

## Thai News Update: 25 September 2020

### **1. Govt expands 'grow-your-own-veg' scheme after demand sprouts up**

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

The Agriculture and Cooperatives Ministry has extended its offer of free seeds for people to grow their own vegetables as a way of easing the financial burden of Covid-19. Public demand for the seeds has been strong, with more than 103,000 people signing up for the scheme since its launch on May 7. The ministry has responded by offering another 200,000 packets of seed for people to grow in gardens or pots – 100,000-morning glory, collard, choy sum, cucumber and chilli packs and 100,000 packs of collard, morning glory, holy basil and chilli seeds.

### **2. State of emergency set to be extended through October**

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

A Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) panel on 24 September said the government should extend the emergency decree for another month. The decision will be discussed by the CCSA next Tuesday before being considered by the Cabinet on Wednesday (September 30). The current emergency decree will end on September 30. The panel said an extension was needed to ensure cooperation and faster work in combating the virus crisis by government agencies.

### **3. BOT appoints new policy committee members**

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

The central bank on 24 September appointed new members to its Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) and Financial Institutions Policy Committee (FIPC). Bank of Thailand secretary Pruettipong Srimachand said the new appointments will replace members whose terms are ending. Their three-year tenures will start from November this year. The four new members of the MPC are Kanit Sangsubhan, Rapee Sucharitakul, Somchai Jitsuchon and Subhak Sriwaraksa. The five new members of the FIPC are Kannika Ngamsopee, Chanant Charnchainarong, Pornchai Chunchachinda, Phawana Niemloy and Ayudh Kritsanamara.

### **4. AOT extends relief to airlines, operators until 2022**

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

Airports of Thailand (AOT) is providing discounts and fee suspension until March 2022 to airlines and operators using its facilities, as it does see air travel business recovering until 2021. AOT president Nitinai Sirismatthakarn said after a board meeting on 23 September that AOT would provide relief to six airline operators by suspending rental space fee, building usage fee

and monthly payments until March 31, 2022. AOT assesses that such measures would reduce its revenue in fiscal year 2021 by an additional 0.143 per cent from previously forecast, down from the fiscal year 2020 by 42.21 per cent, Nitinai said.

### **5. Shorter quarantine if tourist test succeeds**

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

A seven-day quarantine for foreign tourists can be put into effect in November if the first batch of inbound tourists in October is clear of coronavirus infections, says the Tourism and Sports Ministry. After next Tuesday's cabinet meeting, the government will announce more details of the special tourist visa (STV) that will allow long-stay visitors, the first international arrivals in almost six months, to enter the country by Oct 1, said Tourism and Sports Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn. If the first two groups of 300 foreigners complete the 14-day quarantine on Oct 15 and Oct 21 without a positive case, then the ministry plans to propose an increase in the number of tourists per week by Nov 1.

### **6. JD Central steps up game**

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

JD Central, an e-commerce joint venture between Central Group and Chinese internet giant JD.com, is sharpening its focus to customer experience, new merchants, use of technology and marketing assistance for brands as part of its strategy in the highly competitive segment. "The pandemic is speeding up Thailand's e-commerce growth as merchants and brands are expanding to go online," Rvisra Chirathivat, chief marketing officer of JD Central, told the Bangkok Post. Online retail accounts for 2-3% of the total retail market, but it is expected to jump to 10% by 2025. The online retail segment includes e-marketplaces, social commerce, brands' own websites as well as consumer-to-consumer (C2C) communication.

### **7. Phuket vegetarian festival to go ahead**

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

The famous Phuket vegetarian festival will go ahead this year after organisers promised strict enforcement of social distancing principles to help prevent the resurgence of Covid-19 in the province. Phuket governor Narong Woonsiew said provincial agencies and organisers agreed on 24 September the annual celebration could be held from Oct 17-25. Leading festival organiser Prasert Fukthongphol thanked the province for giving the greenlight to continue the annual procession and fair. "We will seriously enforce social distancing measures and require all participants to wear face masks," he said.