

## Thai News Update: 3 December 2020

### **1. Grab, Gojek close in on terms for merger**

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

Grab Holdings Inc and Gojek have made substantial progress in working out a deal to combine their businesses in what would be the biggest internet merger in Southeast Asia, according to people with knowledge of the talks. The region's two most valuable startups have narrowed their differences of opinion, though some parts of the agreement still need to be negotiated, said the people, asking not to be named because the talks are private. The final details are being worked out among the most senior leaders of each company with the participation of SoftBank Group Corp's Masayoshi Son, a major Grab investor, one of the people said.

### **2. Ministry sees four-year test for tourism sector**

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

The tourism industry, which accounts for 12% of Thailand's GDP, is expected to take at least four years to recover to the pre-pandemic levels, says the Finance Ministry. While several financial authorities and think tanks project Thailand's economy will fully recover over the next two years, the recovery of the domestic tourism sector is anticipated to take until 2024 to recoup 40 million foreign tourist arrivals, said Arkhom Termpittayapaisith, the finance minister. Foreign tourists are forecast to number 8 million next year before rising to 16 million, 32 million and 40 million in 2022, 2023 and 2024, respectively, said Mr Arkhom.

### **3. JSCCIB asks for stimulus continuation**

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

Joint Standing Committee on Commerce, Industry and Banking (JSCCIB) is urging the government to extend its economic stimulus campaigns for 3-6 months to continue ongoing efforts to boost spending. The call is being made as the economy has not fully recovered in the wake of the pandemic. The JSCCIB says the country still needs fiscal-monetary injections, even though experts believe the economy will get better next year. JSCCIB member and Federation of Thai Industries chairman Supant Mongkolsuthree said the panel wants the government to use the stimulus packages as a tool to drive the economy forward.

#### **4. Export marketing, partner talks making progress**

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

The government looks set to organise as many as 343 marketing activities both in and outside Thailand and accelerate free trade agreement (FTA) talks with several potential partners including the European Union (EU), the UK, the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the European Free Trade Association (Efta). Commerce Minister Jurin Laksanawisit said on 2 December the ministry in close partnership with the private sector has already completed promotional and stimulus plans for exports, which include marketing events and trade pacts. Of the planned 343 marketing events, some 135 will be held in Thailand and the remaining 208 are scheduled to be organised in foreign countries.

#### **5. Thailand facing 3 core risks: BOT policy committee**

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

The Bank of Thailand's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has identified three issues of concern for the country – the rapidly rising baht, a bleak outlook for the financial system, and rising household debt. The concerns were pinpointed in minutes of the MPC meeting on November 18, which were made public on Wednesday (December 2). The minutes raised concern that the rising baht would hit the fragile economic recovery by eroding export profits, in turn affecting investment and employment.

#### **6. Phase 2 of shopping subsidy schemes put to Cabinet next week**

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

The second phases of two economic stimulus projects – “Let Go Halves” and the state welfare card shopping subsidy – were approved by the Centre for Economic Situation Administration (CESA) on 2 December and will be put to the Cabinet next week. Under phase 2 of Let's Go Halves (Kon La Khreung), the number of participants eligible for the daily Bt150 shopping subsidy will be increased from 10 million to 15 million. The total subsidy limit per person will also rise from Bt3,000 to Bt3,500. The second phase will run from January 1 to March 31.

#### **7. Finance minister sees 4-4.5% growth for Thai economy next year**

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

The Thai economy is expected to expand 4-4.5 per cent next year, said Finance Minister Arkhom Termpittayapaisith. The economy will take two years to recover, while the tourism sector will take four years before recovering to pre-Covid-19 levels, he told a seminar on next year's economic conditions, hosted by Prachachart Turakit newspaper on Wednesday. He expected Thailand to see at least 8 million tourist arrivals next year, doubling to 16 million in

2022, 32 million in 2023 and 40 million in 2024. He added that despite the brighter outlook, the ministry was not being complacent and has continued to launch or extend stimulus packages to revive an economy struggling under the impact of Covid-19.

#### **8. Bangkok Bank opens online gold-trading platform**

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

Bangkok Bank (BBL) has joined hands with Hua Seng Heng Group to open an online gold trading service. The Hua Seng Heng USD Gold Trade platform enables customers to use their foreign currency deposit (FCD) accounts to trade in gold at the US dollar price, said BBL senior executive Chansak Fuangfu on 2 December. “Those interested can open an FCD account at any of BBL’s 45 branches,” he said, adding that applications will be made available at more branches if the platform proves popular. Thanarat Pasawong, CEO of Huang Seng Heng Group, said that online gold trading had grown sharply by 6 per cent this year despite Covid-19’s impact on the global economy.