

Thai News Update: 8 April 2021

1. PM orders 14-day shutdown of any entertainment venue, restaurant with Covid-19 infection

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

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha has ordered an immediate 14-day shutdown of entertainment venues or restaurants where a Covid-19 infection is found, government spokesman Anucha Burapachaisri confirmed on 8 April. “The measure has been effective since April 5 in a bid to prevent Covid-19 from spreading further after a new outbreak linked to entertainment venues such as pubs, bars and karaoke parlours,” he said. “If an infection is found at any of these businesses, it will be shut down for at least two weeks. In case infections are found across many businesses in the same area, they will all be shut for at least 14 days,” he clarified.

2. Thais advised to stay home for Songkran to limit spread of COVID-19 UK strain

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

Thailand’s top virologist, Dr. Yong Poovorawan, has expressed his concern that the UK strain of COVID-19, which is now linked to the Thonglor cluster and is spreading through Bangkok and several other provinces, will spread more rapidly during the Songkran festival and may mutate into a local strain that is difficult to eliminate. His recommendation is for all Thais “to stay home to contain the disease, for the nation” during the Songkran festival next week. In his Facebook book post on 8 April, Dr. Yong of Chulalongkorn University admitted that the spread of the UK strain in Thailand is unexpected, because Thailand has not fully opened to foreign arrivals and all arrivals are subject to 14 days mandatory quarantine and two COVID-19 tests.

3. Thai private sector ‘can import Covid-19 vaccines’

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

The government is not monopolising the purchase of Covid-19 vaccines and is not blocking the private sector from importing them, government deputy spokesperson Traisree Taisaranakul said on 8 April. In a bid to clarify “inaccurate” information that is confusing the public, she said the demand for vaccines is far higher than the production capacity. “According to the Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation Ministry, as of April 5, countries had placed orders for up to 9.6 billion doses, and only 658 million doses have been administered so far,” she said. She said many countries have approved specific Covid-19 vaccines for emergency use, while many manufacturers have offered to sell directly to government agencies.

4. Thailand Approves Latest Economic Relief Package for Businesses

Source: Thai Business News ([Link](#))

On March 23, 2021, Thailand's government approved its latest economic relief package, valued at 350 billion baht (US\$11.2 billion), to support businesses in the country. Some 250 billion baht (US\$8 billion) was allocated for soft loans while the remaining 100 billion baht (US\$3.2 billion) will go towards an 'asset warehousing' program whereby debtors can use their assets as loan collateral but will have the right to redeem their assets under a specific time frame. This latest relief package is an extension of the existing soft loan scheme issued in April 2020; Thailand's third stimulus package aimed at mitigating the economic impact caused by the pandemic.

5. EA to start making batteries for electric vehicles in June

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

Energy Absolute Plc (EA) expects to start making batteries for electric vehicles (EVs) at its production factory in Chachoengsao in June, marking its presence in the industry this year. "The move signals significant progress in the EV supply chain in Thailand because batteries are a major component of EVs," said EA deputy chief executive Amorn Saphaweekul. Production at the 6-billion-baht facility will begin with a trial run of its machinery. Mr Amorn expects the EV industry in Thailand to shape up this year after the National New Generation Vehicle Committee on March 25 approved the private sector's plan to have EVs make up 50% of total car manufacturing by 2030, an increase from 30%.