

THAI NEWS UPDATE: 23 JUNE 2021

1. Cabinet approves Phuket sandbox

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

The cabinet on 22 June approved the Phuket sandbox tourism scheme that sees the island reopen on July 1, followed by a trio of destinations in the Gulf of Thailand -- Koh Samui, Koh Phangan and Koh Tao -- on July 15, allowing in fully vaccinated tourists from some countries. Government spokesman Anucha Burapachaisri said the reopening was pushed by local entrepreneurs after the Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) agreed in principle with the plan on June 18. Mr Anucha insisted disease control measures and close monitoring will remain in place as required by the CCSA. The reopening scheme would be scrapped if there are more than 90 infections reported per week in tourism areas.

2. Somkid touts e-commerce platforms

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

Former deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak has suggested Thai manufacturers build their own e-commerce platforms rather than rely heavily on existing leading e-commerce platforms and retail chains. "Covid-19 is likely to stay with us for a long time, leading people to need personal services," said Mr Somkid, now chairman of Saha Pathana Inter-Holding Plc, a holding company under Saha Group, the country's leading consumer product conglomerate. "Thai manufacturers therefore still have time to build their own e-commerce platforms and integrate all supply chains from raw materials, warehousing, production and sales to payment under one ecosystem while treating retailers and e-commerce operators as supporters to balance bargaining power." According to Mr Somkid, the Covid-19 pandemic which has continued for almost two years has changed many things in the world, especially consumer behaviour and lifestyles.

3. Ministry cuts interval between AZ jabs to combat raging Delta infections

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

The second dose of AstraZeneca can be administered after eight weeks instead of 10-12 weeks in areas where Covid-19's Delta variant is spreading fast, the Public Health Ministry said on 22 June. As of June 20, the Delta strain first found in India accounted for over 10 per cent of all Covid-19 infections in Thailand, according to samples analysed by the Department of Medical Sciences. Department chief Dr Supakit Sirilak said 6,000 samples had been tested since the third wave of infections began on April 1. The Alpha (UK) variant accounted for

88.97 per cent or 5,641 cases, while Delta accounted for 10.43 per cent or 661 cases. Most new Delta Covid cases were found in Bangkok. Renowned virologist Dr Yong Poovorawan on 22 June predicted that Delta would become the dominant strain in Thailand within four months.

4. BGRIM collaborates with Siemens Energy to upgrade co-generation plants

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

B.Grimm Power Public Company Limited (BGRIM), Thailand's leading industrial power producer, has formed collaboration with German engineering firm, Siemens Energy to upgrade its ten co-generation power plants. The accord will see Siemens Energy render its technological expertise to raise BGRIM's powerhouses, currently with a combined generating capacity of 1,294 megawatt, by 44 MW. As part of the overall performance improvement, the availability and efficiency of the facilities will also increase to a maximum of 55%.

5. Malaysia and Thailand launch cross-border QR payment

Source: Techwire Asia ([Link](#))

The central banks of Malaysia and Thailand, in a bid to bridge the transactional gaps between neighboring countries, recently launched a cross-border Quick Response, or better known as QR payment linkage, to enable consumers and merchants in both countries to make and receive instant cross-border QR code payments. The new move is the first phase in integrating the real-time retail payment systems of Malaysia's Real-time Retail Payments Platform (RRP) and DuitNow instant bank transfers together with Thailand's PromptPay, they said in a statement. In short, users in Thailand are now able to use mobile payment applications to scan DuitNow QR codes to make payments to merchants in Malaysia.