

Thai News Update: 14 August 2020

1. Plan unveiled for Bt31.9bn Ayutthaya rail hub

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

Public-private partnerships will invest Bt31.9 billion to develop Ayutthaya as a national high-speed rail hub, according to the Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning. The Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) project will be constructed around Ayutthaya railway station to promote the province as an international destination for culture and history. The TOD is expected to connect with high-speed train lines linking Bangkok with the North and with Nakhon Ratchasima in the Northeast. Roengsak Thongsom, director of the office's Bureau of Transport and Traffic System Development, said Ayutthaya is one of three cities chosen for the TOD project.

2. AIS, U-tapao team for smart airport

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

Advanced Info Service (AIS), the country's largest mobile operator by subscribers, has partnered with U-tapao airport to support digital infrastructure for a 5G network, WiFi 6 and other tech solutions in a bid to turn it into a smart airport. U-tapao airport is located in the Eastern Economic Corridor, one of the government's strategic priorities under the Thailand 4.0 policy. AIS chief executive Somchai Lertsutiwong said 5G tech deployment and digital solutions could be a way to shore up the economy in the wake of the pandemic. The digital infrastructure, 5G tech and WiFi 6 are expected to support new digital solutions, he said.

3. BMW lines up 25 electric models

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

German automaker BMW Group announced it plans to offer 25 electrified models by 2023 as part of its commitment to fight climate change and air pollution, while keeping the internal combustion engine as the method for powering hybrid vehicles. BMW has seen EV sales grow at an average rate of 30% per year. Its total number of EVs on the road is expected to reach 1 million by the end of 2021 and 7 million by 2030. By 2030, BMW expects EV sales to represent half of its total sales in European markets. "We are not giving up on the internal combustion engine, but will invest heavily in electric moving forward," Wieland Bruch, corporate communications manager for electromobility, said at a virtual press conference last week.

4. Siam Future allocates B2.61bn for retail projects

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

SET-listed Siam Future Development is splashing a combined 2.61 billion baht to develop new retail projects over the next few years. Sajjapong Wongaroon, the company's senior assistant vice-president, said the first batch worth 32 million baht was spent renovating Market Place community mall in Nawamin. The work was completed this month. Some 1.23 billion baht is being used to build a U-turn bridge, food park and car park expansion at the Megabangna shopping centre. The U-turn bridge and food park are scheduled for completion next month, while the car park is to open in the first quarter of next year.

5. Prayut divvies up responsibilities among his six deputies

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

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha on Thursday (August 13) signed an order assigning responsibilities for all six deputy prime ministers, the government's deputy spokesperson Traisulee Traisoranakul said. According to Prayut's orders, newly appointed Deputy PM and Energy Minister Supattanapong Punmeechaow will also look after the Finance Ministry, Board of Investment and the National Economic and Social Development Council, while incumbent Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai, who has just been named deputy PM, will also oversee the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation.

6. New centre to rehabilitate economy

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

The cabinet on 13 August gave the green light to establish a centre to handle the country's economic rehabilitation from the coronavirus crisis. The economic situation administration centre, tasked with working in the same manner as the Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration, will be chaired by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha. The centre will comprise 22 committees with representation from all economic ministers, the Interior and Labour ministries, the Bank of Thailand's governor and the heads of three private-sector organisations. The secretary-general of the National Economic and Social Development Council will be the centre's secretary.

7. CPF net profit soars amid surge in demand for pork

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

Charoen Pokphand Foods (CPF) reported a sharp 45 per cent jump in net profit in the first half of 2020 compared to 2019 due to the rising demand for pork amid African Swine Fever (ASF) and the company's growing aquatic business. The company's net profit totalled

Bt12.13 billion. “In the first six months of 2020, CPF has generated Bt281.9 billion revenue from sales, which is 9 per cent higher from the same period last year,” CPF chief executive officer Prasit Boondoungprasert said. “Sales revenue from exports to 16 countries expanded 12 per cent year on year, while domestic sales grew 2 per cent. International sales are responsible for 69 per cent of the company’s total revenue while 31 per cent are from domestic market.”

8. Prayut lays out 5 directions for new Cabinet

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

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha on 13 August assigned five policy directions to his new Cabinet. In a televised address, he said the Cabinet’s first priority was to remedy suffering caused by the Covid-19 fallout, especially among small and medium-sized enterprises. It must also seek ways to solve the problems in a sustainable way, he added. Third, the government must offer incentives to businesses to retain employees, and fourth, it must devise plans to help new graduates find employment. Finally, ministers must carry out all these plans with total transparency and listen to opinions from all stakeholders, he said.

9. Prayut to chair first meeting of economic management panel on Aug 19

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

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha will chair the first meeting of a new panel tasked with managing the economy amid the virus crisis on August 19, said Thai Chamber of Commerce chairman Kalin Sarasin. The opening meeting will evaluate the economic situation, he said. The committee will hear private sector proposals that the government urgently launch measures to bridge the economic gap, solve unemployment, help small business operators survive the outbreak and boost domestic tourism.