

## Thai News Update: 14 July 2020

### **1. OVEC aims to develop highly skilled workforce for EEC in five years**

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

Narong Paewpolsong, secretary-general of the Office of Vocational Education Commission (OVEC), on Monday (July 13) released guidelines on the production of vocational personnel to support investment in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), in a bid to attract investment in industries that require skilled personnel. According to OVEC, the EEC will in five years require some 475,000 workers, of which 253,000 should have a vocational education, 213,000 should hold at least a bachelor's degree, while the rest will need to have a master's or doctorate.

### **2. Jomtien Beach being widened under Bt1.1bn project**

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

Jomtien Beach in Pattaya is being widened under a Bt1.1-billion project to replenish a vast expanse of sand eroded over the years by the sea. The Marine Department aims to expand around 7 kilometres of beach to a width of 35-50 metres in order to preserve the sands as a tourist attraction in the resort city. A budget of Bt1.16 billion will be spent on the project's two phases, said Marine Department director general Wittaya Yamuang. Under the first phase, 640,000 cubic metres of sand will be taken from the seabed near Koh Larn to widen about 5.5 kilometres of Jomtien Beach.

### **3. Natural gas business restructuring plan set to be submitted for approval**

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

The Energy Policy and Planning Office (EPPO) has finished drawing up a plan to restructure the natural gas business and will soon present it for approval to the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC), which is chaired by Energy Minister Sonthirat Sonthijirawong, an Energy Ministry news source said. The source said the EPPO has proposed two approaches in restructuring the natural gas business, with the first being open, free competition.

### **4. Bt100 billion set aside to help small tourism operators hit by Covid-19**

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

The Government Savings Bank (GSB) has earmarked Bt100 billion for soft loans to small and medium enterprises in the tourism sector, Finance Minister Uttama Savanayana said. This move is in line with Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak's policy that banks offer more loans to small as well as new businesses that have been affected by the Covid-19

outbreak. This amount will be lent to commercial banks at an annual interest rate of 0.01 per cent, so they can lend the money to SMEs at no more than 2 per cent per year.

### **5. Energy Ministry revises plan on developing community power plants**

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

The Energy Ministry has said it will present a revised version of the 2018 Power Development Plan to the Cabinet on Tuesday (July 14), which if approved, will allow it to go ahead with calling bids to set up grassroots community power plants. The revised version of the plan now incorporates the amount of electricity to be generated by these plants totalling 1,933 megawatts from 2020 to 2024. Last December, the National Power Policy Committee had approved the project in the form of very small power plant, with a capacity not exceeding 10MW.

### **6. CRG banks on cloud kitchens**

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

Central Restaurants Group Co (CRG), one of the country's leading quick-service restaurant chains, is ramping up its cloud kitchens, facilities built to produce food and drink specifically for delivery. CRG plans to spend 500 million baht to open 100 cloud kitchens across the country in five years. President Nath Vongpanich said it is embarking on the e-commerce market, opening full delivery service. The new business model will respond to consumer trends and increase chances to access a new target group in shifting to the online platform.

### **7. Third-quarter investment strategy**

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

As we enter the second half of 2020, Covid-19 remains a serious challenge worldwide, with more than 12.3 million cases and deaths exceeding 550,000. Concern is now centred on acceleration in new infections, which are now reaching more than 200,000 per day. Despite the rise in new cases, daily death rates are declining. We are also encouraged that medical services worldwide are getting a better handle on the virus and that infected patients tend to be younger, meaning they are typically better able to manage the symptoms and recover. But the clouds have yet to part; Brazil and India continue to report large increases in new infections and now rank second and third, respectively, in total cases. The US leads the world with over 3.1 million and 133,000 deaths.

## **8. Thailand plans to improve, upgrade airports**

**Source: Xinhua Net ([Link](#))**

Thailand is planning to make improvements and upgrades of airports in some provinces, given a 5.8 billion baht (about 185.54 million U.S. dollars) funding, confirmed a senior government official on 13 July. Department of Airports Director General Thawee Kesisamang said his agency has planned to improve and upgrade the airports in several southern and northeastern provinces with the 185-million-U.S.-dollar budget allocated for the fiscal year 2021. The planned improvement and upgrade of the provincial airports are to accommodate international flights to and from southern China, the Middle East and Europe, particularly those with wide-body aircraft such as Airbus A330 and Boeing 787, Thawee said.