

THAI NEWS UPDATE: 6 JULY 2022

1. Saudi investors eye EV prospects during EEC visit

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

Saudi Arabia has become the latest country to show an interest in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), with prospective investors looking in particular at five key industrial areas, notably electric vehicles (EVs), during a tour of the zone. Around 100 prospective Saudi investors, led by Krayem Alenezi, member of the board of directors of the Riyadh Chamber of Commerce, recently visited the EEC to get first-hand information about the zone, which covers parts of Chon Buri, Rayong and Chachoengsao. The government aims to turn the EEC into Thailand's high-tech industrial hub.

2. State urged to back smart hospital drive

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

The government should support the smart hospital scheme backed by 5G infrastructure as it could help ease people's expenses and save the state budget, according to the former chief of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC). Takorn Tantasith, former secretary-general of the NBTC, said the country is earmarking around 100 billion baht a year for public healthcare expenses and the amount keeps increasing as Thailand became a fully aged society in 2021. People are now also troubled by economic woes and the smart hospital drive is expected to help reduce public spending on healthcare services by 38 billion baht per year, he said.

3. Cabinet okays B8.38bn elderly aid

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

The cabinet on 5 July approved 8.38 billion baht allocated from the fiscal central budget to extend the cash handout programme for 10.9 million elderly people to help mitigate the impact of the rising cost of living. Each beneficiary will receive 100-250 baht extra for six months, depending on their age between April and September. The extra cash handout will be on top of the monthly allowances they are normally entitled to. The cabinet had approved the cash handout scheme for the elderly in April, but the payment has yet to be made now that the government needs time to study the funding source. The first payout will be made in a lump sum for four months (April to July) from July 19 onwards, with the second payout scheduled for Aug 19 and the third payout in September.

4. Thailand has crude oil reserves for 60-70 days

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

Energy Minister Supattanapong Punmeechaow on 5 July allayed fears of oil shortage, saying the country now has crude oil reserves for 60 to 70 days. Supattanapong said the country has doubled its oil reserves from 30 days in the normal situation because of the global energy crisis caused by the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. He said the oil reserves situation was reported at the meeting of the National Security Council chaired by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha on Monday.

5. Cabinet okays draft decree freeing some agencies from Data Protection Act

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

The Cabinet on 5 July approved a draft royal decree to exempt enforcement of the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) on agencies related to national security, public safety, tax collection, international cooperation and legal procedures. The draft royal decree proposed by the Digital Economy and Society Ministry aims to allow the agencies to collect, use or even reveal personal data. The Office of the Council of State is currently considering the draft.

6. Bangkok to pilot medical sandbox using digital tech in five districts

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

Five Bangkok districts have been selected to pilot the “Rachapiphat Sandbox”, a medical programme that aims to increase healthcare standards in metropolitan areas using digital technology. Bangkok to pilot medical sandbox using digital tech in five district. The programme will be led by Rachapiphat Hospital under the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration’s Medical Service Department in five districts – Thawi Watthana, Bang Khae, Nong Khaem, Phasi Charoen and Taling Chan. “The Rachapiphat Sandbox aims to increase treatment standards of primary health centres, improve the patient transfer system and utilise telemedicine to expand coverage at the community level,” Bangkok deputy governor Tavid Kamolvej said on 5 July.