

THAI NEWS UPDATE: 23 AUGUST 2021

1. Kratom now listed as legal herb

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

With the law effectively decriminalising the plant *Mitragyna speciosa*, commonly known as kratom, effective from 23 August, many people are looking forward to using the herb openly without the threat of prosecution. The plant will be reclassified as a herb that can be legally grown and used under the recently amended Narcotics Act, after it had been listed as a Type-5 narcotic under previous iterations of the law. Not only will the use and possession of the plant for medical purposes no longer be illegal, more than 12,000 people who had been convicted for kratom-related offences when it was still considered a narcotic will be granted an amnesty.

2. Overseas Thai donates B20m to buy vaccines for Korat

Source: Bangkok Post ([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. Forest complex reservoir project 'in study phase'

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

The Royal Irrigation Department (RID) is attempting to allay concerns raised over a plan to construct a cluster of seven reservoirs around the Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex by saying the project is still at its study phase. Mahit Wongsu, director of environment at the RID, said none of the seven projects, which are a part of a water management effort for the Bang Pakong river basin, is off the ground, and some are still pending surveys and design planning.

4. Govt approves Bt89bn price-guarantee scheme for rice farmers

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

The National Rice Policy and Administration Committee on Monday approved a budget of Bt89 billion to guarantee the rice price for this year's crop (2020/2021), said government

spokesman Anucha Burapachaisri. Monday's online committee, which was chaired by Prime Minister Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha, estimated the budget would help 4.69 million rice-farming households. To be eligible, rice must have less than 15-per-cent moisture, while farmers must be registered with the Department of Agricultural Extension from April 1 to October 31 (or June 16, 2021 to February 28, 2022 for farmers in the South). The money will be sent to farmers' accounts by the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives from October 15 onward.