

Thai News Update: 7 April 2020

1. Incoming flight ban extended to April 18

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

The Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) has extended a ban on all commercial flights to Thailand until April 18 to support the country's campaign to contain the coronavirus. Thailand had banned passenger flights from Saturday to Monday. Hours before the order expired, the aviation regulator issued another announcement extending the ban to April 18. The extension was in line with efforts to curb the outbreak of Covid-19 under the Emergency Decree, the CAAT said. The new order will end on April 18. Until that date, only state and military aircraft, emergency landings, technical landings and flights for humanitarian and medical purposes will be allowed, it said.

2. Thai Immigration seek visa relief for stranded foreigners

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

Thailand's Immigration Chief Pol Lt Gen Sompong Chingduang, is seeking cabinet approval for new measures to help foreigners in Thailand affected by the Covid-19 crisis. The proposal will be submitted to the cabinet for approval this week, he said. Cabinet meets each Tuesday. The proposals follow a difficult week for foreigners and immigration officials coping with long queues of panicking visitors trying to sort out their visas in a very non-social distancing environment. Long queues and frustrated tourists have been the norm at immigration offices around Thailand in recent weeks.

3. Local SMEs tapped to produce masks

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

Seven small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the garment industry are ready to produce around 350,000 washable fabric masks per month to help solve the shortage of masks in Thailand. Director-general the Department of Industrial Promotion (DIP), Nattapol Rangsitpol, said seven local sportswear and undergarment manufacturers — Manee Innerwear, Yong Sanga, Union Thai Group, Kennet Textile, High Quality Garment, World Knitting Apparel and Apparel Creation — have changed their production lines to produce masks, in line with the government's policy. Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak had previously ordered garment and textile factories in Thailand to prepare materials to make face masks to serve growing demand and overcome shortages.

4. Thailand aims to become regional LNG hub despite Covid-19 crisis

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

The escalating Covid-19 outbreak will not disrupt Thailand's aim to become a regional hub for liquefied natural gas (LNG), Energy Minister Sontirat Songtjirawong said recently. Sontirat has of late assigned Thailand's oil and gas conglomerate, PTT Plc, to take a lead in driving the country towards the goal. He added that PTT has conducted a trial of LNG reload to transport LNG to small vessels. The Energy Ministry has also revised regulations to liberalise the LNG market in the country. Meanwhile, the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (Egat) has conducted a trial of importing LNG from the spot market, with a second lot of import totalling 65,000 tonnes to be completed early this month.

5. Overseas Thais warned to contact embassy before flying home

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

Thais stranded overseas should contact their local Thai Embassy or Consulate as soon as possible if they plan to return home, the government's Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) said on Monday (April 6). CCSA spokesman Dr Taweessin Visanuyothin made the announcement at Government House, adding that the latest repatriation flight, carrying 111 Thai pilgrims back from Indonesia, was due to arrive at Hat Yai Airport on 6 April. The government has ordered mandatory 14-day state quarantine for all returnees. He urged people who wanted to return to the country to contact their Thai Embassy or Consulate because the government needed to know the number of returnees and their date of arrival.

6. CP imports first mask-making machine to beat shortages

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

Charoen Pokphand Group (CP) says the first of two surgical mask-manufacturing machines it is importing from China arrived at Suvarnabhumi Airport on Sunday night (April 5). The machines will be installed in a factory to produce free face masks for medical personnel and ordinary Thais, being built on the orders of CP's senior chairman Dhanin Chearavanont. The factory construction is more than 80 per cent completed, said company officials.

7. Nielsen: FMCG pick up pace in pandemic

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

Despite the pandemic escalating locally, Thailand's 800-900 billion baht fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry grew in the first two months of this year, according to Nielsen Thailand, the market research firm. Somwalee Limrachtamorn, the company's managing

director, said FMCG in terms of value grew by 1.3% and 1.5% in January and February, respectively, with volume gains of 0.9% and 1.2% over the same period last year. The growth was lower than the rates in the same period last year, when value rose 6.5% in January and 6.3% in February, while volume expanded 6.4% in January and 6.3% in February. In 2019, FMCG grew by 3.9% in value terms and 3.6% by volume from the year before.

8. Unfazed Haier, Midea on track with Thai expansion

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

Despite the unabated spread of the coronavirus, two giant Chinese air conditioner marketers and manufacturers, Haier and Midea, remain active in their expansion in Thailand. Thanet Bin-a-sun, senior vice-president of Haier Electrical Appliances Thailand, an arm of Haier Group, said the company has allocated 30 million baht for a marketing campaign to stimulate spending this summer, aiming at growing sales of air conditioner products by 20-30% for the year. "Overall consumer sentiment is relatively poor since the coronavirus broke out in February," he said. "Sales are expected to significantly drop after malls were ordered temporarily closed from March 22 to April 12, which is considered the peak sales season for air conditioner products."

9. Loxley launches grocery trucks

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

Trading conglomerate Loxley has launched a mobile grocery store selling essential consumer products in crowded communities during the lockdown period. Suroj Lamsam, chief executive and president of Loxley, said that with prolonged measures urging people to stay home and limited service hours for food outlets and restaurants, Loxley Trading Company (LTC) has modified trucks into mobile grocery stores, selling necessary goods at residential projects, dormitories and apartments in crowded communities such as Klong Toey, Phra Khanong, Makkasan and Din Daeng. The company started with two mobile grocery trucks but has committed to ramp up the service if there is a positive response.

10. Srithai beefs up investment in Vietnam

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

SET-listed Srithai Superware Plc, a leading melamine maker, is ramping up investment this year in Vietnam, which has relatively high growth opportunities, while shelving its investment in Thailand, Indonesia and India. Sanan Angubolkul, chairman and president, said the company will splash out 450 million baht this year to expand its business in Vietnam. Of the total, about 300 million baht is to install new machines to increase production capacity of its PET preform

and closure products at its two factories in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. The remaining 150 million baht will be used to build a new melamine factory on a 16-rai plot in Ho Chi Minh City and install new machines at this factory