

## Thai News Update: 5 August 2020

### **1. Thai embassies in 30 nations urged to woo investors for EEC**

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

The Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) Office of Thailand has recently called on Thai embassies in 30 countries to approach foreign firms to invest in the EEC, the office's secretary-general Kanit Sangsubhan said. He said the EEC's main targets are firms in technology, logistics, medical and health sectors, adding that in France, EEC has been eyeing aviation firms, while in the US it is wooing logistic companies. He added that the office will propose to the Cabinet this month a plan to develop a 2,000 to 3,000-rai smart city in the region to accommodate the million or so people expected to migrate to the EEC in the next 20 years.

### **2. Migrant labourers will be allowed to work in Thailand for longer**

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

The Cabinet yesterday (August 4) agreed to extend the period in which migrant labourers from three countries – Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar – are allowed to work in Thailand to strengthen the country's workforce during an economic recovery, deputy government spokesperson Rachada Thanadirek said. Ratchada added that the term must be extended every three months. If the labourer wishes to continue working with the same employer, they must file for an extension at the provincial employment office before the term expires.

### **3. Ministry now aims to roll out travel promotions for expats in Thailand**

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

The Tourism and Sports Ministry aims to introduce travel packages to lure around two million expats in Thailand into travelling around the country to boost domestic tourism, with price promotions for accommodations and attractions equal to those offered to Thai tourists, Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn said today (August 5). The minister explained that because of the present Covid-19 situation, foreign tourists were unable to visit the country, "so we decided to stimulate domestic tourism through foreign expats in our country".

### **4. Cabinet approves new law to unlock medical cannabis industry**

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

The Cabinet on 5 August approved an amendment to the Narcotic Act allowing registered patients, Thai traditional medicine businesses, and farmers to access medical cannabis, Government Spokesperson Narumon Pinyosinwat said. They will receive certificates to

produce, export, import, sell and possess marijuana to develop medical knowledge in collaboration with the government. The new law also hands responsibility for seized marijuana to the Public Health Ministry, which can destroy or preserve the confiscated drug as it sees fit.

## **5. ADB injects \$1.5bn loan to aid Thai Covid-19 recovery**

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

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is loaning Thailand Bt46.7 billion (US\$1.5 billion) to combat the impact of Covid-19. ADB said Thailand remains highly vulnerable to the pandemic due to its deep integration with regional and global economies. Potential surges in Covid-19 cases could overwhelm the Thai health system, warned the bank. ADB forecast Thailand's economy to contract by 6.5 per cent in 2020, down from its December 2019 projection of 3 per cent growth. It said that given the country's strong regional trade, investment and labour links, an economic crisis in Thailand could spill over into neighbouring countries like Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam.

## **6. Dual prices on agenda**

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

The Tourism and Sports Ministry plans to propose to the prime minister the idea of ditching dual pricing at local attractions for expatriates in Thailand, as well as asking tour operators to tailor packages to this target group. The packages should be attractive enough to lure expatriates, a group that could contribute 1 billion baht in tourism revenue to help stimulate the economy, said Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn, the tourism and sports minister. "I'm planning to discuss offering expatriates the same price as locals with Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, providing them an equal chance to visit tourist sites such as national parks and temples," Mr Phiphat said.

## **7. CCSA eyes entry for foreign businessmen**

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

The Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) will next week consider a further easing of the ban on foreign visitors entering Thailand, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha said on 4 August. Speaking after a cabinet meeting on 4 August, Gen Prayut, who chairs the CCSA, said that the cabinet discussed the possibility of further relaxation to allow foreign businessmen who run major businesses to enter Thailand to conduct their transactions, though under strict health safety measures. The matter will be raised at a meeting of the CCSA next week, Gen Prayut said. Deputy Prime Minister and Public Health Minister

Anutin Charnvirakul said on 4 August that the prime minister has instructed the ministry to work with the CCSA to come up with measures to prepare for the arrival of foreign visitors to ensure public health safety and keep the economy functioning at the same time.

#### **8. EEC Office readies BoI-style tax incentives for SEZ investors**

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

The Eastern Economic Corridor Office is set to offer privileges directly to investors in special economic zones in the three provinces of the EEC. Kanit Sangsubhan, secretary-general of the EEC Office, said Section 59 of the EEC Act lets the EEC Policy Committee offer privileges equal to those awarded by the Board of Investment (BoI). Eligible investment must be in targeted industries and located in special promotion zones in the three provinces of the EEC, the Eastern Economic Corridor of Innovation, the Eastern Economic Corridor of Digital and the Eastern Airport City project at U-tapao. The EEC is part of the government's strategy to move Thailand towards a high-tech economy.

#### **9. The bullet trains to make Thais proud**

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

The company building a high-speed railway line linking Don Mueang, Suvarnabhumi and U-Tapao airports has invited experts from various fields to advise it on the best way forward. Suphachai Chearavanont, chief executive of Charoen Pokphand Group and chairman of Eastern High-Speed Rail Linking Three Airports, said the panel would be tasked with supervising the construction project to ensure economic, social and environmental sustainability. Members of this panel are Prof Suchatvee Suwansawat, rector of King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang; Wiwat Salyakamthorn, a renowned agricultural scholar and former deputy agriculture and cooperatives minister who is now president of Agri-Nature Foundation; ML Dispanadda Diskul, CEO of Mae Fah Luang Foundation; Asst Prof Thon Thamrongnawasawat, vice-dean of the Faculty of Fisheries at Kasetsart University; Asst Prof Anurat Anantanatorn, a public administration lecturer with Burapha University; Thirin Thanyawatthanakun, president of Chon Buri's Chamber of Commerce; and Torphong Selanon, president of the Thailand Association of The Blind.