

THAI NEWS UPDATE: 20 AUGUST 2021

1. Anutin promises all expats will get jabbed soon

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

Over 300,000 expats living in Bangkok have received at least one Covid-19 shot, Public Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said on 19 August. He made this remark after discussing the subject with Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai. Anutin said government agencies have been cooperating with embassies to set up vaccination appointments for expats at several venues, including MedPark, Vimut and Bangrak hospitals as well as at the Central Vaccination Centre at the Bang Sue Grand Station. He said the government will also cooperate with the Department of Consular Affairs to cover expats living in other parts of the country.

2. Central bank to test-drive digital currency next year

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

The Bank of Thailand (BOT) plans to develop and test its Retail Central Bank Digital Currency (Retail CBDC) in a real-life environment in the second quarter of 2022. The pilot test will initially be conducted on a limited group under the BOT before it is expanded to the public, retail stores, banks and non-banking facilities, said Vachira Arromdee, assistant governor of BOT's Financial Markets Operations Group. BOT also released a study on the implications of Retail CBDC on the Thai financial sector as well as results of a public survey on the development of the currency. This study was based on "The Way Forward for Retail Central Bank Digital Currency in Thailand" published on April 2 this year.

3. PTTEP donates Robots to End-to-End field hospital in the fight against COVID-19

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

PTTEP stands strong with Thai people. The company has supported innovations and earmarked over 63 million Baht to hospitals, educational institutions and various organizations in the fight against COVID-19. PTT Exploration and Production Public Company Limited (PTTEP) donated 10 CARA Robots, to assist medical personnel in delivering medical and food supplies, an Xterlizer UV Disinfection Robot and additional funds to support PTT Group's End-to-End field hospital. The CARA and the Xterlizer are jointly developed by AI and Robotics Ventures Co., Ltd. (ARV), a subsidiary of PTTEP, and its partners to facilitate medical personnel and reduce the risk of infection.

4. U-tapao projects aim to prop up economy

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

The government has high hopes for the new aviation fuel service systems at U-tapao airport and the Eastern Aviation City development projects, expecting them to play a part in restoring Thailand's pandemic-hit economy. Speaking on Thursday after presiding over the virtual signing ceremony of an agreement to lease state property controlled by the Finance Ministry to Global Aero Associates Co (GAA), Deputy Prime Minister Supattanapong Punmeechaow said the project is an important step in developing the government's flagship Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) and improving investor confidence in the area. The EEC is expected to help lead an economic revival in the country. Established on Aug 15 to operate, manage and provide aviation fuel service systems at U-tapao airport and other related businesses, GAA has registered capital of 600 million baht. Bangkok Aviation Fuel Services Plc (BAFS) and PTT Oil and Retail Business Plc (OR) own 55% and 45%, respectively.

5. CP All eyes 700 7-Eleven openings despite lockdown curbs

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

CP All Plc, the operator of 7-Eleven convenience stores, remains committed to adding around 700 new stores this year with projected capital expenditure of 11.5-12 billion baht, despite the ongoing negative impacts of pandemic restrictions. Of the total spending, store expansion is estimated to cost around 3.8-4 billion baht, with store renovation making up 2.4-2.5 billion baht. Investment in new projects, subsidiaries and distribution centres is estimated at 4-4.1 billion baht, while fixed assets and IT systems are projected at 1.3-1.4 billion, according to the company's statement to the Stock Exchange of Thailand.

6. Robinhood unveils online travel agent

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

The food delivery platform Robinhood is expanding into tourism with a new one-stop online travel agent (OTA) called Robinhood Travel that boasts a zero gross profit policy, like its initial app. Srihanath Lamsam, managing director of Purple Ventures, said the new app slated for January eliminates commission fees for hoteliers, the same concept as its food delivery app. Purple Ventures is a subsidiary of Siam Commercial Bank (SCB) and the operator of Robinhood, which has 2 million users in Bangkok, 130,000 restaurants and 26,000 delivery drivers.