

Thai News Update: 4 March 2020

1. New anti-virus measures for foreign visitors and Thais returning from high risk areas

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

Thailand's Public Health Ministry, via a ministerial announcement, has designated nine countries and two territories as high risk areas for COVID-19, and visitors to Thailand from these areas will be subject to 14-day home quarantine and will have to adhere to health related follow-up measures. The nine countries, defined by Thailand as "high risk", are Japan, South Korea, Germany, China, Taiwan, France, Singapore, Italy and Iran, and the two territories are Macau and Hong Kong. Ministerial announcements specify the following four measures for enforcement: Visitors and Thai citizens returning from the high risk areas will be subject to 14-days home quarantine, even if they are cleared of the disease, unless they have permission from health officials. Those who do not have a permanent residence or lodging in Thailand are required to show officials, upon arrival, evidence of where officials can locate them during the 14-day period...

2. Songkran Festival not cancelled, likely to proceed in a toned down form, says Thai Tourism Authority Governor

Source: The Pattaya News ([Link](#))

As the world continues to deal with the outbreak of the Covid-19 Coronavirus worldwide and many events continue to be cancelled in Pattaya such as The LPGA tour, The St Patrick's Day Parade, The Open Swimming Competition, the Troppixx Music Festival and the Marine Run, attention has begun to turn on social media to the biggest holiday of the year in Thailand-Songkran, The Water Festival, also known as the Thai New Year. Songkran traditionally, along with Christmas and New Years week, is the biggest and longest domestic holiday of the year in Thailand and the largest holiday tourism attraction in the country drawing hundreds of thousands of domestic and foreign tourists for what is billed as the worlds largest water fight.

3. BGrimm sees good prospects for business expansion despite virus outbreak

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

BGrimm Power Plc appears to have weathered the economic downturn and adverse impact so far brought about by the Covid-19 outbreak, the company said in press release. “January 2020 figures show that while some industrial customers such as some auto parts manufacturers reduced their power off-take due to the economic condition, many other customers boosted their power purchases amid increasing demand,” BGrimm CEO Preeyanart Soontornwata said. For instance, packaging firms such as AJ Plast and Universal Polybag increased their power purchases in January by 20 per cent over the same period last year, according to Preeyanart.

4. From co-working to co-living, these 7 brands in Southeast Asia have got you covered

Source: e27 ([Link](#))

Humans are naturally wired to be oriented towards one another and sociality is a dominant factor that shapes our physiological and emotional needs. This makes the idea of co-working space a popular option amongst independent workers and startups. It is based on the concept of connecting like-minded individuals, thus giving rise to another trend known as “co-living” a housing solution where people with common interests share a living space together. This is great for working professionals, freelancers and travellers moving to a new city. Here, e27 lists down nine leading co-living spaces perfect for working professionals, travellers and freelancers across Southeast Asia...

5. ASEAN encourages Canada to promptly complete free trade agreement

Source: Antara News ([Link](#))

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) encouraged Canada to swiftly complete the ASEAN-Canada Free Trade Agreement (ASEAN-Canada FTA) to gain potential addition for the region's gross domestic product (GDP) worth US\$39.36 billion. Based on the fact that Canada is a traditional trading partner of the ASEAN, Indonesia has engaged with it to expand the scope of cooperation through the finalization of the ASEAN-Canada FTA, Indonesian Ambassador to Canada Abdul Kadir Jailani noted in a written statement issued by the Indonesian Embassy in Ottawa and received in Jakarta on 3 March. The statement was delivered by Ambassador Jailani at a discussion on "ASEAN-Canada Free Trade Agreement: Potential and benefits" held in Ottawa on March 2.

6. Panic buying hits Bangkok stores

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

Shoppers in Greater Bangkok are quickly emptying supermarket shelves of long-lasting items like instant noodles, packed rice, tissue paper, tinned fish and drinking water as fears mount over the coronavirus epidemic. Large retail operators including Tops Supermarket, Tesco Lotus, The Mall Group and Big C Supercenter acknowledged that these items have been snapped up quickly since the weekend. They are also in consensus that fear of the deadly virus is the primary cause for the shopping spree. "We have never seen these kinds of purchases," said Chairat Petchdakul, vice-president for supermarket merchandising at The Mall Group Co, the operator of Gourmet Market.

7. Tourism aid headed to economic cabinet

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

Large-scale measures to help tourism-related operators and employees affected by the coronavirus epidemic are set to go before the economic cabinet on 6 March. Given that other ministries are involved in the relief package, it needs to be discussed in the economic ministers' meeting before forwarding to the cabinet for approval, said Lavaron Sangsnit, director-general of the Fiscal Policy Office (FPO). The package launch is aimed at helping tourism-related operators and employees get through this hard period, Mr Lavaron said. The package will comprise both financial and non-financial measures to enable the tourism workforce to earn a living, he said.

8. Tax waiver granted for cash-back amount from 'Eat, Shop, Spend' scheme

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

The Cabinet on March 4 agreed to waive personal income tax on financial privileges given to registered consumers under the government's economic stimulus package "Eat, Shop, Spend" in phase 2 and 3, Government Spokeswoman Narumon Pinyosinwat said. The campaign, which ran from the third quarter of 2019 to early 2020, is aimed at promoting domestic tourism and consumption to boost the country's economy amidst the global economic slowdown due to the international trade war. According to the Ministry of Finance proposal, the "cash back" amount granted to those registering will not be considered for calculation of tax. The maximum cash returned to each person is Bt8,500, if the registered person spends at least Bt50,000 on domestic travel, products or services during the campaign period.

9. Dozens of PPP projects up for consideration on Friday

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

The Transport Ministry will submit 41 Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects for consideration by the Council of Economic Ministers on 6 March. If approved, they will be forwarded to the National Economic and Social Development Council, said minister Saksayam Chidchob on March 3. Topping the PPP projects due for consideration are the Orange Line mass transit system (Bangkumon-Minburi) worth Bt235.320 billion; the Purple Line mass transit system (Taopoon-Rat Burana), costing Bt124.791 billion; the Nakhon Pathom-Cha-Am highway, Bt79 billion and the Bt4.942 billion Samui cruise terminal.