

Thai News Update: 2 July 2020

1. Travel bubble scheme drawn up in 3 phases

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

A travel bubble plan for leisure travellers has been drafted with three phases for opening, starting with a mere 1,000 tourists per day across five provinces. Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn, the tourism and sports minister, said the ministry already asked the Association of Thai Travel Agents (Atta) and the Tourism Council of Thailand (TCT) to design 6-7 day tour packages in five areas that are ready to join the pilot project, comprising Chiang Mai, Koh Samui, Krabi, Phuket and Pattaya. The number of international tourists is capped at 1,000 per day nationwide in the first phase without a 14-day quarantine, and is expected to start in August. If any province's capability to handle swab tests for the coronavirus rises, the government will allow a higher number based on that volume.

2. Price controls on delivery services may shackle riders

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

The government's new move to apply price control measures to online food and parcel delivery services could heap pressure on operators already suffering from losses, while rider partners would be at risk of having their share of revenue diminished, say industry pundits. On 1 July, the cabinet resolved to include online food and parcel delivery services in the list of 51 controlled goods and services, based on the Price of Goods and Services Act. The issue was forwarded to the cabinet by the Commerce Ministry, citing the Central Committee on the Price of Goods and Services's (CCP) consideration and notification. Deputy government spokeswoman Rachada Dhnadirek said the measure was adopted because of numerous complaints about online services and online food delivery prices.

3. Thailand prepares to sign RCEP pact minus India

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

Fifteen Asia-Pacific countries will sign the RCEP trade pact by the end of 2020 but India will not be among them, the Commerce Ministry has confirmed. However, members of the Regional Economic Partnership Agreement (RCEP) last week opened the way for India to return to negotiations without having to start the process anew, said Auramon Supthaweethum, director-general of the ministry's Department of Trade Negotiations. He was speaking after last week's RCEP teleconference between ministers for all 10 Asean countries and their counterparts from China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. RCEP

members have a combined population of nearly 3.6 billion people or 48.1 per cent of the world population. In 2019, RCEP members had a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of over US\$28.5 trillion or 32.7 per cent of global GDP, with total trade value of more than \$11.2 trillion or 29.5 per cent of world trade value.

4. Chansin to lead Thai Airways

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

Thai Airways International (THAI) has appointed Chansin Treenuchagron, a former president of the state-owned oil and gas conglomerate PTT Plc, as acting president. THAI on 1 July informed the Stock Exchange of Thailand of Mr Chansin's appointment, which was approved by a special board meeting. The appointment takes effect today. The former president of PTT Plc joined the THAI board last month. He replaces Chakkrit Parapuntakul, who resigned as acting president but remains the company's second vice chairman. Mr Chansin's appointment as acting president effectively ended his position as THAI's independent executive.

5. Makro launches novel concept for home dwellers

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

Siam Makro, the operator of Makro cash-and-carry stores, has launched a new concept store to cash in on a business opportunity from the pandemic. Siriporn Dechsingha, the company's chief corporate communication officer, said with many people staying home during the pandemic and higher demand from end users, the company in June introduced the Fresh @ Makro store at Ease Park community mall, Ram Intra KM 4. The Fresh @ Makro store applies concepts used at Makro's cash and carry stores, food services, eco and food outlets. The store offers mainly fresh food items, taking up 70% of the total space of 800 square metres, targeting small food stores and big families.

6. Hitachi partners with Microsoft for automation

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

Hitachi and Microsoft Corp announced a partnership 1 July to develop digital and automation solutions for the manufacturing and logistics sectors in Southeast Asia, North America and Japan, with services expected to be available in Thailand next month for the first time. The two companies will work together to meet growing demand for predictive maintenance and process automation in remote areas and support enterprises responding to challenges posed by the pandemic. Hitachi will integrate its existing industry solutions, such as its data analytics service Lumada and its Internet of Things-ready industrial controllers HX Series

with Microsoft's cloud platform to help businesses increase their workforce productivity and operational efficiency.

7. Panel tasked with studying CPTPP wants another 60 days

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

An extraordinary committee tasked with studying whether Thailand should join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) has said it requires another 60 days. The committee's chairman Veerakorn Kamprakob said this was necessary as its three subcommittees need more time to complete their work. The original deadline for the job was early July. The three subcommittees were assigned the job of studying the pact from the aspects of economy, agriculture and public health. Given that Thailand is an agriculture-oriented country, this aspect needs to be studied very carefully.

8. New mentoring programme to help farmers become entrepreneurs

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

The Department of Agricultural Economics has launched the "Agri Biz Idol" campaign to promote agricultural entrepreneurs using mentoring system in eight categories. "In the pilot phase of 'Agri Biz Idol', we will select 80 farmers countrywide who have strong business plans to increase their product values using new technology under smart farming or smart production approaches," said Chalermchai Srion, Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives. "This campaign will be divided into eight categories of agricultural industries: organic agriculture, community enterprise, agricultural product processing, agricultural tourism, high-technology agriculture, industrial agriculture, mega-farm enterprises and agricultural services."