

THAI NEWS UPDATE: 4 OCTOBER 2021

1. Collection of B500 fee from foreigners starts next year

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

The Tourism and Sports Ministry is poised to start collecting a 500-baht tourism fee for a "tourism transformation fund" next year, with the budget following a co-payment model. The Centre for Economic Situation Administration last week approved the creation of the fund, which is expected to subsidise projects that transform the industry, focusing on high-value and sustainable tourism. Yuthasak Supasorn, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) governor, said the fee collection of 500 baht per person should start next year, with the aim of collecting 5 billion within the first year, assuming 10 million foreign arrivals in 2022. The National Tourism Policy Committee already gave the nod to start the fund earlier this year, with a proposed fee of 300 baht per person.

2. Vaccinations commence for over 5 million students

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

Students aged between 12 and 18 in "dark red zone" provinces will start to receive vaccines from 4 October. The Education Ministry said on 3 October that it planned to inoculate 5,048,081 students aged 12-18. Some 71 per cent, or 3.61 million, have already registered for vaccines. Students are set to receive two doses of Pfizer. The first dose will be administered from 4 October for 15,465 schools in 29 dark red zone provinces. The second dose will be given in November.

3. Asean trade talks with Australia, NZ, India bear fruit

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

Asean, Australia and New Zealand are to upgrade their free trade agreement by 2022, while Asean Economic Ministers (AEM) in consultations with India have resolved to increase the free trade in goods and provide increased inter-market access in hopes of creating a market of more than 2 billion consumers. Deputy Commerce Minister Sansern Samalapa told reporters on Sunday that the 26th AEM-Asean discussions with Australia and New Zealand on September 15 had welcomed the progress in negotiations on upgrading the Asean-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) agreement.

4. Oldest Thailand conglomerate eyes power projects in Europe, US

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

B.Grimm Group, Thailand's oldest industrial conglomerate, is mulling investments in power projects in Eastern Europe and the United States to tap rising demand for renewable energy.

The closely held group, which gets most of its earnings from Bangkok-listed B.Grimm Power Plc, is exploring whether to invest on its own or through partnerships, with financing a key deciding factor, said Caroline Link, the president of B.Grimm Joint Venture Holding Co, one of its main investment arms. “The renewables side is very interesting at the moment,” said Link, 39, in an interview with Bloomberg Television. “We have such growth potential in the energy sector,” with a major focus on “very interesting” projects in Eastern Europe, she said, without elaborating on possible US ventures.

5. Chiang Mai will accept foreign tourists by November

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

Chiang Mai has announced its readiness to welcome visitors to stimulate the city's economy and will accept travellers to four provinces from October 1 for Thai travellers and November 1 for foreign tourists. Rattaphol Naradisorn, deputy governor of Chiang Mai, revealed that Chiang Mai province is ready to receive a lot of tourists, including accommodation, tourist attractions, and the safety of public health. The Chiang Mai Communicable Disease Committee issued a notice on September 1 allowing people arriving from highly restricted areas to not be tested for COVID-19.

6. TAT targets Korean, Indian visitors for high season

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

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) aims to increase inbound visitors from Asian markets during the high season via travel bubble schemes with South Korea and India. Thanet Phetsuwan, TAT deputy governor of marketing for Asia and South Pacific, said most visitors in the reopening schemes came from long-haul destinations that have fewer quarantine requirements than Asian countries. TAT overseas offices in this region and the South Pacific are due to discuss the marketing strategy today to resolve this problem. India does not allow flights to Thailand as international air travel is only available for countries under bilateral air bubble agreements, such as the US, the UAE, Japan and the Maldives. Thailand is not on its list.

5. PM outlines vision for 'Phuket transformation'

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

The government is gearing up to promote Phuket as a world-class destination, hoping to lure one million foreign visitors over the next six months and generating at least 60 billion baht in revenue. Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha shared the "Phuket transformation" initiative on his Facebook on Friday as fresh easing of coronavirus restrictions took effect that saw

cinemas reopen and shortened spells in curfew and mandatory quarantine. He said the programme aims to attract up to a million high-quality foreign travellers and those who are on "workation" during the fourth quarter of this year and the first quarter of 2022, or an average of 5,000 visitors per day.