

THAI NEWS UPDATE: 20 JULY 2021

1. Thai durian producers urge rail link with China to tap soaring demand

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

The Thai Durian Association has urged the government to ease the bottleneck that's strangling durian exports by linking Thailand's rail network with the Laos-China railway. et for completion in 2024, the Laos-China railway offers a potential route for durian shipments to China, where demand for the Thai fruit is soaring. However, association chairman Phanusak Saiphanich said there is currently no connection between the Thai rail network and the Laos-China link. He urged the government to reach an agreement with Laos on linking the rail routes. Thailand currently ships durians to China via sea and road. Transportation by ship takes longer and places the products at more risk of spoilage. However, ships are a cheaper transportation method than trucks.

2. NHSO earmarks over THB1 billion for shipment of rapid test kits

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

In a meeting on Monday, the National Health Security Office (NHSO) earmarked 1.014 billion for the purchase of rapid antigen test kits to help uncover more Covid-19 cases nationwide. These test kits are expected to be distributed to healthcare units nationwide in the next two months. Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, who presided over the NHSO meeting, said these kits will also be distributed among local and migrant workers in a bid to contain the intensifying Covid-19 situation in the country.

3. PTT Group to scale battery production

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

National oil and gas conglomerate PTT Group is aiming to scale its battery production capacity to a gigawatt-hour level after opening a factory in Rayong, the first semi-solid battery production facility in Southeast Asia. PTT runs the battery business through its power generation arm, Global Power Synergy Plc (GPSC), which on Monday held an opening ceremony online, presided over by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha. The 1.1-billion-baht factory, located in the Map Ta Phut area, currently has a capacity of 30-megawatt hours. It will produce batteries, named "G Cell", to serve electric vehicles (EVs) like tuk-tuks, buses and motorcycles used for the delivery of goods, said Worawat Pitayasiri, GPSC president and chief executive.

4. CESA to receive 7+7 island extension plan on Thursday

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

Sandbox areas remain unfazed by the removal of Thailand from the European Union's (EU) white list as tourists still don't have to quarantine upon return. Meanwhile, travellers can island-hop after a 7-day stay in Phuket as the plan is expected to begin on Aug 1, says the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). Siripakorn Cheawsamoot, TAT deputy governor for Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas, said the latest travel advisory from the EU hasn't had an impact because the status of Thailand as a basic risk area will not require travellers to quarantine when they return home. However, TAT will closely monitor tourism demand and try to promote the sandbox as a safe haven as opposed to the rest of the nation.

5. Banpu to lure investors via three debenture tranches

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

Banpu Plc, a leading international energy provider, says it will offer three tranches of debentures to general investors on July 30 and again on Aug 2-3 through four leading financial institutions. The indicative interest rates are 2.9%, 3.3%, and 3.80% for the 5-year, 7-year, and 10-year debentures, respectively. The interest will be paid every six months. Underwriters said that investors are confident in Banpu's growth potential in integrated energy businesses, which are moving to deliver smarter energy for sustainability under a greener and smarter strategy.