

Thai News Update: 3 February 2020

1. Jurin looking at possibility of making face masks, hand gels controlled goods

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

The government is considering making protective face masks and hand sanitizer gels controlled goods, which would subject them to price-control by the government, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce Jurin Laksanawisit said on February 2. Jurin said he would preside over an emergency meeting of the Central Committee for Prices of Goods and Services on February 3 to discuss the possibility of such a move. Earlier, Jurin had ordered Provincial Commerce offices nationwide to survey and monitor the markets to make sure there was no shortage or raising of prices for protective face masks and hand sanitizer gels.

2. Thailand preparing to cash in on trade ties with UK after Brexit

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

The Ministry of Commerce will accelerate moves for a free trade agreement with Britain after it officially leaves the EU, a senior official said. The ministry is planning to hold a seminar to give knowledge about trade regulations with Britain after Brexit this March, so that Thai entrepreneurs are not affected by the changes. Auramon Supthaweethum, director-general of the Trade Negotiations Department, said that the United Kingdom officially ceased to be a member of the European Union (EU) at 11 pm GMT on January 31, three and half years after Britain voted to leave the EU in a referendum.

3. IEAT offers four location options for Exxon Mobil's new petrochem facilities

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

The Industrial Estate Authority of Thailand (IEAT) is working with Petroleum Institute of Thailand to survey possible locations for Exxon Mobil Corporation to establish its new petrochemical facilities in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), the authority's governor, Somjin Phileuk, said. "We have narrowed down suitable choices to four; two of them are lands near Laem Chabang Industrial Estate with areas of 5,000 and 1,200 rai respectively, one will

involve reclamation of 2,500 rai of land in the Gulf of Thailand, and the last choice is at Phase 3 of Laem Chabang Port with an area of 1,875 rai," she said.

4. WHO praises Thailand's efforts to combat PM2.5

Source: Pattaya Mail ([Link](#))

The World Health Organization (WHO) has commended Thailand on its efforts to address high levels of particulate matter of 2.5 microns or less (PM2.5), while suggesting the country adopt its air quality guidelines. Dr. Lesley Onyon, a WHO representative, said today that Thailand has shown its commitment to raising awareness and providing information about the PM2.5 issue to the public. As a result, many people have become more alert about the situation. Relevant agencies will have to do more to raise public awareness about the primary sources of PM2.5 and encourage people to help reduce vehicle emissions by using public transport.

5. KBank uses digital for Asean retail

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

Kasikornbank (KBank) looks set to use digital banking to make inroads into the regional retail market, tapping higher-yield business. With digital technology, costs for individual customer acquisition have declined significantly, meaning regional retail banking contributes better yields than regional wholesale banking, said co-president Pipit Aneknithi. "We plan to offer a full range of retail digital banking services, spanning from deposits and lending to investment products," he said. "The bank will unveil its mobile banking app K Plus in neighbouring markets. This sector represents new S-curve growth."

6. Robots roll out to treat infectious diseases

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

Chulalongkorn University teachers have developed telemedicine robots for use in Thailand to help with the assessment and treatment of infectious diseases. The robots will initially be deployed at Bamrasnaradura Infectious Diseases Institute, Rajavithi Hospital and Central Chest Disease Institute. Chulalongkorn University yesterday handed over the first three telemedicine robots to Khate Sripratak, cardiologist and president of the Chest Disease Institute's medical staff organisation. "Using robots will reduce the chance of infections [for medical staff]. Less contact means less chance of infection but without sacrificing the quality of the care," Dr Khate said.