

Thai News Update: 27 January 2021

1. With internationally stamped lab, Thailand ready to expand cannabis production

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

The use of medical cannabis is a key government policy and the Drug and Narcotics Bureau under the Department of Medical Sciences is testing and developing health products from cannabis and hemp, said Supakit Sirilak, the department's director. In August last year, a local laboratory testing active substances in cannabis plants, extracts and oil became the first lab in Thailand to be granted international standards certification. The laboratory tests samples for strength and residues such as heavy metals, pesticides, mycotoxins, fungicides and contaminated microorganisms etc.

2. Tourist lift tipped for Pattaya

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

Tourists are expected to soon start flocking back to Pattaya amid a far brighter Covid-19 outlook and with the mandatory 14-day quarantine no longer being enforced. The president of the Thai Hotels Association Eastern Chapter, Phisut Sae-khu, said Chon Buri might be removed from the government's list of "red zones" after it reported zero new infections several days in a row. Mr Phisut called for the loosening of restrictions, saying business people were facing a serious liquidity problem and many small- to medium-sized hotels had already gone out of business. Nor could anyone yet predict how long it would take surviving businesses in the province to fully recover, he said.

3. PTTGC signs up for olefins modification project

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

PTT Global Chemical (PTTGC) on 27 January announced it signed an engineering, procurement and construction agreement for the Olefins 2 Modification Project on January 22. This move allows PTTGC to boost the use of propane gas as feedstock and aligns with the company's strategy to enhance feedstock flexibility and long-term competitiveness, said Pattaralada Sa-Ngasang, executive vice president for finance and accounting. "So far, the environmental impact assessment [EIA] has been approved by the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning," she said.

4. Covid-proof Vietnam launches showcase to lure Thai investors

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

Vietnam launched a push to lure Thai investors on 26 January, touting its status as one of the few economies that grew in 2020. The Vietnamese Embassy in Bangkok showcased a “Golden Opportunity for Thai Investors in Vietnam”, hosted by the Thai-Vietnam Business Council and Vietnam’s Amata VN Plc. Vietnam’s Ambassador to Thailand Phan Chi Thanh affirmed that his country’s economy had expanded 2.91 per cent last year in the teeth of Covid-19, thanks to its early control measures.

5. Bangkok Airways to start flying to Trat, Sukhothai from Feb 1

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

Bangkok Airways will resume its direct flights from Bangkok to Trat and Sukhothai from February 1 onwards. The resumption of these two flights from Bangkok’s Suvarnabhumi Airport will bring the number of destinations covered by the airline to seven, including Samui, Phuket, Krabi, Lampang and Chiang Mai. However, flights between Phuket and Hat Yai, Phuket and U-Tapao and Phuket and Samui remain suspended until March 27. The airline will also keep its passenger lounges, airport service kiosks and its ticketing office on Bangkok’s Vibhavadi Rangsit Road closed until February 28.

6. Rayong gets ready to lift restriction on 10 types of businesses, public sites

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

The Communicable Disease Control Committee has agreed to allow 10 types of businesses and sites in Rayong to reopen from 27 January. Governor Charnna Iamsaeng said that since the number of new cases in the province is low, the following businesses will be allowed to reopen:

- Shopping centres, shops selling construction materials and mobile phone outlets
- Thai massage shops
- Beauty clinics
- Museum, learning parks, learning centres or similar establishments
- Public libraries and others.

7. Foreign investment funds see 27.5% rise in 2020

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

Foreign investment funds (FIFs), excluding term funds or short-term fixed-income funds, recorded a 27.5% growth from 2019 with total net asset value of 840 billion baht, accounting for 21% of the Thai mutual fund market, an increase from around 10% in 2016. Chinese equity funds recorded the highest net asset value of 120 billion baht in 2020, a 185% increase from the previous year, with an average return of nearly 19%. Large-cap equities of Thai equity funds showed a solid recovery with an average return of 13.7% during the last quarter of 2020. However, despite the pickup in the last quarter, large-cap Thai equities' total returns

for 2020 were still negative at -10.4%, with Stock Exchange of Thailand total returns of -5.2%, due to a huge negative return of -21% during the first three quarters.