

## THAI NEWS UPDATE: 22 JULY 2021

### **1. CEOs launch bid to reboot economy**

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

More generous economic relief and a clear alternative plan after a missed vaccination procurement target is required, according to 40 CEOs who met Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha remotely to discuss a solution to the pandemic crisis on 21 July. Thai Chamber of Commerce (TCC) chairman Sanan Angubolkul said the business sector was concerned about the pandemic and vaccine procurements which have missed their target. Fuelling the bad news is the continued surge in daily Covid-19 infections and fatalities which have weighed down the economy.

### **2. State urged to step up progress of special zones**

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

The government is being urged to speed up the implementation of additional special development zones and the digitalisation of government services to boost investments and rehabilitate the country's economy which has been battered by the Covid-19 crisis. Kanit Sangsubhan, secretary-general to the EEC Office, said the government's flagship Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) alone is not enough to attract investment and boost the country's gross domestic product to grow 4-5% a year as planned after Covid-19. The EEC scheme alone is not enough to upgrade Thailand to become a developed country, he said.

### **3. BoI offers tax incentives to boost production technology**

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

Industry Minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit expects Thailand to become a leading country with robotic and automation technology by 2026, following investments in robot-based production systems. The country is emphasising robotics, automation and system integration (SI) development in a move to eventually produce technologies of its own. "Thailand is currently in a middle-term development plan from 2018 to 2021 to develop these technologies in line with the government's S-curve scheme," Mr Suriya said. During this period, the investment value for automation and robotic systems has been around 116 billion baht. There are also 74 SI-related businesses registered with the Center of Robotic Excellence (CORE).

#### **4. ShopeePay drives Thailand's digital payment adoption forward**

**Source: Digital News Asia ([Link](#))**

SHOPEEPAY has announced its commitment for the second half of 2021 and is aimed at driving a fully-integrated digital payment forward in Thailand, with the objective of leveraging technology to raise quality of life. In a statement, it said that digital services have continued to grow rapidly and is driven by the third wave of Covid-19 pandemic. This includes digital money transfer where consumer preferences are tuned to online shopping. According to Kasikorn Research Center, at least 53.9% of Thai consumers use digital payments. The firm foresees continued growth in mobile wallet transactions in 2021, rising 15.8% to 18%, compared to 8.7% growth in 2020 or a 9.9% improved performance year-on-year, it said.

#### **5. Thailand's very own mRNA vaccine 'will be ready for use by yearend'**

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

Chulalongkorn University expects to complete the first phase of human trials of its mRNA Covid-19 vaccine within this month, Dr Chalermchai Boonyaleepun, deputy chair of the Senate's public health committee, said on social media. He explained that the trial, which kicked off in June, is being conducted on two groups of volunteers – ages 18-55 and 65-75. The trial is using doses of three sizes – 10, 25 and 50 micrograms (mcg). In comparison, the Pfizer and Moderna doses are 30mcg and 100mcg respectively. Chalermchai said the locally produced vaccine can be stored for three months at a temperature of between 2-8 degrees. In comparison, the Pfizer vaccine can only be stored for a month and the Moderna jab for just a week in these temperatures. Chalermchai also said the university aims to boost the vaccine's efficacy against new variants.

#### **6. Initiative aims to provide talent for the EV industry**

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

SET-listed Energy Absolute Plc (EA), a renewable energy developer and operator, has teamed up with Rajamangala University of Technology Isan (RMUTI) to produce university graduates with new technological skills to serve EA-run battery and electric vehicle (EV) production facilities in Chachoengsao. EA's 6-billion-baht battery factory began operating in June and an EV assembly plant, valued at 1.8 billion baht, is also operating. EA chief executive Somphote Ahunai said Thailand needs to develop human resources to enhance competitiveness in the EV industry, one of 12 industries to drive the Thai economy over the coming decades. He said students should be introduced to modern technology in the

automotive industry and became adept at using it in order to help Thailand maintain its status as the "Detroit of Asia", following years of serving as a major car production site.