

Thai News Update: 4 February 2021

1. Thailand intensifies talks with EU for quick purchase of AstraZeneca vaccine

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

The Public Health Ministry has stepped up negotiations with British vaccine company AstraZeneca to import the first lot of its anti-Covid-19 vaccines this month and is also asking the Thai Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to consider importing and registering China's Sinovac vaccine faster. Ministry permanent secretary Dr Kiattaphum Wongrajit said on Wednesday that Thailand aimed to procure the first lot of 50,000 AstraZeneca vaccines by February 14 despite the European Union limiting exports amid delivery disputes and a shortage of doses.

2. Thai investor confidence rises for second month in a row

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

Thailand's Investor Confidence Index was up 1.5 per cent in January for its second successive monthly rise, the Federation of Thai Capital Market Organisations (Fetco) reported on 3 February. The index rose to 132.55, buoyed by an influx of foreign funds, the rollout of Covid-19 vaccines and the performance of companies listed in the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET), Fetco chairman Paiboon Nalinthrangkurn said. Meanwhile, downside factors causing uncertainty among investors were the fresh Covid-19 outbreak, worries over the euro zone's economy, and Thailand's economic recession.

3. Cabinet earmarks Bt275 million for hosting BIMSTEC meetings

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

A Cabinet meeting on 2 February approved a budget of Bt275 million to organise the 6th Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) meeting and other related meetings in 2022, a news source revealed. Founded in June 1997, BIMSTEC has seven members – Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand, which joined the grouping in December 1997. The source also said a study has shown that BIMSTEC members mostly rely on domestic production and consumption as their main economic driver, valued at around 55 to 70 per cent of total gross domestic product.

4. Firms eye jobs as national agenda

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

The Joint Standing Committee on Commerce, Industry and Banking (JSCCIB) suggests the government make Covid-19 vaccination a national agenda, with the tourism sector the first to

receive vaccines as soon as July. People working in the tourism industry should be receive in the first priority grouping as protecting them against the highly contagious virus should help restore the economy, JSCCIB member and chairman of the Federation of Thai Industries Supant Mongkolsuthree said on 3 February. They need protection as their jobs require them to meet and serve both Thai and foreign travellers.

5. Thai internet users keep up top banking app usage streak

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

Thailand retains the pole position in the world for internet users engaging in mobile banking and financial services apps while becoming one of the top five for e-commerce adoption, mobile payment, mobile commerce and QR code usage, according to the Digital 2021 report. The annual report was published by We Are Social, a global digital agency, in partnership with social media solutions provider Hootsuite, focusing on digital, mobile and social media trends around the world. The report said Thailand tops the ranking for banking and financial service app use -- the third year in a row -- with 68.1% of internet users aged 16-64 saying they engage with these apps every month.

6. Aseanta to seek reopening scheme

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

The ASEAN Tourism Association will press for a border reopening scheme among Asean's 10 member states at the 24th meeting of Asean Tourism Ministries on 4 February. Mingkwan Metmowlee, president of the ASEAN Tourism Association (Aseanta), said the association, which includes the private sector and national tourism organizations (NTOs) of the 10 member states, will call for a resumption of tourism by the first or second quarter of this year as the industry is on the brink of collapse and needs urgent action. "More than 70% of tourism jobs in this region will be lost if the borders remain closed, but once tourism picks up we will face another crisis -- a labour shortage," said Mrs Mingkwan.