

THAI NEWS UPDATE: 19 AUGUST 2021

1. Fund approved despite 'blank cheque' fears

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

The House of Representatives on 18 August voted to approve 587 billion baht of spending in the next fiscal year's central fund despite some lawmakers' doubts over accountable spending. The fund, designed for prompt disbursements through deregulation, has been criticised by the opposition as almost impervious to checks. The MPs gave the central fund the all-clear by a vote of 326 to 52. The fund was expanded from 571 billion baht -- governed by Section 6 of the 3.1-trillion-baht budget expenditure bill -- after 16 billion baht, saved from trimming budget allocations to various ministries during the budget scrutiny stage, was added to it.

2. Chiang Mai's best-laid reopening plans

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

With the high season less than two months away, Chiang Mai is poised to reopen to international tourists in October but is taking a different approach to the Phuket sandbox, with tourists required to travel through sealed routes via package tours. While Phuket opened to independent tourists as the island achieved vaccination rates of more than 70%, like most provinces Chiang Mai is still waiting for its Covid-19 vaccine allotment. As of Aug 9, four districts set as pilot destinations in the province were short of 104,749 required doses. Mueang, Mae Rim, Mae Taeng and Doi Tao have vaccinated 50%, 34.7%, 24% and 29%, respectively, of their residents.

3. TAT Spread Happiness and Built Confidence for Tourists and Communities

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

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) launched the Happy Paradise Campaign to present tourism products and services, bringing impressions and new experiences to tourists in the Phuket Sandbox programme through the Happy Paradise Campaign while supporting the local communities and local culture. The reopening program of the pilot provinces to welcome back international visitors started with the Phuket Sandbox programme on the past July 1, 2021. To July 31, 2021, there are about 14,000 tourists in the Phuket Sandbox programme which generates more than 829-million-baht income.

4. Arapat Sangkharat unveils investment vision for Thailand

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

Maybank Kim Eng's incoming leader reveals big plans for new era. ybank Kim Eng Securities (Thailand) is a familiar name among Thai investors, having held the number one market

share for 16 consecutive years from 2002-2017. The leading securities company now enters a new era under the leadership of Arapat Sangkharat, deputy chief executive officer, who was appointed Officer in Charge on July 1. Arapat joined the company on August 17, 2020, as deputy chief executive officer and regional head of transformation of Maybank Kim Eng Group. He arrived with more than 20 years of experience in the banking business at leading companies both domestic and international, including Siam Commercial Bank, BNY Mellon, American Express and Citigroup.