

## THAI NEWS UPDATE: 19 MAY 2022

### **1. Ministry seeks green light for entertainment venues to reopen**

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

The Public Health Ministry will ask the Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) on 20 May to allow entertainment venues located in the green zone to open, a source said on 18 May. The Public Health Ministry held a meeting on Tuesday for an update on prevention measures, as the Covid-19 situation in Thailand is getting better, including changing provinces' colour zones. According to the source, the ministry will propose to the CCSA to add more provinces to the green zone, which will allow entertainment venues to open. However, the ministry has not decided which provinces and how many provinces will be added to the green zone. Meanwhile, eight associations have sent a proposal to the government to help their businesses recover and improve their competitive potential in tourism.

### **2. ASEAN-US summit: Long on talk, short on substance**

**Source: Thai PBS ([Link](#))**

Prime Minister Hun Sen of Cambodia, as the chair of ASEAN, however, put a positive spin on the outcome. In his social media post, he said that both sides had agreed to upgrade their relations to a 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership', the same level as the regional grouping's ties with China and Australia, achieved last year. While the joint statement indicated that a meaningful, substantive and mutually beneficial partnership would be formally established during the 10th ASEAN-US Summit in Cambodia in November this year, many ASEAN members had no clue on how to achieve that in real terms.

### **3. Joining the EV revolution in Asean**

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

Governments in Southeast Asia are floating very ambitious plans to capture a share of the electric vehicle market. And rightfully so. As the world prepares for carbon neutrality, the automotive industry is embarking on a fundamental transformation. At the COP26 summit in November, various nations and leading car manufacturers pledged to phase out fossil fuel-powered vehicles by or before 2040. In Southeast Asia, the aim is clearly to create opportunities for the EV industry to serve both the export and domestic markets.

#### **4. CP, Gunkul to launch CBD products**

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

Charoen Pokphand Foods (CPF) and Charoen Pokphand Produce (CPP), both under the umbrella of agribusiness and food conglomerate CP Group, have teamed up with Gunkul Engineering, a renewable energy developer and construction company, to develop cannabidiol-infused food and beverage products. The three companies yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding on the integrated development of the products that offer full traceability and are intended to satisfy a growing demand from health-conscious consumers. According to Prasit Boondoungprasert, CPF's chief executive, as an integrated food producer the company is interested in hemp as a new economic crop that can be turned into value-added food and beverages.

#### **5. 'World's biggest free trade area' to be meeting's focus**

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

Commerce Minister Jurin Laksanawisit will chair four days of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) meetings that have as part of their agenda the ambitious goal of creating the world's biggest free trade area. Mr Jurin said on Wednesday he inspected preparations for the Apec Ministers Responsible for Trade Meeting 2022 being held in Bangkok from Thursday until Sunday. The trade meeting will be attended by members of 21 economic areas. The session forms an integral part of the Apec summit to be held in November. Mr Jurin said the meeting agenda will focus on a plan to transition Apec into the so-called Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP) by 2040.