

## Thai News Update: 9 April 2020

### **1. Thailand, US in 'proactive' trade talks**

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

Thailand and the United States on 8 April discussed “proactive” economic, trade and investment cooperation, which will be crucial for salvaging the economy in the aftermath of the new coronavirus pandemic. The discussion was carried out between Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha and Michael George DeSombre, the new US ambassador to Thailand, during the latter’s visit to introduce himself to Gen Prayut at Government House.

### **2. Immigration Bureau has granted automatic extensions of visas, here are the details**

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

Thai Immigration, in partnership with the Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-Cha and the Thai Cabinet, have granted automatic extensions of ALL visa’s that expire from March 26th until April 30th. The approval became official this evening after being signed by the Prime Minister and then published in the Royal Gazette, which in effect makes the order law. Foreigners no longer have to report to an Immigration office during this period and will not be charged a 500 baht per day overstay fee.

### **3. BMA offering Covid testing at home**

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

The government is being advised to waive the daily minimum wage requirement for six months to help entrepreneurs maintain employment during the pandemic. Thanit Sorat, vice-chairman of the National Labour Development Advisory Council, said the council estimated that the country’s total unemployed could reach 9-10 million by the end of this month after the government declared a state of emergency and curfew nationwide, up from 6.5 million in March.

### **4. Minimum wage waiver floated to sustain SMEs**

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

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manufacturing and service sectors. The estimates exclude 500,000 new graduates and 400,000 existing unemployed workers, Mr Thanit said.

### **5. Thai government prepares for Thai returnees**

**Source: National News Bureau of Thailand ([Link](#))**

The Thai government has prepared to receive Thai nationals returning from abroad by taking into consideration the number of returnees and Thailand's capacity on communicable disease control. Following the government's decision to extend a ban on incoming flights to Thailand until April 18, to help contain the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), the information has been spread on the media that the number of Thai nationals arriving from other countries will be limited to 200 passengers per day. The Foreign Ministry clarified that the decision to restrict the number of Thai arrivals was made by a joint meeting of relevant government agencies to support the efficient management of inbound passengers and the government's 14-day quarantine measure.

### **6. Bangkok website for Covid self-assessment goes viral**

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

A Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) website where users can assess their risk of being infected with Covid-19 virus has become a big hit with city residents. BKK Covid-19 (<http://bkkcovid19.bangkok.go.th>) has been visited by more 18,000 people since its launch on April 3. Bangkok governor Aswin Kwanmuang said the BMA was sending officials to homes of people who learned that they were at risk, to test them for infection. Those whose test positive for Covid-19 will be immediately admitted to a hospital. The service is aimed to curb the spread of the virus by identifying new infections and isolating them in public health facilities.

### **7. Central Bank earmarks Bt900 billion to save SMEs, stabilise corporate bond market**

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

The Bank of Thailand is planning additional measures worth Bt900 billion to rescue SMEs and the corporate bond market that have been severely affected by the Covid-19 outbreak. Veerathai Santiprabhob, governor of the Bank of Thailand (BOT), announced that the central bank and the Finance Ministry were working together closely to swiftly implement measures to alleviate the impact of the outbreak on households and businesses. However, the intensity and longer-than-expected crisis requires additional relief measures to support small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which are the backbone of the economy and a primary

source of employment. It is necessary for these businesses to have sufficient funding and liquidity to survive these testing times and retain their workforce.

#### **8. KBank, SCB cut prime lending rates**

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

Kasikornbank (KBank) and Siam Commercial Bank (SCB) cut their prime lending rates by 40 basis points on 9 April after the Bank of Thailand lowered the required contribution made by banks to the Financial Institutions Development Fund (FIDF). The banks' new prime lending rates will take effect on Friday. KBank's minimum lending rate (MLR) will be reduced to 5.60% from 6%, the minimum overdraft rate (MOR) to 6.22% from 6.62% and the minimum retail rate (MRR) to 6.10% from 6.50%, KBank co-president Predee Daochai said in a release

#### **9. Indonesia a bright spot for Thai exports**

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

Prospects for exports to Indonesia remain promising this year after the fellow Asean member temporarily lifted the import licence requirement for garlic and brown onions until May and moved to lower import tariffs on 749 products such as soybeans, food, textiles, corn, shoes and ceramics. Indonesia lifted the import licence requirement for garlic and brown onions on March 19 to counter a domestic shortage. The period runs until May 31 this year, said Auramon Supthaweethum, director-general of the Trade Negotiations Department.

#### **10. FIBO unveils robots for outbreak**

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

The Institute of Field Robotics (FIBO) under King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi has launched the FACO robotic series to care for Covid-19 patients in hospitals, lowering the risk of contracting the coronavirus among healthcare workers. FIBO founder Djitt Laowattana said FACO stands for FIBO against Covid-19 and the series comprises four prototype robots and a system platform that can be deployed at hospital wards to tend to patients.

#### **11. KBank to establish R&D unit for tech**

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

Kasikornbank (KBank) plans to set up a research and development (R&D) unit with a focus on IT to prepare for a changing environment after the pandemic crisis. New knowledge is needed to deal with the new world, particularly in developing competitiveness, chairman emeritus Banthoon Lamsam told reporters after his recent resignation from all management roles and the board of KBank, run by his family for the past 75 years. He offered PTT as an example.

The national energy firm founded Vidyasirimedhi Institute of Science and Technology and Kamnoetvidya Science Academy Project in Rayong, and KBank wants to follow in PTT's footsteps, Mr Banthoon said.