

Thai News Update: 2 December 2020

1. Asean's new online customs system set to boost trade

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

The region's businesses can now access a powerful new online trading system connecting countries under a single cross-border transit regime, Asean Secretary-General Lim Jock Hoi announced on 1 December. The Asean Customs Transit System (ACTS) will reduce intra-Asean trading challenges and enable companies to benefit fully from the Asean Economic Community (AEC) and the free movement of goods across the region, he added. The new system aims to meet twin goals set by Asean economic ministers in 2017 – to reduce trade transaction costs by 10 per cent by 2020 and double intra-Asean trade between 2017 and 2025.

2. GMM share buyer talks up TV show plans

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

Renowned television producer, Takonkiet Viravan, has committed to support marketing capability and ramp up co-production with SET-listed GMM Grammy, after his joint venture firm, The One Enterprise, recently acquired a 17% stake of GMM Channel Holding, in which GMM Grammy previously held 50% share, in a deal worth 2.2 billion baht. "We [the company] have decided to buy 17% stake of GMM Channel Holding [GCH], the media, entertainment and content providing company because we see a market opportunity that will come from the business synergy between the two firms," said Mr Takonkiet. "GMM TV, GMM Media, Change 2561 and GMM Studio are all the best content providing companies that can fulfil the business of The One Enterprise to serve wider customer groups."

3. BoI okays B56.4bn medical, biotech investment

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

The Board of Investment (BoI) has approved 56.4 billion baht worth of new medical and biotechnological investment projects as part of a move to make Thailand a medical industry hub in Asean. Up to 209 projects were granted tax privileges between 2018 and September 2020. Most of them, 129 projects valued at 30.8 billion baht, are related to medical businesses. Coming second are 51 projects, worth 25.4 billion baht, in biotechnology, followed by 26 scientific laboratory projects, worth 1.9 billion baht. BoI secretary-general Duangjai Asawachintachit attributed the high numbers to the government's emphasis on the medical industry, which is one of 12 targeted S-curve industries.

4. THAI reveals new flights from Xmas

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

Thai Airways will resume domestic flights between Bangkok and Chiang Mai and Bangkok and Phuket from Dec 25 after suspending them for almost nine months because of Covid-19. The last time the national carrier flew from the capital to the two tourist provinces was April 1. There will be three flights a week — on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays — on both routes and the new schedules will run until Feb 28, the source said. He added that the flights would operate with the wide-bodied Boeing 777-200ER aircraft, with a full onboard service on offer and miles being earned by Royal Orchid Plus members.

5. Ministry targets 3.8% boost for agricultural GDP

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

The Agriculture and Cooperatives Ministry aims to boost the country's agricultural gross domestic product by 3.8 per cent and agricultural productivity by 1.2 per cent annually. It also aims to reduce the number of low-income farmers by 10 per cent and increase irrigation areas by 350,000 rai each year. Agriculture and Cooperatives Ministry permanent secretary Thongplew Kongjun said the ministry will work under the concept of “Agri Challenge” to solve immediate problems for farmers, and set up workflows in line with the “new normal” era. Urgent missions the ministry needs to work on include the Royal Projects, the One Tambon One New Theory Agriculture Group, large scale agricultural projects, and smart farming, he added.

6. Cabinet gives green light to new 120kph speed limit

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

Tuesday’s Cabinet meeting approved a Transport Ministry draft for new speed limits on Thai roads. The draft ministerial regulation raises the speed limit on highways from 90 kilometres per hour to 120kph – but only for cars. A limit of 90kph has been set for trucks weighing more than 2.2 tonnes and buses with room for more than 15 passengers. Minivans and buses with capacity for 7-15 passengers are limited to 100kph. A 65kph limit applies to cars towing another vehicle, small four-wheelers, and three-wheelers. Meanwhile motorcycles have an 80kph speed limit, though big bikes of 35kW or more have a 100kph ceiling. School buses are limited to 80kph.

7. Parliament approves new quotas for exports to EU, UK after Brexit

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

Parliament on 2 December unanimously endorsed amendments to Thailand’s trade agreement with the European Union and the United Kingdom. Commerce Minister Jurin Laksanawisit

explained to Parliament that the trade agreements had changed because the UK had separated from the EU, causing Thailand to renegotiate quotas for its exports. Thai officials have renegotiated quotas for about 31 Thai products exported to the EU, and 32 products exported to the UK. The new quotas came into force on Tuesday (December 1).

8. Pros and cons on Thailand pursuing FTA with EU published on DTN website
Source: The Nation ([Link](#))

The Department of Trade Negotiations has released a complete study on the pros and cons of Thailand resuming free-trade talks with the European Union (EU) for Commerce Minister Jurin Laksanawisit to consider. Auramon Supthaweethum, the department's director-general, said the Institute of Future Studies for Development has completed the study and it has been published on www.dtn.go.th. The study shows that if Thailand and 27 EU members, excluding UK, cancel all import tariff, then in the long-run Thailand's gross domestic product will be boosted by 1.28 per cent worth Bt205 billion per year.

9. Cabinet agrees to set aside Bt1.78 billion for 2 grassroots economy projects
Source: The Nation ([Link](#))

The Cabinet on 2 December agreed to earmark Bt1.78 billion to fund two projects to boost the grassroots economy, government spokesperson Anucha Burapachaisri said. Of the total, Bt1.6 billion will be spent on enhancing the capacity of machinery used by the Rice Department to improve the quality of rice grown in the country. This fund will also cover the purchase of new machines and equipment. The remaining Bt176 million will be spent by the Culture Ministry's Office of the Permanent Secretary to develop community products.