Wednesday Phuket, a "world-class tourist destination", has embraced tourism in the "new normal era" by seeking to elevate medical tourism to an international level. Dr Chalermpong said the plan is being discussed by executives at the Public Health Ministry and the Tourism and Sports Ministry before it is submitted to cabinet for consideration.

5. Emergency decree extended

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

The Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) on 22 July approved the extension of the emergency decree for another month until Aug 31. The current ban on public gatherings will, however, be lifted as soon as the extension takes effect. CCSA spokesman Taweessilp Visanuyothin said the extension was necessary because although the coronavirus was still spreading worldwide Thailand was allowing in foreign visitors and easing lockdowns on business and activities that posed a high risk of disease transmission. "There must be strict and continuous supervision to prevent a local spread. The executive decree on public administration in emergency situations enables the prevention and solution to the problem," he said.

6. Four types of foreigners to be allowed to enter Thailand: CCSA

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

The Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) has in principle approved the sixth phase of lifting restrictions on some groups of foreigners, but is waiting for detailed guidelines on disease prevention from related ministries before an effective date can be announced. Dr Taweessin Visanuyothin, CCSA spokesperson, said on Wednesday (July 22) that this was done in line with proposals on boosting the economy from several ministries. So far, CCSA has decided that four groups of foreigners will be allowed to enter the country, All foreigners are required to undergo a Covid-19 test three days prior to departure, US\$100,000 health insurance, booking for an alternative state quarantine, access to a liaison officer and use of ThaiChana application. The Foreign Ministry is also discussing ways of granting

access to tourists from Japan, China, South Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong as well as ensuring the safety of Thai people.

7. Thailand prepares to assume APEC Chair 2022

Source: Vietnam Plus ([Link](#))

Thailand has hosted the first Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Focus Group (AFG) meeting as the country prepares to assume the APEC Chair in 2022, the Bangkok Post reported on July 22. The meeting focused its discussion on digitisation, global economic challenges and the tensions between the United States and China. During the discussion, AFG members agreed that the world is facing imminent challenges including adapting to the "new normal" and deteriorating international trade and economic environments brought about by increasing US-China tensions, according to Cherdchai Chaivaivid, director-general of the Department of International Economic Affairs. There is a likelihood that "geo-technological" rivalry will occur, "neo-nationalism" will rise and an economic recession caused by COVID-19 will happen, he said. The AFG also discussed ways to harness digitisation, while managing challenges posed by disruptive technologies. The group noted the need to ensure that people and society are "future-ready", Cherdchai added.

8. Thai Cabinet endorses multiple projects to help create tens of thousands of new jobs

Source: The Pattaya News ([Link](#))

After the government approved seven economic restoration projects, with a combined budget of 400 billion baht, the Cabinet yesterday endorsed three more projects, with a combined budget of 4 billion baht, to help create 39,000 more jobs. Deputy Government Spokeswoman, Dr. Ratchada Thanadirek, said the first project is the Ministry of Interior's 1.08-billion-baht project to have volunteer caregivers look after dependent elderly persons. The project will enable people affected by the COVID-19 situation to work as caregivers for 12 months, starting this month. They will receive training and learn skills needed to look after the elderly in their communities. The project is expected to create jobs for 15,548 people. The second is the sub-district integrated development project, which will promote public participation in solving people's problems and development of local areas. The 2.7-billion-baht project will employ 14,510 people, or two people in each sub-district, for 12 months, starting this August. Their monthly salary will be 15,000 baht.

9. Visas to be automatically extended until September 26

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

Government spokesperson Traisuree Taisaranakul announced that the Cabinet resolved on Tuesday (July 21) to extend visa amnesty for foreigners stranded in Thailand to September 26. Foreigners were initially allowed to stay until July 31 without having to apply for a visa extension. The resolution will be published in the Royal Gazette soon.

10. Rayong's 10MW waste-fuelled power plant will be up and running by next year

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

The Rayong provincial administration organisation is expected to complete the 10-megawatt waste-fuelled power plant within next year, the organisation's head Piya Pitutecha said. Construction of the plant began last year. Rayong authorities will begin constructing the second plant next year, which is expected to be completed in 2022, after which construction of the third plant will begin and that is estimated to be completed in 2023. All three plants will be able to treat 1,500 tonnes of waste daily and have a combined power-generation capacity of 30MW.