

## THAI NEWS UPDATE: 17 MAY 2022

### **1. International air travel may return to pre-pandemic levels by 2023**

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

International wheat prices jumped to a record high on 16 May as an export ban by India, the latest country to use trade curbs to counter food inflation, threatened to further squeeze world wheat supply strained by the war in Ukraine. The price, which was already high in the wake of Russia's invasion of major wheat exporter Ukraine, jumped to €435 (\$453) per tonne as the European market opened. Benchmark futures in Chicago rose as much as 5.9 per cent to \$12.475 a bushel, the highest in two months and within about \$1 of the all-time high set just after Russia's invasion. Wheat has contributed to record highs this year for global food prices as measured by the UN's food agency, with Russia's invasion of Ukraine upending the market by halting massive shipments from Ukrainian sea ports.

### **2. EEC Office banking on Japanese investors**

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

The Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) Office is keen to draw Japanese investment in electric vehicles, smart electronics, semiconductors, pharmaceuticals and medical devices, digital, smart farms, the bio-, circular and green (BCG) economic model and smart cities over the next decade. According to Petch Chinabutr, deputy secretary-general of the office, the strategy is based on a memorandum of intent on collaboration on green industry and advanced technological development signed by the EEC Office and the Japan External Trade Organization (Jetro) on Jan 13 this year during a visit to Thailand by the Japanese Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Koichi Hagiuda.

### **3. State preps perks for new economic corridors**

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

The government is set to offer the highest level of incentives for investors in the bio-, circular and green (BCG) economy, innovation and high technology, R&D that increases the value of products, and human resources development to supply four new regional economic corridors. According to Anek Meemongkol, deputy secretary-general of the National Economic and Social Development Council, the new incentives will be determined soon at a Board of Investment (BoI) meeting chaired by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha. Mr Anek said the four special economic corridors should focus on new investment categories that can increase the value of farm products that conform to the government's policy to promote the BCG economy.

#### **4. TAT eager to increase domestic tourism market in H1**

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

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) plans to spur 80 million domestic trips in the first half this year as the downward trend in new Covid infections helps rebuild local travel sentiment. "The TAT aims to tally 40-50 million domestic trips in the second quarter, which will help secure 80 million trips in the first six months and keep the goal for the whole year of 160 million trips in sight," said Thapanee Kiatphaibool, TAT deputy governor for domestic marketing. According to the Tourism and Sports Ministry, local tourists made 28.8 million trips during the first quarter, down 67.5% year-on-year, with tourism revenue plunging 63.8% to 144 billion baht.

#### **5. Saudi Arabia gives top priority to Thailand over fertiliser supplies**

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

Saudi Arabia agreed to sell fertiliser to Thailand to help ease the shortages caused by the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, Thai Chamber of Commerce (TCC) chairman Sanan Angubolkol said on 16 May. Sanan is part of a business delegation led by Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai visiting Saudi Arabia to pursue business opportunities. The TCC chief said Don urged Saudi Investment Minister Khalid Al-Falih to consider selling fertiliser to Thailand at a meeting in Riyadh on Sunday. Al-Falih said that though many countries have made similar requests, Saudi Arabia prioritises its ties with Thailand and that he has instructed suppliers to meet the delegation on 17 May.

