

Daily Thai News Updates: 13 September 2017

1. S44 set to discard TM.6 cards for Thai travelers

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

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha will exercise Section 44 under the interim charter to revoke an age-old regulation that requires Thai citizens to fill in immigration cards, a practice that has been partly blamed for causing long queues at airport immigration lines. While both arriving and departing Thai nationals will no longer be required to fill in the cards, known as Tor Mor 6, or TM 6, foreigners coming to the country will still have to fill in the documents until new immigration cards are launched, government spokesman Sansern Kaewkamnerd said Tuesday after a meeting of the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO), chaired by Gen Prayut. The new cards, which will require foreigners to provide only necessary information wanted by state agencies, have been approved by the cabinet.

2. Cabinet approves new rates for sin taxes

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

The cabinet yesterday gave the green light on new excise rates for so-called sin taxes that are expected to be announced in the Royal Gazette on Friday, according to Excise Department's director-general, who insisted on no additional burden for business operators and consumers. Somchai Poolsavasdi said that the Cabinet agreed on a draft of the ministerial regulation for the excise rates on liquor, cigarettes and cards. The move was in line with the Excise Act, B.E. 2560 (2017) which will come into force on Saturday, on expectation for an announcement in the Royal Gazette a day earlier...Somchai insisted that the new excise rates will not add to the burden on business operators and consumers, and coordinating efforts were being made relating the hoarding of goods...Taxing will be grouped into three categories: luxury products; an environmentally affected group; and sin products that damage people's health, he said. A new excise will be levied on the degrees of sweetness...The new excise bill will not increase the burden to the business operators but boost transparency, fairness and appropriateness, the source said.

3. APP allows public to access info on govt spending

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

New mobile application ‘Where Did the Tax Go?’ was introduced yesterday at the international exhibition “Digital Thailand Big Bang 2014”, intended for the public to track government spending and procurement. Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, while visiting the public relations booth of the application, called for the public to download and try using the app for information about the government’s income and expenditure. The application is in conformity with the information act which allows the public to access government information in order to curb corruption. It also has a channel for users to report graft. Prayut said that the government was sincere in its attempt to combat graft. The most important thing was that people needed to know how the taxes are spent, he said.

4. Thai trips strokes interest of investors, says Japan Minister

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

Thailand will remain a key player for Japanese investors with more investment likely to flow into the country in the near future, Hiroshige Seko, Japan's Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry says. "Thailand has emerged as the most important supply chain for many Japanese industries such as automobiles and this is evident from the fact that today Thailand is producing a similar number of vehicles as Japan," Mr Seko. Mr Seko, who is in Thailand with representatives from as many as 570 Japanese firms on a three-day visit at the invitation of Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak and his economic team, said most investors who have joined the delegation have shown a great deal of interest in investing in Thailand.

5. Customs claims B4bn in luxury car duties

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

The Customs Department will claim 4.2 billion baht in import duties for 250 luxury cars from importers as part of its effort to crack down on tax evasion. The 250 cars are among 300 luxury vehicles seized by the Department of Special Investigation (DSI) and examined by the Customs Department to determine if they were taxed correctly, said Chaiyut Kumkun , the department's spokesman. After the investigation, the department will require the importers to pay import duties worth 4.2 billion baht, he said. The DSI has been rounding up imported supercars in recent months to verify their documents and summoned a number of luxury car importers to acknowledge charges of falsely declaring import prices to avoid tax payments.

6. Two step forward as smart city pioneers

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

Bang Saen and Hat Yai will be among the pioneers centres in Thailand for the development of “smart city” initiatives that promote the country’s advancement in strategic areas such as health and tourism, the environment and the establishment of trading hubs. The push into smart cities fits with the government’s Thailand 4.0 economic model that is aimed at promoting innovation and creative value as major economic drivers. Narongchai Khunpluem, mayor of the Saensuk municipality that manages Bang Saen in Chon Buri province, said that the city had set a vision to become a trailblazer in the smart city programme, with leadership in security, tourism, health and energy. According to Narongchai, there are about 20,000 households with 45,000 people in Bang Saen, with 6,000 – or 15 per cent of the total – aged 60 or above. The city also attracts 1.8 million tourists every year, but only less than 5 per cent are foreigners, mainly from Asia and Europe.

7. Schools get smart city grants

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

The government has offered 250 million baht to the Council of University Presidents of Thailand for local research related to smart cities as part of Thailand 4.0. At least 17 of more than 30 universities have applied for research projects to serve smart city initiatives, said Akkarit Sangpetch, project manager of smart startup development, which is being run via the Smart City Innovation Hub programme under the Council of University Presidents. The project aims to encourage R&D by offering grants to universities that carry out work at smart city projects and promote local startups.

8. Social media team to promote Thai tourism

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

A group of Thai bloggers are teaming up with top Chinese social media influencers to promote tourism among free and independent travellers from China to Thailand. The partnership aims to change the tourist’s perception of Thailand as a mass market to a quality leisure destination in the wake of the collaborative efforts by the two governments to crack down on zero dollar and cheap packages from China since late 2015. Eight Thai travel bloggers and four Chinese online influencers will work together to strengthen two-way travel between Thailand and China, said Sathita Sorassa, president of Media and Blogger Club Thailand.