

## Thai News Update: 22 August 2019

### **1. Rice Committee endorses rice price guarantee scheme**

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

Thailand's Rice Policy and Management Committee, chaired by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha, has approved a rice price guarantee scheme for five types of rice and a parallel measure to help farmers cover their harvesting or production costs. Deputy Prime Minister and Commerce Minister Jurin Laksanavisit said Wednesday that the committee's decision will be forwarded to the cabinet for consideration at its meeting on August 27th.

### **2. Tourism boss snips 2019 foreign arrivals**

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

The Tourism and Sports Ministry has cut its foreign arrivals forecast to 39-39.8 million this year, down from 40.2 million. Affected by global tension, Thai tourism in the first half this year saw foreign arrivals grow only 1.4% to 19.7 million, prompting the ministry to shave its target in July from 41.3 million to 40.2 million. Tourism and sports minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn said he is confident the new projection is achievable as the government has been working to offer incentives to foreign visitors.

### **3. Thailand BOI, University Network to Spur R&D Linkage with Industry**

**Source: Yahoo Finance ([Link](#))**

The Thailand Board of Investment (BOI) this month entered into an agreement with eight of the country's leading universities aiming to improve linkage between the academic and manufacturing sectors in the fields of research as well as human capital development, in order to foster innovation and boost the country's competitiveness, the BOI said. The memorandum of understanding signed with Thailand's Research University Network (RUN), a higher education alliance setup in 2015, covers knowledge and information sharing in the area of research and development between RUN member universities and industrial operators. The agreement will

stimulate collaboration in private sector demand-driven R&D activities, co-operative education programs and high-skilled workforce recruitment, the BOI said.

#### **4. TAT and Shopee spreading e-commerce locally**

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

Local tourism operators have teamed up with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and Shopee to use e-commerce to expand group travel, especially among younger segments. Tour packages based on the collaboration have been available at the flagship platform of Shopee since yesterday. The partnership enables domestic travel companies to connect digitally with young travellers, said Chamnan Srisawat, president of Thai Federation of Provincial Tourist Associations (TFOPTA). Shopee is a Singapore-based mobile app that has 30 million downloads in Thailand.

#### **5. Thailand and South Korea partner on development of electric buses**

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

An all-electric bus sits on the campus at King Mongkut's University of Technology in Thonburi, Bangkok. The electric bus is a joint project between Korea and Thailand, led mainly by Korean automaker Edison Motors, which currently provides public transport services with eco-friendly buses at Namsan in Seoul and on Jeju Island. The project involves 11 organisations from both sides, including Korea's Industry Ministry and Korean Energy Technology Evaluation and Planning. The Thai side includes the Bangkok Mass Transit Authority, the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand and King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, where the bus is being tested.

#### **6. Bidding terms ready for Digital Park Thailand**

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

The Digital Economy Promotion Agency (Depa) is expected to issue new terms of reference shortly for the private sector to invest in the Digital Park Thailand project in Chonburi's Sri Racha district. Depa president and CEO Dr Nuttapon Nimmanphatcharin said the terms for bidding should have government approval soon after August. The 800-rai, Bt4-billion infrastructure project is part of the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) special economic zone

covering Chonburi, Rayong and Chachoengsao. The aim is to attract world-class tech firms to set up shop for ventures in edutainment, drones, robots, e-sports and other technology.

### **7. Planned biorefinery first step to ‘Biopolis’**

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

The National Science and Technology Development Agency will invest Bt3.4 billion in a pilot biorefinery in the Eastern Economic Corridor of Innovation (ECCi). The aim is to add value from biological research to industrial manufacturing and create innovative products, while raising Thailand’s as a hub for bio-technology in Southeast Asia. President Narong Sirilertworakul said the agency in charge of managing the ECCi had arranged for Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha to lift the symbolic first shovel of soil next February 27 and construction of Phase 1A would be completed in the first quarter of 2021. A significant aspect of the project is the development of a modern agricultural and the biorefinery industry to promote the benefits of both by mobilising a “Biopolis” – a city of innovation.

### **8. Somkid hears upbeat talk on Japanese rail investment**

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

Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak on 21 August spoke with Japanese Ambassador Shiro Sadoshima at Government House about the possibilities for investment in a high-speed railway on the Mukdahan-Mae Sot route in the Eastern Economic Corridor. He said the ambassador told him the Japan International Cooperation Agency had studied the idea and found potential for investment. Somkid noted that Thailand has for years sought investment from Japan with an eye to promoting rail transport linking Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Myanmar. He planned to discuss the matter with the transportation minister and ask the Thai-Japanese Joint Committee on Trade, Investment and Economic Cooperation to consider it.

