

Thai News Update: 27 March 2020

1. Malls waive rental fees for outbreak

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

Central Pattana Plc, the SET-listed retail developer under Central Group, on 26 March announced measures to help tenants at its closed malls Preecha Ekkunagul, CPN's president and chief executive, said the company is waiving rent for tenants at shuttered malls and offering discounts on rent of 10-50% for stores that remain open. Some 3,000 shops at 27 malls will benefit from the waiver CPN is also providing pickup and delivery zones at closed malls and preparing a business plan for the return of service once the crisis is over.

2. True triples bandwidth capacity as Internet, mobile usage see big leap due to Covid-19

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

There has been a sharp spike in internet and mobile usage as more people are staying at home due to the Covid-19 threat, Jirachai Kunakorn, chief network operations officer at True Corporation Plc, said. "We detected increased usage in all of our channels, including fiber and broadband internet, cable TV and mobile phone," he said. "In the past month, the internet bandwidth usage has increased 52 per cent while mobile data usage has increased 18.4 per cent." To cope with the increase in demand, True Corp has increased its domestic and international bandwidth capacity by up to three times, Jirachai said.

3. Ministry creates war rooms to handle essential goods

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

The Commerce Ministry has set up war rooms to supervise seven essential consumer goods and services sectors to curb any possible shortages and hoarding during the coronavirus outbreak. Commerce Minister Jurin Laksanawisit said the war rooms will monitor seven product and service items, including processed food, rice, ready-to-eat food such as instant noodles, drinking water, fruit juices, beverages, medical supplies and product transport, as well as home delivery services.

4. CAAT approves flight cancellations

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

The Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) has approved airlines' decisions to scale back flights or stop flying altogether due to the Covid-19 outbreak, but told carriers to compensate customers. Chula Sukmanop, CAAT director-general, said the approval was given after the authority met Thai carriers on Tuesday, namely Thai Airways International (THAI),

Bangkok Airways, Thai AirAsia, Thai AirAsia X, Thai Lion Air, Nok Air, Nok Scoot and Thai Vietjet Air. The airlines said the outbreak was responsible for a steep plunge in passenger numbers nationwide. Mr Chula said the CAAT had predicted at the start that a pandemic would bring tremendous losses to the airline industry. Back then, the agency estimated that almost 10,000 flights around the country would be suspended, leaving a void of more than 3 million passengers in the first quarter.

5. Ministry to divert some of its budget funds to help Thai entrepreneurs

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

The Ministry of Digital Economy and Society (DES) aims to cut its spending to help Thai entrepreneurs and shore up the economy. Ministry permanent secretary Atcharin Phatthanaphanchai said that during the board meeting to discuss the budget for fiscal year 2020 and 2021, a proposal to cut the expenditure budget by 10 per cent was approved. “We aim to cut spending and use that money to hire private contractors to undertake projects under DES’ supervision,” she said. “This should help promote employment and subsequently stimulate the economy amid the slowdown due to Covid-19.”

6. Covid-19 centre receives directives from PM

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

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha on March 26 issued six guidelines to the Covid-19 centre which is tasked with tackling the virus outbreak, according to its spokesman Dr Taweetilp Visanuyothin. Topping the list is the requirement that all parties involved will have to propose action plans in details, while the centre will seek cooperation and input from social sectors to overcome the crisis. The centre will also follow up results of the emergency decree enforced on 26 March and propose remedy measures as well as ensuring sufficient medical supplies.

7. Nokia chief aims to accelerate Thailand's 5G journey

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

The 5G wireless broadband technology will have a significant impact on the overall lifestyle of Thai citizens, as well as on enterprises in Thailand, said David Oxford, Nokia Thailand's country director. "The impact will come in two waves. Firstly, enterprises, such as transportation, manufacturing, logistics, or even the government, will be able to provide much more efficient services with lower latencies and higher data speeds. These new services that enterprises look to serve their customers will increase the overall operational efficiency in Thailand.

8. Ministry of Public Health discusses treatment cost of Covid-19 at hospitals and coverage of medical care

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

The Department of Health Service Support explained the guidelines for the disbursement of COVID-19 treatment cost today, emphasizing that Thailand has one standard for all Thai people to access the health services. A meeting among the Medical and Public Health Emergency Operations Centers was held at the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) to discuss treatment for COVID-19 patients and set standards for payment expenses among private hospitals to confirm that people can access health care without worrying about the expenses.

9. Thailand's chicken egg exports banned for 7 days

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

Deputy PMr and Minister of Commerce Jurin Laksanawisit says... "Currently domestic production capacity averages 40 million eggs per day, while Thailand's daily consumption is 39 million, and 2 million were exported. To deal with the problem, the Ministry of Commerce is temporarily banning the exports of chicken eggs for 7 days from today in a bid to boost supply at home. The 7 day ban is a trial period, if the situation does not improve by next week, we may consider extending the ban". Furthermore, the Ministry of Commerce will monitor and keep egg prices in the range of 3.3 – 3.5 Baht each and perform random price check frequently. Any price gougers will be sentenced to a maximum of 7 years or a 140,000 Baht fine, or both.

10. A mega-list for travel disruptions during state of emergency

Source: Khaosodenglish ([Link](#))

Thailand woke up to the first day of a state of emergency on 27 March, with several travel restrictions in place to make journeys more difficult in an effort to stem further spread of coronavirus in the country. Following the announcement of the emergency decree on 26 March, 357 checkpoints manned by security forces and civilian officers were set up across the country, especially the capital, to check travelers for symptoms. Many transport operators also ceased their services, from buses and boats to airplanes. Although commuting between provinces is still allowed, the government has made it clear that it is deliberately making it more complicated to do so.

11. Thai Immigration urges non tourist foreign residents to do their 90 day reporting online

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

As Thailand continues to implement measures for social distancing, one of the most glaring exceptions has been video and photos coming from busy Immigration centers across Thailand

as an estimated 500,000 tourists countrywide come to terms with being stuck in Thailand for an extended duration and look to extend their visa's. Thai Immigration in Bangkok has stated that although Immigration Commanders understand the situation and are making every effort to take care of those foreigners who need assistance they also have to balance National Security at the same time. Immigration Centers, besieged with long lines in a time when people are asked to socially distance to prevent getting the Covid-19 Coronavirus or spreading it, have responded by opening secondary locations or larger waiting areas depending on the province or city. Additionally, they are attempting to make longer queues and lines, provide temperature checks, provide hand sanitizer, require masks and other precautions.