

Thai News Update: 27 May 2020

1. B39bn for handouts gets nod

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

The cabinet on 26 May agreed to set aside 39.42 billion baht to finance a new cash handout programme designed to help 13.14 million people considered extremely vulnerable to the economic hit of the Covid-19 crisis. Deputy government spokeswoman Rachada Dhnadirek said the cabinet on 26 May agreed in principle to the proposal, already approved by the government's committee screening the disbursement of the 1.1-trillion-baht loan which the government aims to secure to fund its Covid-19-related rehabilitation scheme. Three groups of people are deemed very vulnerable to the economic impact of the outbreak; young children up to six years old, 9.66 million elderly people and 2 million people with disabilities, she said.

2. Govt to consider joining Asia-Pacific trade pact in a month

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

The cabinet has agreed to set up a committee to consider whether Thailand should seek membership in an Asia-Pacific trade agreement after widespread opposition last month amid concerns joining the pact may harm the agriculture industry. The lower house panel will open for public opinions on membership of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), deputy government spokeswoman Rachada Dhnadirek told a news briefing. "The committee's conclusion will be useful for the cabinet to decide on CPTPP membership... and the government wants them to get it done within 30 days," she said.

3. PM looks to bolster SMEs

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

The government has come up with fresh measures, including quotas under procurement projects to buy products and services from small- and medium-sized (SMEs) enterprises to help alleviate the hit from the Covid-19 crisis, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha said. Speaking in a TV Pool broadcast on Tuesday evening, Gen Prayut said that in recent weeks, he had personally visited a number of business associations to listen to their pandemic-related woes. Gen Prayut said SMEs employ more than 14 million people and they play a very important role in the economy. While the state will do its part to help SMEs, he said he wanted large business owners to help support local SMEs too when they make buying

decisions. Also from these meetings, shopping outlets nationwide told him that they wanted to reopen as soon as possible, and that they have put in place rigorous health precautions to prevent the spread of the virus, he said.

4. Over a million public health volunteers given CPF food discount coupons

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

Over a million volunteers in the public health sector nationwide have received food-discount coupons from local hospitals, as a part of collaboration between the Public Health Ministry and Charoen Pokphand Foods to deal with Covid-19 crisis. The coupon can be used to purchase CP products sold in CR Freshmart stores nationwide. The campaign was started in the beginning of May, and was the fourth campaign in which CPF had joined hands with the ministry. The local volunteers were praised for the Covid-19 preventive operation. They have been supported by numerous organisations in medical devices, food, and drinks.

5. Petroleum institute tasked with feasibility study on petrochemical development

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

Petroleum Institute of Thailand is now studying the feasibility of petrochemical industry development in the fourth phase after it was notified by the Energy Policy and Planning Office (EPPO) that the project must be complete within 2020. “The institute had also submitted to the EPPO the plan to use petrochemical industry to support other industries in nearby communities such as tourism, food manufacturing, auto making to promote the circular economy.” Kurijit said. “We are also studying the possibility of exporting petrochemical products to new markets such as India and Africa via Andaman Sea, which will expand our market from the existing ones in China, Japan and South Korea.”

6. CP to help sell SME products through 7-Eleven stores and online

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

SMEs will be able to sell their products in 7-Eleven stores nationwide under an agreement between Small and Medium Enterprises Development Bank (SME D Bank) and CP All Plc, operator of the convenience store chain. The SMEs can also tap the online channel at [www.ShopAt24.com], the bank's managing director, Natnaree Ratthapat, said. “The retail channels will include selected 7-Eleven stores nationwide, website [www.ShopAt24.com] -- which has over 5 million visitors per month -- and home shopping via the 24 Catalog magazine,” she added.

7. Travel, curfew restrictions next to be lifted

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

Restarting interprovincial travel and reducing curfew hours will be the focus of the government meeting today (May 27) on the third phase of easing Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. The third-phase relaxation is due to begin on Monday (June 1). Restrictions on travel in the country would be lifted at the meeting, confirmed Gen Somsak Rungsita, National Security Council (NSC) secretary-general. Permission to ease the restrictions would come from central government, though provincial authorities could maintain tighter controls on movement at their borders if necessary, he added. The possibility of reopening amusement parks, water parks and allowing some sports activities would also be discussed with public health agencies, said Somsak. However, venues and sports deemed to be at-risk of Covid-19 transmission would be restarted under the fourth phase of lockdown relaxation.