

Thai News Update:8 June 2020

1. Thailand conducts talks online for rice sales

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

The Department of Foreign Trade is carrying out online negotiations with Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and China on rice sales since Covid-19 has posed an obstacle to face-to-face deals. Director-general Keerati Rushchano said that after discussions with Hong Kong were successful, the department will use Zoom video conferencing to negotiate with other countries and follow up on the situation via online platforms. "The department plans to collaborate with rice exporters in discussing with the importers how satisfied they are and inform them that Thailand is ready to export high-quality rice," Keerati said.

2. New Japan budget airline launches with Narita-Bangkok cargo flight

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

New Japanese budget airline Zipair Tokyo Inc launched in early June by flying a passenger jet to Bangkok that was loaded only with cargo. With the aviation industry facing strong headwinds due to the novel coronavirus pandemic, the company wholly owned by Japan Airlines Co was forced to commence operations by focusing on cargo, delaying its planned Narita-Bangkok passenger services. As the Thai government has banned inbound international passenger flights until the end of June as part of efforts to prevent the spread of the virus, Zipair has postponed launching services that were initially scheduled to start on May 14. Last Wednesday, the company's first flight using a Boeing 787 passenger jet departed from Narita airport, east of Tokyo, for the Thai capital with a cargo of 13 tonnes of daily commodities such as detergent.

3. Exporters urged to use privileges

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

Exporters are being urged to make more use of free trade agreement (FTA) privileges and the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) during the coronavirus crisis, especially in high-demand categories like food, drinks and processed farm products. Keerati Rushchano, director-general of the Foreign Trade Department, said that while use of FTA privileges and the GSP by Thai exporters fell by nearly 10% year-on-year during the first quarter of 2020 to US\$16.24 billion, strong demand was seen in the above categories. "We advise exporters to make use of the privileges under FTAs and the GSP before exporting," Mr Keerati said.

4. Bangkok rail hub nears completion

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

After several decades of dormancy, Thailand's rail transport sector is entering a renaissance. In the capital city, 10 mass transit projects are under construction. Across the nation, major railway projects are also underway, including the 308-kilometre dual-track railway from Nakhon Ratchasima to Ubon Ratchathani. Many municipalities -- from Chiang Mai in the North to Phuket in the South -- are also pushing plans to build their own rail systems. However, none of these projects reflect Thailand's rail renaissance like Bang Sue Central Station, a "mega-station" that will replace the century-old Hua Lamphong Station as Bangkok's main rail hub. The State Railway of Thailand (SRT) says Bang Sue Central Station will open in January 2021, along with the Red Line commuter rail.

5. Ministry eyes B3,000 handout for tourists

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

Eligible recipients of domestic tourism stimulus measures will be entitled to a 3,000-baht cash handout that will automatically be deducted from their bills when they spend nights or pay for food or services at participating hotels, restaurants and related tourism operators, says an informed source at the Finance Ministry. The scheme will require only hotels, restaurants and tourism-related operators to sign up with the designated state agency, while service users are automatically eligible without any registration requirement, the source said.

6. Companies want clarity on CPTPP

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

The private sector is calling for a quick and clear stance from the government on the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). Companies cited foreign investors who have already invested and are interested in further spending in Thailand, though they are waiting for the government's decision on participation in the pact to determine future action. "We're inundated with inquiries from foreign investors about the government's stance on participation in CPTPP," said Sanan Angubolkul, vice-chairman of the Thai Chamber of Commerce. "But right now we cannot provide them any clear answers."

7. TAT to discuss redirecting international bookings for domestic trips to boost tourism

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

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) will discuss with hotels, airlines and online travel agents the idea of swapping customers' bookings for flights to foreign countries and

accommodations there for domestic flights and accommodations instead. TAT governor Yuthasak Supasorn said he wanted flight bookings to foreign countries and reservations for overseas accommodations, which customers couldn't use due to the Covid-19 crisis, to be converted into domestic flights and accommodations. This would stimulate domestic tourism in the second half of the year, he explained. Customers who agree to swap their international bookings for domestic ones will receive an incentive in the form of a discount.

8. Thai food campaigns in the US to focus on online shopping amid anti-racial protests
Source: The Nation ([Link](#))

The Department of International Trade Promotion is planning to adjust its promotional campaigns of Thai food and products in the United States to focus on online shopping after anti-racism protests have affected Thai restaurants and retailers. "The unrest in many US cities has prevented customers from visiting Thai stores or dining out at Thai restaurants," said director-general Somdet Susomboon yesterday (June 7). "The department will therefore shift the focus of its promotional campaigns to online shopping and home-delivery. "We will work with online shopping platforms and local delivery companies to expand coverage as well as provide special coupons for discounts and giveaways when ordering Thai food and products online, especially in areas where emergency has been clamped," he said.