

Thai News Update: 30 April 2020

1. Restaurants, markets and parks among venues to reopen as Bangkok relaxes COVID-19 control measures

Source: CNA ([Link](#))

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) will relax certain COVID-19 control measures in the Thai capital as its order to temporarily close venues with risks of infection comes to end on Thursday (Apr 30). Its spokesperson Pongsakorn Kwanmuang said eight types of venues will be allowed to resume operations, including restaurants outside department stores and supermarkets, public and private parks, hair salons and barbershops, golf courses and driving ranges as well as sports venues for running, tennis and badminton. Markets, clinics and pet grooming businesses are also in the list. "The reopening date will correspond to the one that Thailand's Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration will announce in a day or two," Mr Pongsakorn said in a press conference on Wednesday, following a meeting with the Bangkok Communicable Disease Committee.

2. Thailand to keep US trade list spot

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

The United States Trade Representative (USTR) in its annual Special 301 Report is expected to keep Thailand on its Watch List (WL) thanks to improvements in intellectual property (IP) protections, said a source at the Commerce Ministry. That report is scheduled to be released on Thursday. Thailand was lifted from the USTR's Priority Watch List (PWL) and placed on the WL in 2017 after it had been left on the PWL for 10 years, said the source. More amendments were passed to improve the efficiency of tackling bootleg films, which allowed Thailand to join more international treaties on intellectual property protection, said the source. Thailand has also formed a national committee on the prevention and suppression of intellectual property violations.

3. Don Mueang Airport prepares to reopen

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

Bangkok's Don Mueang International Airport is preparing to open for more flights beginning this Friday, as 2 airlines have announced plans to resume limited domestic routes. The airport's director Samphan Khutranont says Thai AirAsia and Thai Lion Air will resume some domestic service at Don Mueang on Friday, in addition to Nok Air, which has continued operating about 20 domestic flights serving about 1,000 people a day. Most airlines have suspended service due the Covid-19 outbreak. He says Thai AirAsia will operate 18 flights and Thai Lion Air 4

flights per day. On Friday Nok Air will increase its daily flights to 24. As a result, Don Mueang airport will serve about 3,000-4,000 passengers a day.

4. Thai government lists three types of business which will reopen first

Source: Thai PBS ([Link](#))

As the COVID-19 situation in Thailand gradually improves, the National Infectious Disease Committee has approved the limited reopening of three types of business. The first are businesses which provide life's basic necessities, including non-air conditioned barber shops, wet markets and open-air food shops. The second type are those with a large customer base and have an impact on the economy, such as shopping malls, restaurants and Thai massage parlors. The third type are those which help to improve health, such as fitness centres, gyms and spas. Deputy Prime Minister and Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said that, after four months of effort fighting COVID-19, the country has achieved a certain level of success in controlling the disease, adding that the businesses which do reopen must strictly observe social distancing and other anti-viral measures.

5. True Corporation Thailand selects Ericsson 5G RAN

Source: Thailand Today ([Link](#))

Thai communications service provider True Corporation Plc (True) has selected Ericsson (NASDAQ: ERIC) as a 5G Radio Access Network (RAN) vendor as part of its national 5G network. Products and services from Ericsson Radio System will enable True to operate 5G on 700MHz (low-band), 2.6GHz (mid-band) and 26GHz (high-band) frequencies in the North, Central-West, and Upper South regions of Thailand. Rollout got underway in March 2020 immediately following Ericsson's selection as a 5G vendor. Ericsson's selection by True follows successful 5G test bed and technology showcases jointly organized by the companies in multiple locations in Thailand. The companies have worked together since 2017 to demonstrate the benefits of 5G for Thai consumers and enterprises.

6. Lockdown eased, but country remains closed to foreign tourists for another month

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

Though Thailand will allow some businesses to reopen from Friday (May 1), the country is still not ready to welcome foreign tourists, say government officials. Tourists would find it difficult to enter the country anyway, since incoming flights are banned until the end of May, Dr Taweessin Visanuyothin, spokesman of the government's Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration (CCSA), said on Wednesday (April 29). He was responding to news reports that Chinese tourists have expressed a desire to visit Thailand next month. Last year the number

of Chinese visitors rose 4.4 per cent to 10.99 million, out of a total 39.7 million tourist arrivals in Thailand, up 4.2 per cent.

7. PEA eyes smart electricity grid for EEC provinces

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

The Provincial Electricity Authority (PEA) is studying plans to develop a smart grid in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), PEA's assistant governor Pongsakorn Yuthagovit said on Wednesday (April 29). The plan will see the 1.3 million conventional electricity meters being replaced by smart meters in EEC provinces, not including the meters in Pattaya, at the cost of Bt9 billion. The project will also cover meter maintenance and software upgrade. EEC covers the provinces of Chachoengsao, Chonburi and Rayong.

8. Cabinet approves plan to create regional hub of 'next-gen' food

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

The Cabinet on Tuesday (April 28) approved an action plan to drive economic growth by transforming Thailand into Asean's production hub for so-called next-generation processed food. The plan lays out measures for the first phase of processed food industry development, from 2019-2027. It covers rice, livestock, bio-food and health food products. Also incorporated are packaging and digital technology for food innovation. The action plan will see the creation of a new generation of food makers who focus on innovation, value-added products and also intelligent packaging. The plan will be funded by Bt6.671 billion from the 2020-2023 fiscal budget along with private investment of Bt2.224 billion.

9. Wind Energy chief makes hospital foray

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

Nop Narongdej, chief of Wind Energy Holdings, a renewable energy firm, is jumping into a hospital venture with plans to open the 4-billion-baht Navavej International Hospital early next year. Located on a 13-rai plot on Kaset-Nawamin Road in Bangkok, Navavej International Hospital is a partnership between Mr Nop (60%), textile maker Saha Union Group (30%) and consumer products conglomerate Saha Pathanapibul Plc (10%). Navavej Co has 1.8 billion baht in registered capital. The 4-billion-baht, eight-rai first phase of Navavej Hospital will serve residents in the Kaset-Nawamin area with a capacity of 150 inpatient beds, said Mr Nop.

10. Asean to delay any visa exemption schemes

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

No more talks about visa exemptions or visa fee waivers are expected for Asean countries in the foreseeable future as members are focusing on their own rehabilitation plans, the tourism

and sports minister said. At a Special Meeting of Asean Tourism Ministers on Covid-19 via video conference on Wednesday, tourism ministers of the 10 member nations approved in principle the Joint Statement of Asean Tourism Ministers on Strengthening Cooperation to Revitalise Tourism, said Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn, the tourism and sports minister. The region agreed to commit to a prevention plan, with each country sharing information through the Asean Tourism Crisis Communications Team, as well as seeking cooperation from international organisations together to revive travel confidence following the outbreak.