

THAI NEWS UPDATE: 23 SEPTEMBER 2021

1. Veerathai highlights seven pressing issues

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

The government needs to address seven pressing issues in its new national economic and social development plan, says Veerathai Santiprabhob, former governor of the Bank of Thailand. He made the remarks on Wednesday at the annual meeting of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC). The first pressing issue is bloated state agencies and state enterprises, resulting in ballooning state budgets, Mr Veerathai said. The second is disparity, especially in the educational system and the competition gap between small and medium-sized enterprises and large corporates. The third issue is the country's competitiveness in the global value chain. He said many countries have made agreements to join free trade pacts, including the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

2. UNICEF provides oxygen concentrators to support Thailand's fight against COVID-19

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

UNICEF continues its emergency support to Thailand's COVID-19 response by providing 550 life-saving oxygen concentrators to help treat patients with respiratory diseases. UNICEF's emergency support to the COVID-19 response in Thailand so far also includes: Reaching more than 275,000 disadvantaged children and adults with 607,000 hygiene supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer, alcohol spray, disinfectant and child and adult-size face masks. Reaching 8,360 vulnerable children including children without parental care, urban poor children and migrant children, with Magic Box and Bag sets of books, toys, learning materials and parental guides to help keep young children learning while at home and others.

3. Reclaimed royal land will be used for makeshift prisons, low-income housing

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

The Treasury Department announced on 22 September that it has taken back more than 100,000 rai of land owned by the Royal Property Bureau and will redistribute it among prisons and low-income people. Director-general Yutthana Yimkarun said most of the 100,000-rai taken back from state agencies was either left unused or was being misused. The land will now be used for temporary prisons, inmate training sites and housing for low-income people. The Treasury Department currently oversees some 500,000 rai of royally owned land. The department has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the

Corrections Department to use some of the newly claimed land to build makeshift prisons to ease congestion. These new prisons will also include vocational training sites to help inmates develop new skills.

4. Thailand climbs in digital index

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

Thailand jumped 19 places from a year ago in a new global digital wellbeing study, but is still behind Malaysia and Singapore in Southeast Asia. The third annual edition of the Digital Quality of Life Index (DQL) ranks Thailand 44th among 110 countries, with Singapore sixth and Malaysia 31st. The top five, in order, were Denmark, South Korea, Finland, Israel and the United States. Covering 90% of the global population, the study was conducted by the cybersecurity and virtual private network (VPN) provider Surfshark and evaluated countries based on five fundamental digital wellbeing pillars. Thailand excels in internet quality (19th), but displays comparatively low results in internet affordability (58th), e-infrastructure (46th), e-security (63rd) and e-government (51st).

5. Business body seeks incentives to stimulate foreign demand

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

The Phuket sandbox will help revive the residential market in the province next year, but a local business body is calling on the government to provide one-stop services and incentives to boost demand from foreign buyers. Thanusak Phungdet, president of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce, said many foreign buyers were waiting for the country's reopening to resume property purchases and transactions. "Foreigners buying a Thai property visit Thailand as tourists. They should be recognised as a resident and we should provide one-stop services and set up regulations for them to follow," he said.