

Thai News Update: 24 July 2018

1. High-Speed Rail Link Pushed Back To 2024

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

The high-speed railway set to link Don Mueang, Suvarnabhumi and U-Tapao airports will open in mid-2024 at the earliest, State Railway of Thailand (SRT) acting governor Voravuth Mala said on July 23. The government had earlier expected the 200-billion-baht megaproject to be open by 2023. The interim rail chief made the comments after a scheduled first meeting among government authorities and representatives from all 31 firms who bought bidding documents for the project this and last month. The documents cost one million baht per firm to obtain. Each firm interested in operation and management rights had purchased the documents, Mr Voravuth said. Upon its completion, the 220km airport-linking high-speed railway will mostly use the existing Airport Rail Link's railway, from Phaya Thai to Suvarnabhumi airport in Samut Prakan. The project mainly involves constructing extensions from Phaya Thai to Don Mueang airport and Suvarnabhumi to U-Tapao airport in Rayong.

2. PTTEP Eyes Myanmar Project

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

SET-listed PTT Exploration and Production Plc (PTTEP) is proposing that Myanmar's energy policymakers develop and operate a large gas-fired power plant to tap surging demand for energy there. If the project goes forward, it will be handled by PTTEP International Co Yangon Branch, the company's wholly owned subsidiary in Myanmar. Piya Sukhumpanumet, general manager of PTTEP International, said the plan is to partner up with sister firm Global Power Synergy Plc (GPSC) on the project. The national oil and gas conglomerate, PTT Plc, is the parent firm of both PTTEP and GPSC. GPSC is in charge of power business. Mr Piya said the project will cost hundreds of millions of dollars and is being considered by policymakers in Myanmar. "The project is set to add value to our existing exploration and production (E&P) business," Mr Piya said.

3. Boi Set To Favour EV Firms

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

The Board of Investment (BoI) looks set to offer promotional privileges to two electric vehicle (EV) manufacturers after having frozen all EV applications from carmakers for almost a year. Approval of investment applications worth 10 billion baht for promotional privileges on EVs for two firms, one of which is Honda, will be discussed at July 25 BoI meeting chaired by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, said secretary-general Duangjai Asawachintachit. Ms Duangjai said the BoI previously approved on a gradual basis investment privileges for several firms from Japan and Europe, including Toyota, Mercedes-Benz and BMW, which asked for investment promotion in hybrid electric vehicles (HEVs), plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) and battery electric vehicles (BEVs).

4. Pace Set To Pick Up On Digital Projects

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

The Ministry of Digital Economy and Society will push for many projects to get off the ground this year as part of its efforts to propel Thailand more fully into the digital age. The minister, Pichet Durongkaveroj, said that among these plans are the development of a test bed for 5G mobile applications and, to support technology startups more broadly, a cyber port initiative. Pichet made the remarks on July 23 at an event, “Future Economy and Internet Governance: Big Change to Big Chance”, hosted by the Electronic Transactions Development Agency (Public Organisation) (ETDA) at the Siam Paragon shopping complex. The three-day event kicked off on July 23. He said that the ministry would set up the 5G mobile application test bed lab at Digital Park in Si Racha. The move will help equip Thailand for the country’s transition from the current 4G telecommunications landscape to the incoming 5G era, the minister said. Pichet said the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) is considering allocating some spectrum bands for the 5G testing at the planned test bed.

5. 4 Northeast Provinces Seek Bt10 Bn For Projects

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

Four lower northeastern provinces are planning to push the Cabinet to approve Bt10 billion for development projects – part of a plan to turn the area into a trade hub for Indochina – when Prime

Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha visits the area on July 24. Officials and business executives from Ubon Ratchathani, Amnat Charoen, Si Sa Ket and Yasothon province intend to raise the issue at a mobile Cabinet meeting in Amnat Charoen and Ubon Ratchathani. The meeting began yesterday amid tight security to prevent local protests as the province is a major stronghold of dissent. Local officials argued that any movement against the junta could be at the expense of limited budget allocations to the provinces. But Titipol said the Cabinet would not be very professional if it took protests personally. Prayut denied his latest trip to the Northeast was aimed at “giving away money or wooing votes”. The proposed development projects can be divided into five groups – logistics such as road, rail and air transport; agriculture including reservoir and dyke construction; industrial manufacturing; tourist destinations; and quality of life, according to Wittaya Wirarat, who heads the chamber of commerce of the four provinces.