

Thai News Update: 25 August 2020

1. Hong Kong in travel bubble talks with Japan, Thailand

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

Hong Kong has restarted discussions with Japan, Thailand and a handful of other countries over setting up travel bubbles, commerce chief Edward Yau said on 24 August, given a mutually recognised coronavirus testing mechanism is established. Addressing a webinar held by the Hong Kong Productivity Council on small business promotion amid the coronavirus pandemic, Yau told the news media that Hong Kong has engaged in travel bubble discussions with between eight and 10 countries and places. Discussions with Japan and Thailand, which had been suspended as the pandemic worsened in July, are in more advanced stages compared with other countries, Yau said.

2. B.Grimm looks to renewables, LNG

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

B.Grimm Power Plc, Thailand's top private power generation firm by capacity, continues to expand its domain in renewable energy and liquefied natural gas (LNG) businesses as cleaner energy is becoming a new global trend. Its president Preeyanart Soontornwata said her company will not stop looking for business opportunities in energy sector despite economic slowdown caused by lockdown measures used to curb the spread of Covid-19 worldwide. Renewables and LNG will be mainstream energy in line with growing concerns over climate change, she said.

3. Smart Park being propelled ahead

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

Industry Minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit plans to ask the cabinet to approve a 12-billion-baht Smart Park industrial estate as well new measures to stimulate car sales after the pandemic dies down. The new complex, to be located on 1,383 rai in Map Tha Phut in Rayong, will be among key projects in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) scheme to serve 12 targeted S-curve industries, including next-generation cars, robotics, medical technology as well as aviation and aerospace. "We will not delay the project and expect to complete it within three years," Mr Suriya said during a trip to Rayong on 24 August where the cabinet meeting is scheduled for 25 August. Construction is set to start in the second quarter next year as the government pushes ahead with its ambitious EEC scheme to build a

high-tech industrial hub spanning 30,000 rai in three provinces: Chon Buri, Rayong and Chachoengsao.

4. Rayong firms push for travel perks until year-end

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

Operators in Rayong are urging the government to extend the tourism campaign until the end of the year to stimulate weak domestic demand and create more events in Koh Samet to attract locals. Sarinthip Tupmongkholsup, president of Tourism Association of Koh Samet, said tourism sentiment during the high season will not be strong enough to drive domestic trips in this tough economy. If the tourism campaign that ends on Oct 31 can be extended until the end of the year and the government helps generate more tourism events for destinations, further benefits for locals can be created, she said.

5. Tax cut for new-car purchases in pipeline

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

The Cabinet will today (August 25) consider a proposal to cut tax on purchases of new cars as it discusses measures to boost the auto industry amid the Covid-19 crisis. The tax cut will be proposed by Industry Minister Suriya Juangroongruangkit following his meeting on Monday with Mitsubishi Motors executives at the Mitsubishi factory in Laem Chabang, Rayong province. Mitsubishi has said it accelerate its planned Bt20-billion investment in Thailand. The company will launch its first plug-in electric car – the Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV – in late 2020 or early 2021 in Thailand. The model will be the first Mitsubishi e-vehicle produced outside Japan, Suriya said after the meeting.

6. Prawit asks Labour Ministry to implement ‘urgent’ policies

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

Deputy Prime Minister General Prawit Wongsuwan visited Rayong’s Labour Rehabilitation Centre with Labour Minister Suchart Chomklin, Deputy Labour Minister Narumon Pinyosinwat and executives of the ministry yesterday (August 24). Prawit thanked ministry officials for helping Thai and foreign labourers during the Covid-19 crisis by mitigating the impact from unemployment and wage cuts that several employers have undertaken to keep their businesses afloat. The deputy premier also announced “urgent policies” for the ministry to implement to improve the labour situation after the crisis

7. Medical cannabis industry gears up to drive Thai economy

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

Medical cannabis will be raised to the status of an economic crop in Thailand and exported across the world, according to a government subcommittee studying the draft law on cultivation of cannabis and Thai hemp. The subcommittee said Thai farmers should also have access to both certified commercial cannabis seed and be able to generate their own seed stocks, said Weerachai na Nakorn, an adviser to a community cannabis enterprise in Buriram province. The government panel agreed to promote Thai medical cannabis in the Asian, European and US markets, he added, speaking at a seminar organised by the Play La Ploen community cannabis enterprise in the northeastern province.

8. Phuket tram system to cost Bt35bn and start running in 2026

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

The Mass Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand (MRTA) plans to invest around Bt35 billion for the first phase of its tram project in Phuket province. The first phase linking Phuket Airport and Chalong intersection was discussed at a meeting between Phuket deputy governor Wongsakorn Noonchukhan and MRTA assistant governor Sarot T Suwan on Monday (August 24). This meeting also heard opinions from local people and businesses as well as the Phuket administration. The first phase covers 42 kilometres and 21 stations, while the second will cover 16.5 kilometres.