

## Thai News Update: 3 July 2020

### **1. Somkid meets US envoy to woo investors for Thai Silicon Valley, EEC**

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

Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jaturtipitak met US Ambassador Michael George DeSombre on Thursday (July 2) to talk about developing an economic collaboration between the two countries. The deputy PM also told the envoy that Thailand's capital market was similar to that of Singapore, because the Stock Exchange of Thailand has built connections with China and Hong Kong's stock markets. Meanwhile, the Board of Investment (BoI) reported that the government has launched the "Thailand Digital Valley" project covering 30 rai in Chonburi's Sri Racha district. This operation aims to build another national digital hub apart from Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Phuket, and will also serve as a platform for smart cities as well as help digitise the EEC industrial section.

### **2. Italthai's hospitality arm to open 12 new hotels in Asia**

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

Italthai is preparing to open 12 new hotels across Asia as the hospitality industry emerges from a lockdown that caused domestic and international revenues to drop 60-70 per cent. The construction and hospitality giant is the parent company of ONYX Hospitality Group, whose brands include Amari hotels. Yuthachai Charanachitta, Italthai's chief executive, acknowledged the company had been affected by the crisis but said it was able to move forward despite severe damage to the tourism sector. The company experienced a slowing but not a halt in its construction business during lockdown, since the market for power plants, petrochemical and industrial factories escaped heavy impacts.

### **3. List of 'travel bubble' countries finalised today ahead of Aug reopening**

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

Foreign tourists will be allowed back into the country in August under "travel bubble" arrangements, Tourism and Sports Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn confirmed on Thursday, (July 2). The "travel bubbles" will cover countries at low-risk of Covid-19 contagion, while the tourists would be allowed to travel on specific Thai routes or itineraries booked through small agencies, he added. After discussions with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and private operators on Wednesday (July 1), Phiphat will today meet with Public Health Ministry officials to finalise the list of "travel bubble" countries.

#### **4. Talks on to finalise new LNG shippers for Ratchaburi power plant**

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

Hin Kong Power Holding (HKH), the winner of the Hin Kong Power Plant project in Ratchaburi province, is in the process of sourcing liquefied natural gas (LNG) to fuel the power plant, a source from the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (Egat) said. The power plant will have the capacity to generate 1,400 megawatts per year. HKH is a joint venture between Ratch Group Pcl (51 per cent shareholding) and Gulf Energy Development Plc (49 per cent).

#### **5. Draft law would ban online alcohol sales in Thailand**

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

In April, the government imposed a nationwide ban on the sale of alcoholic beverages as part of the Emergency Decree to stem the spread of Covid-19. Now the country's top alcohol regulator has approved a draft regulation to ban online alcohol sales. The move comes after alcohol watchdog groups urged the government to crack down on the online sales, which surged during the local pandemic lockdown response from the Thai government. The deputy health minister says the new rule aims to prevent consumers from "having easy access to alcohol".

#### **6. Tourism in Thailand to lose up to \$47bn from Covid-19: UN study**

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

Global tourism revenues are expected to fall by up to US\$3.3 trillion due to Covid-19 restrictions, with Thailand standing to lose \$47 billion, according to a UN study published on 1 July. The 'Covid-19 and Tourism' report released by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Unctad) is based on three scenarios for the industry, with lockdown measures lasting 4 months, 8 months and 12 months. In those scenarios, revenues would fall \$1.17 trillion, \$2.22 trillion and \$3.3 trillion respectively or between 1.5-4.2% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP). The report did not say which scenario was most likely, although an Unctad official said the middle scenario "could be a realistic one".

#### **7. Thailand unlikely to join CPTPP pact this year**

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

Thailand will take until September to study whether to join a trans-Pacific free trade agreement, potentially missing a window for entry this year amid widespread concern that joining the pact may harm its farm and healthcare sectors. The Commerce ministry has said joining the 11-member Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific

Partnership (CPTPP) would boost the country's economy and offset the impact of the coronavirus outbreak, while making sectors including electronics and agriculture more competitive against rivals like Vietnam and Malaysia, both CPTPP members. Opposition parties and some civil groups oppose membership, saying tariff-free access to other CPTPP members could lead to a flood of agricultural and pharmaceutical imports and hurt those industries in Thailand.

**8. Thailand plans more measures to boost consumption amid COVID-19 pandemic**  
**Source: Channel News Asia ([Link](#))**

Thailand is considering introducing new economic measures to boost consumption and help businesses and debtors cope with the impact of the coronavirus outbreak, a deputy prime minister said on Thursday (Jul 2). The government plans to expand a recently announced package to spur domestic tourism, and to help more companies get financial support, Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak told a briefing. "If the business sector has to stop or halt operations, and if there is no demand in the market, it will be difficult," he said, adding that details of the measures could be announced around the middle of July.

**9. Govt wants to attract US tech firms**  
**Source: Bangkok Post ([Link](#))**

US investors are being urged to develop a Silicon Valley-like centre for innovative tech firms in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), with the government pledging to devise special promotion packages for them. Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak conveyed the message to Michael George DeSombre, the US ambassador, when the two met on 2 July. "We talked about the framework for working together to strengthen the economy and promote US investment in Thailand," Mr Somkid said. "I also told the US ambassador the countries should develop a Silicon Valley-like centre that is home to many startups and global technology companies within the EEC, including establishing universities, startups and high-tech companies, and a research and development centre."