

Thai News Update: 23 September 2020

1. Cabinet okays budget to help private sector hire 260,000 new graduates

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

The Cabinet yesterday (September 22) approved a budget of Bt19.5 billion to help the private sector hire 260,000 new graduates, with the government using the money to pay half their salaries. Government spokesman Anucha Burapachaisri said the move comes under the Labour Ministry's Department of Employment Job Expo Thailand 2020. "This move aims to enable new graduates to get a job, improve their quality of life and enhance working experience and skills. Also, it helps entrepreneurs to continue operating their businesses," he said.

2. Thai private sector wants progress on EU free trade deal

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

The private sector has urged the government to resume talks on a free trade agreement (FTA) with the European Union (EU). Thai Chamber of Commerce vice chairman Chusak Chuenprayoth said that members supported resumption of the talks and did not want to see any further delays to the FTA, which would benefit the country. He admitted the FTA would impact some Thai businesses, but said they should hurry to adjust their operations to comply with export requirements and standards under the planned agreement.

3. Progress revealed on U-Tapao Airport and Aviation City project

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

The Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) Policy Committee has revealed progress on the Bt290-billion U-Tapao Airport and Eastern Aviation City scheme after signing a joint-investment deal to construct the megaproject in June. The Aviation City will radiate 30 kilometres from U-Tapao Airport and house aviation businesses, logistics, tourism facilities and more, said EEC Committee secretary-general, Kanit Sangsuphan. U-Tapao Airport would serve at least 15 million passengers per year, bringing three million tourists and an additional Bt75 billion to Bt100 billion annually to Rayong province, he added, speaking at a recent seminar titled "U-Tapao Airport: Aiming to be the third international airport of Bangkok".

4. SMEs reminded to grab govt opportunity on products, services

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

October 1 will become the first day the Finance Ministry's new regulations on government procurement take effect, presenting a good opportunity for small and medium enterprises to gain access to more than Bt400 billion of the government's procurement budget of over Bt1.3

trillion annually, Office of SME Promotion (OSMEP) director Weeraphong Malai said. “The new regulations stipulate that government agencies must use at least 30 per cent of their procurement budget to purchase specified products and services from small and medium enterprises, and prioritise sourcing from SMEs located in the same province,” he pointed out.

5. Job seekers nationwide to get access to opportunities offered at job expo

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

Labour Minister Suchart Chomklin on Tuesday (September 22) instructed the Department of Employment to set up an online option for job seekers nationwide to access employment opportunities offered at Job Expo Thailand 2020. The fair, offering more than a million jobs, will be held at the Bangkok International Trade and Exhibition Centre (Bitec) from Saturday to next Monday. “Since some people may not be able to attend this fair, we have ordered the Department of Employment to provide online job-search service during the expo period,” he said.

6. USFDA grants Thai bureau accreditation status on 4 more aspects of food manufacturing

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

The United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) has certified Thailand's National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS) as an accreditation agency for four additional aspects of food manufacturing, secretary-general Juadee Pongmaneerat said. The bureau received the certification on August 30. “The ACFS has been certified as an accreditation body on low-acid canned foods, acidified foods, seafood hazard analysis and critical controls point, and juice hazard analysis and critical controls point,” she said.

7. Capella opening first brand hotel in Chao Phraya Estate

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

Capella Bangkok is introducing its first hotel under Capella Hotels and Resorts in Thailand this year, shifting focus to the domestic market amid the slowdown. The 101-room hotel is part of Chao Phraya Estate, a mixed-use development under SET-listed Country Group Development, which delayed the opening date to Oct 1 from March because of the outbreak. During the initial stage in the fourth quarter, the hotel will focus on introducing the brand to Thais, letting them rediscover the Charoen Krung area and nearby neighbourhoods such as Yaowarat, said John Blanco, general manager at Capella Bangkok.

8. CPF moves into health drinks

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

SET-listed Charoen Pokphand Foods (CPF) is beefing up its beverage business and plans to launch alternative drinks to tap into Thai consumers focused on their health after the outbreak. Prasit Boondoungprasert, CPF's chief executive, said the pandemic has led to heightened health awareness, with consumers looking for hygienic, easy-to-cook food that offers value for money. "Without the outbreak, we might have taken 3-5 years to raise Thais' awareness about [the importance of] healthy food," Mr Prasit said. CPF spends 500 million baht on food R&D each year, with about 500 new food products launched annually in Thailand and worldwide.

9. Egat gathers data for EV charging outlets

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

The state-run Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (Egat) is paving the way for development of charging outlets for electric vehicles (EVs) by using data collected from a test run of its own newly developed electric motorcycles, buses and boats. The plan was announced on Tuesday as Egat officially launched prototype EVs under cooperation with two universities and the Bangkok Mass Transit Authority (BMTA), a state-run bus operator. The one-year test will start at the end of October. Egat chairman Kulit Sombatsiri said his agency wants to spearhead the development of an EV system after years of small-scale testing of an electric sedan. Egat is scaling up the test for commercial purposes.