

Thai News Update: 19 June 2020

1. Phuket plans ambitious project to emerge as international medical hub

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

Phuket has proposed an international medical services project on 140 rai (224,000 square metres) of land to make the province a medical hub. A Phuket official suggested on Thursday that "developing an international medical and public health services centre would ensure safety and value-added tourism". The proposed project will tap state property besides the Tha Chat Chai Police Station in Thalang district for a total of around 140 rai, some 16-17 kilometres from the airport. The idea was conceived due to the Covid-19 outbreak which has severely damaged tourism. Locals are seeing hardly any recovery even after the government has lifted all strict measures, as tourists will practise social distancing until a vaccine is found.

2. BBS to sign Bt290bn contract for U-Tapao megaproject on Friday

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

The government will on Friday (June 19) sign a contract worth Bt290 billion with U-Tapao International Aviation Co for the development of U-Tapao Airport and Eastern Aviation City. The move comes after the Cabinet endorsed the results of bidding for the project, won on June 2 by BBS Joint Venture Group. BBS has established the Utapao Company International Aviation Co Ltd to carry out the development. The airport development scheme is one of five mega-projects in the government's flagship Eastern Economic Corridor infrastructure plan. The EEC Office (EECO) will sign the joint investment agreement in a ceremony overseen by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha at Government House.

3. Thailand on road to becoming cashless society: Visa study

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

Almost eight in 10 Thais (79 per cent) are using contactless payments more often than they did two years ago, according to a study released by Visa on Thursday (June 18). The study, which tracks consumer payments habits across Southeast Asia, also revealed three in four Thai respondents who are not using contactless payments on 18 June, are interested in doing so in the future. Suripong Tantiyanon, country manager for Visa Thailand, said: "It is heartening to see Thai consumers embracing new payment technologies, especially the use of contactless cards for payments."

4. Covid-19 crisis ‘brought opportunities for PTTEP’

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

The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in opportunities of merger and acquisition for PTT Exploration and Production (PTTEP), its president Phongsthorn Thavisin said. He said the pandemic has put some petroleum companies in financial difficulties that they are considering selling their businesses. Meanwhile, he added that PTTEP aims to boost its production ratio of natural gas to 80 per cent from the current 70 per cent and that of oil down to 20 per cent from 30 per cent. This is in line with the global trend of rising demands for natural gas.

5. Kingdom still attractive to foreign investors thanks to top-notch logistics, technology, agriculture

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

Thailand, especially the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), will recover quickly from the Covid-19 crisis because the country can draw investment from its readiness in logistics infrastructure, technology, medical industry as well as capacity to grow food, the EEC Office said. Lasamon Atthapis, secretary general of the EEC Office, said investment in the corridor will recover within the next two to three years. “Within three years, total investment should climb to the Bt300 million target, thanks to Thailand’s capacity to draw foreign investors and their interest in shifting manufacturing bases owing to the US-China conflict and the virus situation,” she said.

6. Baht moves in line with regional currencies

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

The baht opened at 31.09 to the US dollar on Friday morning (June 19), strengthening from its previous close of 31.11. The Thai currency is expected to move between 31.00 and 31.20, said Jitipol Puksamatanan, head of Markets Strategy at SCB Securities. The financial markets on Thursday night moved in a narrow range. The S&P 500 rose by 0.1 per cent, while US bond yields fell to 0.71 per cent, down 3.3 basis points. However, price of WTI crude oil increased by 2.5 per cent to \$38 per barrel, from investors’ expectation that oil producers will lower production as promised.

7. Gold Line will be ‘ready in October as scheduled’

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

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration’s subsidiary Krungthep Thanakom said on Thursday (June 18) that the Gold Line monorail will be ready to operate in October as scheduled. After taking delivery of one of the trains for the line, KT director Manit

Techapichok said the monorail is 89 per cent completed and should be ready for commuters by October. “Once the Covid-19 crisis is resolved, the work will be completed,” he added. The monorail covers three stations – Krung Thonburi, Charoen Nakhon and Khlong San – and the fare charged will be Bt15 throughout. It is believed that more than 40,000 commuters will use the rail daily.

8. Govt considers Bt100 billion in subsidies for rice farmers

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

The National Rice Policy Committee has earmarked about Bt100 billion to provide subsidies for rice farmers for the 2020-2021 crop year. Ratchada Thanadirek, deputy government spokesperson, said the committee chaired by PM Prayut Chan-o-cha, agreed in principle to provide subsidies to rice farmers from September 1 to May 31, 2021. Initially the government will launch the rice-production enhancement project, under which each farming family will be granted Bt1,000 per rai, limited at 20 rai. About 4 million families will get financial aid worth a total of Bt56 billion. This subsidy has been increased from last year’s Bt500 per rai offer, she told the press after the meeting on Thursday (June 18).

9. Central Pattana embarks plan to rebuild economy

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

Thailand’s no. 1 developer to lead new initiatives that boost consumer sentiment and springboard business recovery Central Pattana Plc. (CPN), Thailand’s leader in shopping centre and property development under brands centralwOrld, CentralPlaza, CentralFestival, Central Phuket, and Central Village kicks off its strategic recovery plan to help rebuild economy after the COVID-19 situation has been improving, while still reinforcing social distancing measures to keep people safe. To support government’s policy, it aims to boost domestic purchasing power as well as create jobs and income distribution locally to stimulate the overall economy. The company recently launched massive discount campaigns throughout June and July 2020, which will stimulate spending and at the same time, help ease the public’s cost of living.

10. Airlines in Thailand to restart international flights with business travelers and investors

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

To prepare for the reopening of international flights, the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand or CAAT invited all airlines with international flight services, to reach a mutual understanding about observing the new public health measures issued by The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Representatives of 14 airlines that have international

routes attended the meeting, and were informed by the CAAT committee of guideline to cope with the COVID-19 risk in the airline business. Many in-flight services have to be practiced with hygiene concerns. For example, social distancing, food and beverage services during the flight, body temperature taking, passengers having to wear masks, and flight attendants having to wear gloves and a mask when providing services. These practices will also be implemented on domestic flights

11. Thai investors granted ownership of firms in Japan

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

Thai investors can take complete ownership of service businesses in Japan after the recent ratification of the first protocol to amend the Asean-Japan Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Partnership (AJCEP). Deputy Commerce Minister Weerasak Wangsuphakijkosol said on Thursday that Japan on June 12 ratified the first protocol to amend the AJCEP, which extends the agreement applied since late 2008 to cover trade in services, investment and the movement of citizens, in addition to market access for goods. The first protocol will become effective on Aug 1 this year. Mr Weerasak said Japan agreed to open trade in services because Thailand is interested in such businesses and believes they have potential.