

## Thai News Update: 16 February 2021

### **1. First batch of Covid vaccine will arrive on Feb 24: Anutin**

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

The first shipment of China's Sinovac Covid-19 vaccine will arrive in Thailand on February 24, Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul announced on 15 February. He said the first batch of 200,000 doses will leave China on February 20. They are expected to be the first Covid-19 vaccine to arrive in Thailand following a delay in shipments of the AstraZeneca vaccine procured by the Thai government.

### **2. National Single Window project to facilitate sharing of citizens' info among state agencies**

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

The Ministry of Digital Economy and Society (DES) plans to push the "national single window" (NSW) project, with an aim to share citizens' information among government agencies, in a bid to improve operational efficiency and decrease people's expenses in preparing documents. DES Minister Buddhipongse Punnakanta explained that the NSW is a central system, linking the database of each agency.

### **3. Govt to dump seven out-of-date laws**

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

A Government House source said the Cabinet recently approved a draft to repeal some laws that are either not applicable any more or overlap other laws. The Council of State proposed seven laws that can be repealed, namely: 1940 Royal Thai Police Regulation and Operation of Gold Mining Inconsistent with the protection of rights and freedoms of persons prescribed in the Constitution, which specifies methods for land expropriation and does not allow the Agriculture and Cooperatives Ministry power over gold mining as in the past.

### **4. Thailand's GDP contracted 6.1 per cent in 2020 due to Covid-19: NESDC**

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

Thailand's gross domestic products (GDP) shrank 6.1 per cent in 2020 due to widespread impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) said on 15 February. Danucha Pichayanan, secretary-general of NESDC, said at a conference that GDP in the fourth quarter of 2020 rose by 1.3 per cent compared to the previous quarter, but contracted 4.2 per cent year on year. The economy expanded in the fourth quarter as consumption rose, while the government and private sectors continued to expand well.

## **5. Covid-19 restrictions in the US a boon for Thai toy, sports equipment makers**

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

The Department of International Trade Promotion (DITP) is calling on Thai manufacturers of toys and sports equipment to consider expanding to the US market, where demand for these products has been rising since the Covid-19 pandemic. Last year, toy sales in the US rose 16 per cent to \$25.1 billion, with demand rising for merchandise such as skates, skateboards, scooters, dolls and accessories as well as toys for development such as Lego.

## **6. Cabinet approves B50bn loan**

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

The cabinet has approved a 50-billion-baht low-interest loan programme to assist informal workers and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) related to the tourism sector. Since the new wave of the Covid-19 outbreak resulted in certain areas being placed under stringent control, subsequently affecting people's livelihood and businesses, especially those operating in the tourism sector, the cabinet has approved the roll out of additional measures to alleviate debt shouldered by the people and SMEs, said Finance Minister Arkhom Termpittayapaisith. The Government Savings Bank (GSB) and the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives have been approved total loans worth 40 billion baht, with 20 billion disbursed for each bank, to provide support for informal workers affected by the outbreak.

## **7. SPCG looks to ESS development in EEC**

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

SPCG Plc, a pioneer in the area of solar farm development in Thailand, is preparing to conduct a feasibility study on energy storage system (ESS) development in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) as it is looking for new business opportunities to maintain its growth, following an estimate of stable revenues in its solar energy business this year. ESS looks set to become another investment project after the firm last year formed a joint venture with PEA Encom International Co, the clean energy arm of state-run Provincial Electricity Authority, to build a 23-billion-baht solar farm at the EEC's special development zone which will be turned into a low-carbon emission area. SPCG yesterday signed an agreement with PEA Encom International Co to conduct a joint study on ESS, or battery, project.