

Thai News Update: 2 August 2019

1. Jurin seeks easing of regulations from China for Thai exports

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

Commerce Minister Jurin Laksanawisit has appealed to authorities in China to relax new regulations on the import of fruits from Thailand. Jurin has asked Thailand's Minister for the Office of Commercial Affairs in Beijing to negotiate with China's Ministry of Agriculture. Jurin, who is also leader of the Democrat Party, will take part in the 8th Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) meeting being held from 1 August to 3 August in Beijing. It is Jurin's first international meeting since taking the reins at the Commerce Ministry. Thailand, as chair of Asean Economic Ministers this year, will also chair the RCEP meeting in which 16 Asian countries will take part. The meeting assumes added significance as the grouping tries to deal with differences before coming to an agreement.

2. Thailand set to deliver first batch of medical marijuana

Source: Reuters ([Link](#))

Thailand plans to distribute about 10,000 bottles of cannabis oil next week for hospital patients, a government official said on 1 August, the first official use of medical marijuana since a law legalizing it came into effect this year. The Government Pharmaceutical Organization (GPO) will deliver 4,500 5ml bottles of cannabis oil to the Ministry of Public Health to be distributed to hospitals on Aug. 7 for about 4,000 registered patients, GPO executive managing director, Withoon Danwiboon, told a news conference. The remaining 5,500 bottles will be gradually distributed later. Thailand, which has a tradition of using cannabis to relieve pain and fatigue, has legalized marijuana for medical use and research to help boost agricultural incomes. Cannabis oil will be used to treat patients who suffer from nausea from chemotherapy, epilepsy, and aches and pains, Withoon said, adding that patients with Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and in palliative care would also benefit.

3. Thailand, Laos launch cross-border freight train

Source: Xinhuanet ([Link](#))

The State Railway of Thailand (SRT) on 1 August launched a freight train across the First Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge at Thailand's Nong Khai railway station near the border with Laos. The SRT freight train, which started on 1 August at Nong Khai station in northeastern Thailand, carried cargoes from Laem Chabang port to a Container Yard Center at Tha Na Laeng station in Lao capital Vientiane. The train service is in line with logistical development plans of both countries. Acting SRT Governor Worawut Mala presided over the opening ceremony for the launch of the freight train held at Nong Khai station, which was attended by Thailand's Rail Transport Department Director General Saravut Songwilai and Laos' Railway Department Chief Sengthavisay Malivanh.

4. Chiang Mai rallies behind light rail

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

Chiang Mai residents rallied behind the province's first light-rail project at the first public hearing on the project on 31 July, according to Mass Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand (MRTA) governor Pakapong Sirikantaramas. Most participants at the hearing threw their support behind the 12-km Red Line route, which will run from Nakhon Ping Hospital to Mae Hia intersection with some stretches of track running underground. They said the line would tackle traffic congestion in the downtown area and improve mobility. The province's first mass transit line, set to launch in 2027, would also boost tourism, according to the hearing. The residents also urged authorities to build two other lines: a 12-km Blue Line from Chiang Mai Zoo to Sri Bua Ngern Pattana intersection and an 11-km Green Line from Ruam Choke intersection to Chiang Mai airport.

5. Digital Economy and Society Ministry banking on big data link

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

The Digital Economy and Society (DE) Ministry is gearing up for big data analytics development for industrial clusters as part of efforts to push the country forward under the Thailand 4.0 policy. Thailand 4.0 pertains to the economic drive through innovation and

technology. According to DE Minister Buddhpongse Punnakanta, CAT Telecom could play a major role in supporting big data system development in each cluster. "I expect to see an advance of big data connectivity between clusters over the next six months," Mr Buddhpongse said. CAT owns eight data centres with a combined capacity of 1,100 racks. CAT also owns a variety of hard infrastructure, comprising fibre-optics with a length of 2.4 million core-kilometres, 16,000 telecom towers and conduits spanning 463km, as well as six routes of submarine cables and two international internet gateways.