

Thai News Update: 19 August 2020

1. Thailand's Finance Ministry to roll out ฿114 billion in soft loans to assist SMEs

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

The Cabinet approved the Finance Ministry's proposal on 18 August to roll out about 114 billion baht in soft loans and credit guarantees, to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as members of the public, to weather the current economic crisis. Mr. Lavaron Sangsnit, Director of the Fiscal Policy Office and spokesman for the Finance Ministry, said the Ministry realizes that there are still many SMEs who do not have access to sources of financing, despite the fact that the Government has launched several stimulus packages to help businesses and industries affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. He said the Finance Ministry decided on a new stimulus package to assist SMEs, which are yet to receive help from the government, namely general SMEs, SMEs in the tourism business, smaller SMEs and the general public.

2. Cambodia offers great opportunities for Thai bubble tea, coffee business

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

The Department of International Trade Promotion (DITP) is advising Thai businesses to invest in coffee and milk tea products in Cambodia, as it already has more than 800 coffeeshops nationwide and is showing good potential for more. "Thai brands like Amazon, Black Canyon, True Coffee, Inthanin, Arabitia, Doi Chang, Doi Lor and Chao Doi have become very popular, with Thai coffeeshops holding more than 45 per cent market share in Cambodia. Amazon is the biggest player after having opened 140 branches nationwide."

3. Energy Ministry plans a future with electric vehicles

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

The Energy Ministry plans to have up to 1.2 million electric vehicles plying the roads by 2030 and is laying the foundation for infrastructure and battery development. Wattanapong Kurovat, chief of the Energy Policy and Planning Office, said the ministry was sticking by its goal of 1.2 million EV cars by 2030 as other facilities such as charging stations, electric system and EV car technology were being developed including plans on reducing energy consumption. He said the office was also studying the option of EV users selling extra energy from their batteries to the national power grid, which will help strengthen the country's electricity security.

4. New job opportunity for the physically challenged

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

The Department of Airports is offering people with physical challenges a chance to become civil servants by offering jobs in logistics and accountancy departments. It has announced that five positions are available in the two departments and applications will be accepted from August 24 to September 2. Two positions are open for public relations officers in the logistics department and three in the accountancy department. Salary on offer for all five posts is Bt13,800 per month.

5. State of emergency likely to be extended

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

A sub-committee of the Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration has proposed the state of emergency be extended until the end of September to allow continued compulsory quarantining of people arriving from abroad. Deputy army chief Gen Nathapol Nakpanit, head of the CCSA panel, said on Wednesday the executive decree on public administration in emergency situations should be continued after it expires on Aug 31. It was needed to ensure people arriving from other countries were quarantined and to quickly mobilise organisations to respond to any fresh Covid-19 outbreak.

6. Room for improvement in Thai digital quality of life

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

Thailand ranks 63rd out of 85 countries in the digital quality of life (DQL) index based on research by privacy protection company Surfshark, trailing Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam in Asean. The research assesses internet quality, affordability, e-security, online government services and e-infrastructure as key elements. Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam rank 12th, 41st and 54th, respectively. Meanwhile, Thailand remains ahead of the Philippines (66th) and Indonesia (71st). According to Surfshark, Thailand's highest index score is in internet quality. In this category, the nation ranks 47th, following Singapore but "outperforming" various Asean countries such as Malaysia (48th), Vietnam (54th), Indonesia (76th) and the Philippines (84th).

7. Economy A-team set to brainstorm

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

Plans to stimulate domestic consumption and private investment, curb rising unemployment and speed public investment are to be tabled for consultation at Wednesday's first meeting of

the newly established economic situation administration centre. The cabinet last Thursday gave the green light to establish a centre to handle the nation'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 heads of three private-sector organisations.

8. Hotels want expats to get stimulus perks

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

The newly elected president of the Thai Hotels Association has asked the government to include expatriates in the second phase of tourism stimulus, saying those who pay tax should receive equal rights. Marisa Sukosol Nunbhakdi said the stimulus campaign for locals has run since July 18, but the slow response is a sign of weak domestic consumption as locals opt for stringent saving amid the economic slowdown. Mrs Marisa suggested the government focus on another potential target that could help drive the domestic economy, namely expatriates in Thailand, who could be included in the second phase of the stimulus campaign. "We need to treat expatriates who live and pay tax here the same way we treat locals," she said.