

THAI NEWS UPDATE: 2 AUGUST 2021

1. Lockdown extended for 14 days, 29 provinces now in dark red zone

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

The Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration (CCSA), chaired by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, on Sunday extended lockdown measures for another 14 days in a bid to tackle the fast-spreading Delta variant. The CCSA will evaluate the situation again on August 18. In addition, the CCSA also increased the number of provinces in the "dark red" zone from 13 to 29. The 29 provinces are: Bangkok, Kanchanaburi, Chonburi, Chachoengsao, Tak, Nakhon Pathom, Nakhon Nayok, Nakhon Ratchasima, Narathiwat, Nonthaburi, Pathum Thani, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Prachinburi, Pattani, Ayutthaya, Phetchaburi, Phetchabun, Yala, Rayong, Ratchaburi, Lopburi, Songkhla, Singburi, Samut Prakan, Samut Songkhram, Samut Sakhon, Saraburi, Suphanburi and Ang Thong.

2. Thailand set to resume rice export to Iraq after seven years

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

Thai exporters are currently preparing to export 44,000 tonnes of 100 per cent white rice to Iraq for the first time in seven years after Baghdad had suspended the import of Thai rice. government spokesman Anucha Burapachaisri said on his Facebook post on Sunday that he expected the export in the middle of August this year, after which Thai exporters could gradually export more rice to Iraq. "The government is ready to promote Thai exporters to open more rice markets in addition to the three main markets -- premium, general and niche - - which will be a positive sentiment for Thai rice farmers as well," he said.

3. Floating solar farm launch set for October

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

The state-run Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (Egat) is preparing to start commercial operation of what it claims is the world's largest hybrid power generation facility for a floating solar farm at Sirindhorn Dam in Ubon Ratchathani province in October. The operation of the 45-megawatt solar farm was delayed mainly due to the impact of Covid-19, which caused the government to impose lockdown measures, including travel restrictions. The facility was originally scheduled for operation in December last year, but the launch was postponed. In January this year, Egat announced it would begin operating the floating solar farm in June.

4. More Sinopharm jabs arrive in Thailand

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

The fifth batch of the 10 million doses ordered by the Chulabhorn Royal Academy arrived from China on Sunday. This batch had one million doses. The academy is one of the five organisations authorised to import Covid-19 vaccines. Sinopharm, approved for emergency use by the World Health Organisation, is one of the five vaccines given the go-ahead by the Thai Food and Drug Administration. In cooperation with the Public Health Ministry and Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, the academy has been distributing the jabs to people in the capital at the set price of 1,554 baht for two doses

5. Prayut launches Red Line commuter train service

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

The long-awaited Red Line commuter train service was launched on Monday morning in a virtual ceremony presided over by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha. The line, which is two years behind schedule, will cut travel time between the heart of Bangkok and its suburbs to less than half an hour thanks to high-speed electric trains. A three-month trial run kicked off at 10.30am on Monday, and the service is expected to start commercial operations from November. The Red Line runs two routes – the 10-station 26km Bang Sue-Rangsit route which takes 25 minutes to cover and the three-station 15km Bang Sue-Taling Chan route which takes about 15 minutes.

6. More than 60 per cent of Japanese investors put faith in Thailand

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

The majority of Japanese investors -- more than 60 per cent -- have confidence to invest in Thailand, a survey Japanese joint venture companies in Thailand by the Japan Foreign Trade Organisation (Jetro) showed. The result was revealed by Weris Amrapal, Governor of the Industrial Estate Authority of Thailand (IEAT). Weris said that due to the Covid-19 outbreak affecting international shipments, there is a possibility of more parts from Thai manufacturers being used. "It is an opportunity for manufacturers in the industrial estate because they have the ability to produce in a variety of industries. If such issues become clearer, the IEAT will help entrepreneurs have the opportunity to discuss to create further business opportunities," he said.

7. Thailand ripe for a digital banking battle

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

Digital banking is transforming the traditional financial landscape. There are now 249 digital banking players globally -- both dynamic upstarts and transitioning legacy operators -- as of

the end of 2020. Thailand offers a mature and promising market for this digital banking evolution, but one that requires regulatory guidance if it is to truly be unleashed. Financial engagement is relatively high, and financial services institutions enjoy penetration rates above those of other Southeast Asian peers, with more than 80% of Thais having some form of banking account. Digital transformation in banking is not new -- internet banking triggered a similar transition. What sets this shift apart is its remarkable acceleration, driven by the expectations of customers used to the services of technology brands such as Lazada, Shopee and Grab.