

Thai News Update: 12 May 2020

1. Plans for new Suvarnabhumi, Don Mueang terminals to go ahead

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

Airports of Thailand (AOT) is pressing ahead with plans to boost passenger and flight-handling capacity at Suvarnabhumi and Don Mueang airports, despite the impact from the Covid-19 outbreak, said Anake Teeraviwatchai, AOT's senior executive vice president. The state enterprise is studying several projects, including construction of a new terminal for Suvarnabhumi Airport at a cost of Bt42 billion. The Bt42-billion expansion project is currently being considered by the National Economic and Social Development Council. Also in the pipeline is Phase 3 development of Don Mueang Airport. However, the design of the passenger terminal might have to be adjusted to conform with the new social distancing protocol.

2. Businesses urge further easing of lockdown

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

The private sector is calling on the government to continue easing its lockdown measures to allow other businesses, particularly those related to tourism and supply chains, to restart to curb escalating unemployment. Thanavath Phonvichai, president of the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (UTCC), said the latest survey on business sentiment nationwide has found operators most desire an easing of lockdown measures by the government as soon as possible to prevent any further business interruption. "Tourism and supply chains are the sectors most affected by the virus outbreak, resulting in lower employment," said Mr Thanavath. "Consumer purchasing power has dwindled. We expect the number of unemployed will decrease if businesses are allowed to reopen this month."

3. Office market remains robust

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

Despite work-from-home policies challenging demand, the office market will continue to be robust and attract overseas investment if Thailand can contain the outbreak after reopening, says property consultant Colliers International Thailand. Phattarachai Taweewong, associate director of research and communications, said Thailand will be viewed as safe if the government can cope with the virus outbreak. "If we can control the situation well after reopening, this will attract overseas investment," he said.

4. Centara Osaka toasts construction

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

Centara Hotels & Resorts, a leading hotel operator in Thailand, together with Taisei Corporation and Kanden Realty & Development have broken ground on construction of the 34-storey Centara Grand Hotel Osaka. The ceremony took place recently at the Safety Prayer Festival at Namba Shrine near the new hotel site. According to Japanese tradition, before any new construction can begin, a jichinsai ceremony must be held to purify the ground and seek the blessing of the local gods. Shinto priests led the ceremony, and sake was used as one the main elements, sprinkled across the ground where the new construction is planned. Special sake bottles for each of the three partner companies were produced for the ceremony.

5. Panel formed to select next BOT governor

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

Finance Minister Uttama Savanayana has reportedly given his stamp of approval to a seven-member committee tasked with selecting a new governor of the Bank of Thailand. Among the committee members are former Industry Minister Atchaka Sibunruang, former central bank governor Chaiwat Wiboonsawat and former Finance Ministry permanent secretary Rangsan Sriworasat. The five-year term of current BOT governor Veerathai Santiprabhob will end this September, after he took office on October 1, 2015.

6. GPO develops Favipiravir to treat Covid-19

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

The Government Pharmaceutical Organisation (GPO) developed its version of Favipiravir – one of the drugs used to effectively treat Covid-19 – in mid-March but is expected to take approximately a year before submitting this medicine for registration, said Nuntakan Suwanpidokkul, the director of the GPO's Research and Development Institute. The GPO has a management plan to build a sufficient stock of Favipiravir pills to support the sustainable treatment of patients in the country.

7. Quarantine rooms sought

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

The government is speeding up efforts to secure an additional 7,000 rooms to use as quarantine facilities for Thai citizens coming from abroad. The move was agreed at a meeting between Deputy Defence Minister Chaichan Changmongkol and Defence permanent secretary Nat Intarachoen on Monday. The meeting's goal was to assess how effective the government has been in providing Thai returnees with state quarantine facilities in recent months and what can be done to improve conditions for those expected to come home soon. The Centre for Covid-

19 Situation Administration reported that 9,000 Thais have registered with Thai embassies and consulates to return to the country by month's end.

8. Thailand to unveil list of business, leisure activities allowed to resume

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

Thailand's Center for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) announced on 11 May that it will release a full list of business and leisure activities which will be allowed to resume, as part of the government's second phase lockdown relaxations. The CCSA spokesman Dr Taweessin Visanuyothin said that these few days, the state and private sectors will discuss the pros and cons of the types of businesses and leisure activities should they be allowed to re-open. For the time being, Taweessin said he believed there are some types of retail stores that will be allowed to resume businesses on May 17, the day the second phase begins.

9. Business team from Thailand to explore investment opportunities in UP: Minister

Source: Financial Express ([Link](#))

A delegation of entrepreneurs from Thailand is likely to visit Uttar Pradesh in October to explore the “immense possibilities of investment” in the state, Uttar Pradesh Minister Sidharth Nath Singh said 11 May. After a video-conference with former deputy prime minister of Thailand Korn Dabbaransi, the minister for MSME and export promotion told PTI that he evinced keen interest in setting up food processing clusters in the state. “In October, a delegation of entrepreneurs will come from Thailand to visit UP,” Dabbaransi told Singh when he spoke of the immense possibilities of investment in the state. The interaction is part of the efforts of the Yogi Adityanath government to bring maximum investment in the state and to provide employment opportunities to migrant workers by constantly communicating with ambassadors and entrepreneurs of different countries.

10. Thailand's instant noodle exports soar thanks to COVID-19

Source: Pattaya Mail ([Link](#))

The exports of instant noodles soared in the first quarter of this year, especially in Southeast Asia, thanks to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, according to the Department of Trade Negotiations. Auramon Supthaweethum, director-general of the department, said the pandemic caused people to stay home and thus increasingly demand dried and instant food that could be stored for a long period. Instant noodles were among the products that met present demand because their preparation was quick, their prices were cheap, their flavors were numerous and they were generally available and could be kept for a long time, she said.