

Thai News Update: 28 May 2020

1. B Grimm subsidiary granted licence for shipping LNG into Thailand

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

The Energy Regulatory Commission meeting on Wednesday (May 27) agreed to grant a licence for procuring liquified natural gas (LNG) to B Grimm Power's subsidiary, B Grimm LNG, the commission's secretary-general Khomgrich Tantravanich said. This is the fifth licence for the shipping of LNG to be granted. The other four licences are held by PTT Plc, the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand, Gulf Energy Development Plc and Hin Kong Power Holding Co Ltd (HKH), in which Gulf Energy Development holds a 49-per-cent stake.

2. Government adds 4 more products to nation's GI list

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

The government added Thong Dee Ban Thaen pomelos, Pet Non Thai Manila tamarind, Bang Khla aromatic coconuts and Ratchaburi dragon jars to the country's geographical indication (GI) list, the latest move to generate income for local communities. The addition raises the number of Thai indigenous products with GI registration from the Commerce Ministry to 124 products in 76 provinces, leaving only one province, Ang Thong, yet to register a GI product. GI is a distinctive certificate used to identify a product as originating from a particular country, region or locality that has specific qualities, reputation or other unique characteristics.

3. Thai AirAsia considers merger

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

With its "fortune hanging in the balance", the chief of Thai AirAsia (TAA) says it may merge with another low-cost carrier (LCC) to clamp down on pricing wars once flights eventually resume in the country. If Thailand does not resume tourism activities by July, TAA's chairman said next year the company would begin laying off employees, downsizing the company and its fleet to keep its business alive. Local aviation has suffered considerably over the past few months because of the Covid-19 pandemic and government restrictions on international and domestic air travel, including the total shutdown of Phuket's airport. Some 40% of TAA's revenue had previously come from flights in southern Thailand passing through Phuket airport.

4. Central to take over FamilyMart

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

Central Retail Corporation Plc (CRC) has acquired 100% of the shares of FamilyMart, a major convenience store chain, as it moves forward to develop a new business model to cater to modern consumers. According to the chief executive officer of CRC, Yol Phokasub, the acquisition will strengthen Central Retail's hold of the food market and convenience store business in Thailand, which continues to thrive. CRC has partnered with Japan FamilyMart Co (JFM) since 2012, with its subsidiary SFM Holdings holding a 50.65% stake and Robinson Plc (RBS) holding 0.35% stake in Central Family Mart Ltd (CFM), the local operator of the FamilyMart chain in Thailand.

5. Curfew hours to be reduced, more businesses to reopen

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

The government plans to further reduce curfew hours and allow more businesses to reopen in the next few days. The government's Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration will meet on Friday to discuss the reduction of curfew hours and reopening of more businesses, said Dr Taweessin Visanuyothin, spokesperson of the CCSA. The curfew hours will be reduced further from the current 11pm to 4am. Earlier the curfew hours were 10pm to 4am, he said during the daily briefing on the Covid-19 situation. More businesses -- categorised as medium to high risk for infection -- will be allowed to reopen in phase 3, but they must first get approval from the CCSA, he said.

6. Plans afoot to export 200 million eggs in six months

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

Thailand is in a position to resume export of eggs as the current production exceeds domestic consumption, Department of Internal Trade director-general Wichai Phochanakit said. Currently Thailand produces 40-41 million eggs per day while the domestic consumption remains at 38-39 million eggs per day, Wichai said. "The department is aiming to export the excess supply of about 3 million eggs per day under a six-month campaign to promote the export of 200 million eggs in total," he said.

7. Three fruits and dragon jars get geographical indication stamp

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

The Department of Intellectual Property has placed the geographical indication sign on four products, namely emblica or makham pom grown in Nakhon Ratchasima's Non Thai district, the Thong Dee pomelo grown in Chaiyaphum's Ban Thaen district, Chachoengsao' coconut and the dragon jar from Ratchaburi province, Deputy Commerce Minister Weerasak

Wangsuphakijkosol said. These four new additions bring the number of items produced in Thailand with the geographical indication sign up to 124. He added that Ang Thong province was waiting for its Ekkarat drum to be given the sign.

8. Thai parliament urged to pass record US\$60 billion coronavirus stimulus bill

Source: CNA ([Link](#))

Thailand's premier on Wednesday (May 27) urged parliament to approve the kingdom's biggest-ever stimulus package to revive an economy battered by coronavirus, which has brought tourism to a standstill, slashed exports and left millions jobless. The 1.9 trillion baht (US\$59.6 billion) package would be a much-needed financial boost for Southeast Asia's second biggest economy, which is expected to shrink by 5-6 per cent in 2020. Members of parliament - who inaugurated a new building on Wednesday - are set to discuss three bills over the next five days covering healthcare, unemployment and a fund to stabilise markets and boost purchasing power.

9. Government to provide more financial aid to small and medium-sized businesses

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

Thailand's Ministry of Finance has been tasked with coming up with plans for additional financial aid to small and medium-sized enterprises affected by the Covid-19 crisis. Government Spokesperson Narumon Pinyosinwat made the announcement on 26 May. "The Ministry of Finance will estimate the budget to be used as well as the loan limit and interest rate, and will present to the Cabinet again in the next meeting." A source told Nation Thailand the ministry's survey revealed that SME operators, who couldn't get loans at the height of the crisis, were mostly those who had never applied for a loan before and so had no record of their repayment ability. They were refused loans to avoid risk